



Strengthening VET systems in Armenia and Georgia for skills and workforce development

VET CAUCASUS

Governance Framework for Inclusive Vocational Education and Training (VET)

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Background and purpose of the Governance Framework

Vocational education and training (VET) systems in Armenia and Georgia are currently undergoing a strategic transformation aimed at increasing relevance, quality, inclusiveness and alignment with European standards.

Despite substantial progress, both countries continue to face structural challenges such as:

- Including limited coordination among institutions
- Uneven quality assurance mechanisms
- Fragmented employer engagement
- Insufficient support for vulnerable learners

These gaps hinder the capacity of VET providers to respond effectively to labour market needs and to offer pathways that promote social inclusion and sustainable employment.

In this context, the Governance Framework developed under the VET Caucasus project **serves as a foundational instrument to strengthen cooperation, enhance system coherence and improve the operational effectiveness of VET institutions**. Its purpose is to:

1. Provide a structured, transparent and replicable **set of mechanisms** that guide how VET institutions, policymakers, employers, job centres and social organisations collaborate, take decisions, ensure quality and support learners
2. Contribute to **modernisation efforts** in both countries and supports their progressive convergence with EU approaches to VET governance, quality assurance, labour market relevance and inclusion
3. **Harmonise Georgia and Armenia VET systems** with EU expectations while respecting their national legal, institutional and socio-economic contexts. This dual alignment strengthens the credibility and sustainability of VET reforms across the region
4. Reflect principles promoted through CEDFOP and EU-funded capacity-building initiatives, ensuring the **governance model** is technically **robust, future-oriented** and aligned with recognised European standards.

The Governance Framework is intended as a **long-term reference for institutional development**. It establishes shared operational standards, clarifies stakeholders' roles and defines collaboration models that be maintained, scaled and adapted beyond the lifespan of the project. It also aims to empower VET institutions to operate more effectively, deliver high-quality training programmes and build stronger and more inclusive connections with the labour market.

Definition and scope of the Governance Framework for inclusive VET in Armenia and Georgia

The Governance Framework is a **structured operational instrument designed to strengthen coordination, transparency and effectiveness within the VET ecosystems of Armenia and Georgia**. It defines the processes, standards and collaborative mechanisms through which VET institutions, policymakers, employers and social organisations interact to ensure that vocational training is aligned with labour market needs, adheres to national and EU quality requirements and provides inclusive opportunities for all learners.

Its scope extends across **four interdependent domains**:

1. **Accreditation and quality assurance**, establishing criteria and procedures for institutional compliance and continuous improvement.
2. **Cooperation between VET providers and labour market actors**, defining partnership models with employers, job centres and social services.
3. **Inclusive pathways and support systems for vulnerable learners**, ensuring equitable access and progression.
4. **Multi-stakeholder governance and policy coordination**, reinforcing system coherence and shared decision-making.

Benefits:

Structuring coordination across institutions	Strengthening quality assurance and accreditation	Enhancing labour market relevance	Providing a long-term reference for system development
It outlines mechanisms for communication, cooperation and joint planning among ministries, national VET agencies, providers, employers and social actors. This reduces the fragmentation and enhances policy coherence at national and institutional levels	It provides clear guidelines and reference standards (aligned with both national regulations and European quality frameworks) to ensure that VET providers operate effectively, deliver relevant programmes and follow continuous improvement processes	It defines structured collaboration models with employers and job centres, as well as incentives for enterprises to contribute to work-based learning, curriculum updates and student transitions into employment	It serves as a normative and operational guide that can be institutionalised, scaled and adapted over time, supporting ongoing reforms and reinforcing convergence with EU standards and expectations

Each dimension in this Governance Framework is presented through a **structured table** organised into **three features**, which represent the core functional components of that dimension. For each feature, the table outlines:

1. A concise **description** of what the feature covers



2. An explanation of **benefits** for system performance and reform and the expected **stakeholder engagement** required for implementation

Partner inputs

The following section is designed to compile and systematise the qualitative inputs provided by Armenian and Georgian partners in response to the questions set out in the Annex. The inputs collected through these tables serve to contextualise and validate the Governance Framework developed under the VET Caucasus project, ensuring that its four dimensions reflect national realities, institutional practices and implementation challenges.

Each table corresponds to one of the four dimensions of the Governance Framework and mirrors the structure of the Annex questions. Partner contributions are reported in a structured and comparable format, allowing similarities, differences and common priorities across countries and institutions to be identified. Based on the collected inputs, a synthesis will be developed for each country, consolidating key insights, recurring challenges and shared priorities emerging from partner contributions.

The focus of this section is not on exhaustive description, but on capturing key insights, challenges and contextual considerations relevant for the practical implementation of the framework. Information collected in this section will support consolidation activities, inform implementation discussions and strengthen the relevance and credibility of the Governance Framework as a long-term reference for inclusive and quality-focused VET in Armenia and Georgia.

Dimension 1: Accreditation & Quality Assurance Framework

Country	Q1: How are accreditation and quality assurance currently organised in your VET system?	Q2: What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the current accreditation and quality assurance practices?	Q3: Which elements of this dimension of the Governance Framework are most relevant or challenging for your context?
Armenia	Quality assurance in VET is organised through a combination of external and internal mechanisms. The Ministry of Education defines policies and standards, while national bodies such as ANQA and the National Centre for VET Development oversee accreditation and system coordination. At institutional level, providers implement internal QA systems including self-assessment, continuous monitoring and stakeholder feedback processes.	Strengths include a centralised and structured QA system aligned with European principles, supported by dedicated institutions and gradual integration of learning outcomes frameworks. Weaknesses relate to limited stakeholder (especially employer) involvement, resource constraints, and a tendency for QA processes to be compliance-driven rather than improvement-oriented.	Key priorities include strengthening a quality culture focused on continuous improvement, increasing employer involvement in QA and curriculum development, enhancing institutional capacity and staff training, and improving alignment between QA processes and learning outcomes.
Georgia	Quality assurance is centrally managed by the	Strengths include a coherent and centralised	Key challenges include strengthening institutional



	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), which oversees authorization, accreditation and evaluation processes. The system combines external state-regulated mechanisms with internal institutional QA processes, aligned with the National Qualifications Framework and progressively with European standards.	QA framework ensuring transparency, consistency and alignment with European approaches. Weaknesses include uneven institutional capacity, inconsistencies in implementation, and QA systems that are sometimes formalistic. Stakeholder engagement, particularly from employers, remains limited.	capacity, improving practical implementation of QA standards, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and adapting QA systems to work-based learning environments and digital innovation.
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Dimension 2: VET-Labour Market Cooperation & Employer Engagement

Country	Q1: How do VET institutions currently cooperate with employers and labour market actors in your country?	Q2: What are the main barriers to stronger employer engagement in VET?	Q3: Which aspects of the proposed cooperation models would be most useful to strengthen labour market alignment?
Armenia	Cooperation with employers exists but remains limited and often informal. It includes involvement in curriculum design, internships, participation in final assessments and, in some cases, financial support for students. However, engagement is not systematic and depends largely on individual institutional initiatives.	Main barriers include lack of financial and regulatory incentives, low employer awareness and engagement, limited institutional capacity to manage partnerships, and unclear or burdensome procedures for organising work-based learning.	Priority actions include expanding dual education and apprenticeship systems, formalising cooperation frameworks, introducing incentives for employers, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting integration of digital skills and innovation into training.
Georgia	Cooperation with employers is primarily implemented through work-based learning, internships, apprenticeships and participation in curriculum development. While national reforms promote stronger	Key barriers include lack of incentives, limited capacity of SMEs to train learners, weak coordination mechanisms, and low awareness of cooperation benefits. Employer engagement remains uneven and often project-based.	Priority improvements include developing structured WBL systems with clear roles and responsibilities, formalising employer participation in curriculum design, strengthening intermediary structures, improving coordination



	engagement, the level of cooperation varies across sectors and regions.		mechanisms, and using digital tools for labour market intelligence
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Dimension 3: Inclusive VET Pathways & Support for Vulnerable Students

Country	Q1: Which learner groups face the greatest difficulties in accessing, participating in, or completing VET programmes?	Q2: What support measures for vulnerable learners currently exist within VET institutions or through external services?	Q3: How could the Governance Framework help improve inclusion and learner support in your context?
Armenia	Key groups facing barriers include rural learners, persons with disabilities, low-income students, and vulnerable populations affected by social or economic conditions. Barriers relate to infrastructure, accessibility, financial constraints and gaps in prior education.	Support measures include state-funded scholarships, financial assistance, inclusive education initiatives, individual learning plans, and some cooperation with social services. However, support systems remain partially developed and not fully standardised.	Improvements should focus on establishing clear national standards for inclusion, strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring sustainable funding, expanding specialised support services, and enhancing coordination with external stakeholders.
Georgia	Vulnerable groups include rural and low-income learners, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women in certain sectors and students in remote areas. Regional disparities significantly affect access and participation.	Existing measures include state-funded programmes, career guidance, psychosocial support, inclusive policies, bilingual materials and project-based initiatives. However, implementation remains uneven.	Key priorities include strengthening governance and coordination mechanisms, improving data monitoring systems, clarifying institutional responsibilities, ensuring dedicated funding, and scaling up successful pilot initiatives.

Dimension 4: Policy Coordination & Multi-Stakeholder Governance

Country	Q1: How is policy coordination in VET currently ensured across institutions and stakeholders in your country?	Q2: What coordination or governance challenges most affect the effectiveness of VET policies and reforms?	Q3: Which proposed governance mechanisms could most realistically improve coordination and stakeholder participation?
Armenia	Policy coordination is led by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, with the involvement of the National Centre for	Challenges include limited cross-sector coordination, overlapping responsibilities, weak stakeholder engagement, insufficient institutional	Key improvements include establishing permanent coordination structures, strengthening stakeholder engagement, improving institutional capacity, and



	Vocational Education and Training Development (NCVETD), the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA), and other stakeholders. Coordination mechanisms exist but are not always systematic.	capacity and limited use of data for decision-making.	developing integrated digital monitoring systems.
Georgia	Policy coordination is ensured through a centralised system led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth and supported by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), with involvement of vocational education and training (VET) providers and sectoral stakeholders.	Main challenges include fragmentation, inconsistent stakeholder participation, regional coordination gaps, weak employer engagement and limited use of data.	Priority improvements include strengthening multi-level coordination platforms, formalising stakeholder participation, improving digital monitoring systems, enhancing regional coordination, and clarifying institutional roles.

Positive long-term implication for the VET Systems

The Governance Framework developed under the VET Caucasus project is expected to generate **positive long-term effects** across the VET systems of Armenia and Georgia by strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination among stakeholders and supporting more inclusive and labour market-oriented training pathways. Its impact can be observed across different levels of the VET ecosystem.

At **staff level**, the framework contributes to clearer roles, responsibilities and working procedures for VET professionals, administrators and support staff. The introduction of structured quality assurance processes, cooperation mechanisms and inclusion-oriented practices enhances professional competencies, supports more consistent decision-making and fosters a shared understanding of quality, inclusion and labour market relevance.

At **institutional and organisational level**, VET providers benefit from clearer governance structures and operational guidance. The framework supports institutions in improving programme quality, strengthening cooperation with employers and social services and embedding inclusive approaches into their organisational practices. Over time, this leads to more responsive institutions, stronger external partnerships and improved learner outcomes, including higher completion and employability rates.

At **system level**, the framework provides a coherent reference for policymakers and national authorities to align regulations, standards and implementation practices. By reducing fragmentation between policy, institutional practice and labour market needs, it supports more transparent governance, improved monitoring of system performance and stronger convergence with European approaches to VET quality assurance, stakeholder engagement and inclusion.

For the **private sector**, the framework creates more structured and predictable opportunities for engagement with VET institutions. Employers benefit from clearer cooperation models, improved work-based learning arrangements and training provision that is better aligned with labour market needs. This contributes to a more skilled workforce and reduces mismatches between training outcomes and employment demand.

For **civil society and social organisations**, the framework strengthens their role within the VET ecosystem by formalising cooperation mechanisms related to inclusion and learner support. This enables more coordinated responses to social and economic vulnerability and supports the integration of disadvantaged learners into education and employment pathways.

Dimension 1: Accreditation & Quality Assurance Framework

Accreditation and quality assurance constitute the backbone of a modern and credible VET system. In Armenia and Georgia, ongoing reforms highlight the need for the greater alignment with European quality standards, clearer institutional expectations and more transparent mechanisms to assess and improve VET provision. This dimension of the Governance Framework addresses precisely these requirements through the definition of structured, coherent and evidence-based processes that ensure VET institutions operate effectively, deliver relevant training and demonstrate continuous improvement.

Thanks to the establishment of harmonised criteria, transparent evaluation procedures and mechanisms for stakeholder participation in quality assessment, this dimension strengthens institutional accountability and system-wide trust. It also supports the alignment of national VET systems with EU frameworks such as EQAVET and the EQF, reinforcing compatibility with European good practices. Importantly, the dimension ensures that accreditation is not a bureaucratic exercise but a strategic lever for innovation, labour market relevance and learner success.

Features	1.Accreditation Standards & Compliance Procedures	2.External Evaluation & Quality Improvement	3.Stakeholder Participation in Quality Assurance
Description	Establishes clear, harmonised accreditation criteria aligned with national and EU standards; defines compliance requirements, indicators and institutional obligations	Introduces structured external evaluation cycles, performance audits and continuous improvement plans based on evidence and feedback	Ensures employers, job centres, social organisations and learners contribute to defining quality standards and participating in evaluation processes
Benefits	Provides transparency, comparability and credibility across VET providers; reduces fragmentation and strengthens accountability	Strengthens quality culture, ensures systematic improvement and aligns training provision with evolving labour market demands	Enhances legitimacy, relevance and inclusiveness of quality assurance mechanisms; ensures the system reflects multiple perspectives

Stakeholders' engagement	Ministries, national VET agencies, accreditation bodies define standards and compliance rules	External evaluators, national QA agencies, VET institutions and experts conduct assessments and improvement cycles	Employers, job centres, civil society actors and learners participate in reviews, feedback processes and advisory structures
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Dimension 2: VET-Labour Market Cooperation & Employer Engagement

Effective cooperation between VET providers and labour market actors is essential for ensuring that vocational education equips learners with the skills demanded by employers and supports successful transitions into employment. In Armenia and Georgia, gaps in employer engagement, limited coordination between VET institutions and job centres and the absence of structured collaboration models reduce the responsiveness of the VET system to labour market needs.

This dimension of the Governance Framework establishes the mechanisms, partnership structures and incentives needed to strengthen VET-labour market cooperation. It formalises employer participation in curriculum development, expands opportunities for work-based learning and promotes joint planning with employment services and social organisations. Thanks to the embedment of the labour market engagement into governance processes, the framework enhances training relevance, improves employment outcomes and supports inclusive economic development.

Features	1. Structured Employer Engagement Models	2. Work-Based Learning & On-the-Job Training Mechanisms	3. Cooperation with Job Centres & Social Services
Description	Defines formal cooperation models with employers for curriculum development, occupational standards, and training relevance	Establishes structured systems for internships, apprenticeships, and enterprise-based training with clear roles and responsibilities	Creates integrated pathways linking VET institutions with job centres and social services to support learner transitions, especially for vulnerable groups

Benefits	Ensures alignment of training with labour market needs and improves relevance of VET programmes	Enhances employability, provides real-world experience, and supports smoother school-to-work transitions	Strengthens coordinated support, reduces fragmentation, and improves employment outcomes for all learners
Stakeholders' engagement	Employers, sector associations, chambers of commerce, VET providers, and policymakers	Enterprises, mentors, VET trainers, national VET agencies, and labour market actors	Job centres, employment counsellors, social workers, NGOs, VET institutions, and ministries

Dimension 3: Inclusive VET Pathways & Support for Vulnerable Students

The inclusiveness of a VET system is a key indicator of its capacity to contribute to social cohesion, equity and sustainable economic participation. In Armenia and Georgia, vulnerable learners (including low-income youth, learners with disabilities, rural populations and individuals facing social or economic barriers) often encounter obstacles in accessing, progressing through and completing vocational training. These challenges stem from limited support structures, insufficient coordination between VET institutions and social services and the absence of systematic mechanisms to identify and respond to learner's needs.

This dimension of the Governance Framework provides a structured approach to ensure that VET pathways become more accessible, equitable and responsive. It introduces tools for early identification of learner needs, defines support mechanisms within and beyond VET institutions and strengthens cooperation with social actors. Embedding inclusion into governance processes means that the framework ensures that vulnerable learners are not only able to access VET programmes but also receive the necessary support to succeed and transition into the labour market.

Features	1. Early Identification & Outreach	2. Individualised Learner Support & Guidance	3. Integrated Support Pathways with Social Services
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Description	Establishes procedures to identify vulnerable learners early, using screening tools, referrals, and proactive outreach	Defines tailored support mechanisms such as counselling, mentoring, academic assistance, and career guidance	Coordinates VET institutions with social services, NGOs, and local support structures to assist learners with complex needs
Benefits	Prevents exclusion at entry point, reduces dropout risks, and ensures equitable access to VET programmes	Enhances learner retention, well-being, and performance; supports successful completion of training	Addresses multi-dimensional barriers (social, economic, psychological) that affect learner participation and labour market transition
Stakeholders' engagement	VET providers, community organisations, schools, local authorities, employment offices	Counsellors, mentors, teachers, career advisors, peer supporters	Social workers, NGOs, employment services, municipal authorities, VET institutions

Dimension 4: Policy Coordination & Multi-Stakeholder Governance

Effective VET governance requires more than strong institutions: it depends on coordinated action across ministries, agencies, VET providers, job centres and social organisations. In Armenia and Georgia, the fragmentation of responsibilities and the absence of consistent coordination mechanisms limit the coherence and impact of CET reforms. Policy decisions often operate in parallel rather than in synergy and stakeholder engagement may remain ad hoc rather than institutionalised. This undermines the system's ability to respond to labour market changes, ensure quality and support diverse learner needs.

This dimension of the Governance Framework established structured, transparent and sustainable governance mechanisms that promote joint decision-making, shared accountability and continuous communication across all relevant actors. Through the definition of coordination structures, roles and processes, it strengthens policy coherence, reduces duplication of efforts and ensures that reforms are consistently implemented. The dimension also formalises stakeholder involvement, ensuring that employers, social partners and civil society contribute meaningfully to governance processes.

Features	1. Multi-Level Coordination Structures	2. Roles, Decision-Making & Accountability	3. Institutionalised Stakeholder Participation & Dialogue
Description	Establishes formal governance bodies and coordination platforms connecting ministries, VET agencies, providers, and labour market actors	Defines roles, mandates, workflows, and reporting lines across institutions to ensure coherent implementation of VET policies	Creates structured, recurrent mechanisms for employers, social partners, NGOs, and learners to contribute to policy development and governance decisions
Benefits	Reduces fragmentation, strengthens policy coherence, and ensures continuity across national, regional, and institutional levels	Reduces fragmentation, strengthens policy coherence, and ensures continuity across national, regional, and institutional levels	Improves legitimacy, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of VET policies; ensures decisions reflect diverse perspectives
Stakeholders' engagement	Ministries, national VET centres/agencies, regional authorities, VET providers, employment services	Governance bodies, institutional leaders, QA units, policymakers, regulatory authorities	Employers, chambers, unions, social organisations, NGOs, learner representatives, community actors

Conclusion and Summary Table

The Governance Framework developed for the VET Caucasus project provides a coherent, sustainable and EU-aligned foundation for strengthening vocational education in Armenia and Georgia.

Through the integration of structured accreditation mechanisms, robust cooperation models with employers and labour market institutions, inclusive pathways for vulnerable learners and transparent multi-level governance processes, the framework addresses long-standing gaps in coordination, quality assurance and labour market responsiveness.

Its participatory design ensures ownership among national authorities, VET providers, enterprises and social organisations, promoting a shared commitment to system transformation. As a long-term reference tool, it supports policy alignment, institutional capacity-building and continuous improvement enabling VET systems to evolve in response to economic and social demands.

The framework also contributes to more relevant, inclusive and resilient VET ecosystems, fostering better employment outcomes for learners and strengthening the overall contribution of VET to national development and regional convergence with EU standards.

The table in the below provides a consolidated overview of the Governance Framework, summarising the four dimensions and their core features. It is intended as a quick-reference tool to support understanding of the framework's structure, internal coherence and practical implementation logic.

Dimensions	Accreditation & Quality Assurance Framework	VET-Labour Market Cooperation & Employer Engagement	Inclusive VET Pathways & Support for Vulnerable Students	Policy Coordination & Multi-Stakeholder Governance
Feature 1	Accreditation Standards & Compliance Procedures	Structured Employer Engagement Models	Early Identification & Outreach	Multi-Level Coordination Structures
Feature 2	External Evaluation & Quality Improvement	Work-Based Learning & On-the-Job Training Mechanisms	Individualised Learner Support & Guidance	Roles, Decision-Making & Accountability
Feature 3	Stakeholder Participation in Quality Assurance	Cooperation with Job Centres & Social Services	Integrated Support Pathways with Social Services	Institutionalised Stakeholder Participation & Dialogue

Annex

This Annex collects qualitative inputs from Armenian and Georgian partners to contextualise, validate and enrich the Governance Framework developed under the VET Caucasus project.

Partners are invited to reflect on the four governance dimensions presented in the Framework, based on their national and institutional experience.

The Annex is intended as a light, reflective contribution, not as a technical or statistical report.

Instructions for Partners

- Please answer all questions
- You may use bullet points or short paragraphs
- The total length of your contribution must not exceed 3,000 characters (including spaces)

Dimensions

Dimension 1:

Accreditation & Quality Assurance Framework

1. How are accreditation and quality assurance currently organised in your VET system? Please briefly describe existing structures, procedures or responsible institutions.
2. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the current accreditation and quality assurance practices? Consider consistency, transparency, institutional capacity and stakeholder involvement.
3. Which elements of this dimension of the Governance Framework are most relevant or challenging for your context? Please explain briefly.

Answers:

A M	YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS	The quality of VET in Armenia is ensured through a combination of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia defines policies, strategic directions, and overall standards for the sector. External quality assurance is primarily carried out by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA), which is responsible for institutional and programme accreditation, as well as for organising external evaluation processes involving expert panels. At institutional level, VET providers have established internal quality assurance systems. These include self-assessment procedures, regular monitoring of teaching and learning processes, systematic collection of feedback from students and stakeholders, and continuous improvement of educational programmes. The interaction between these two levels contributes to maintaining and progressively improving the overall quality of VET.
		Strengths: The system benefits from a centralised framework, which ensures a degree of consistency in standards and procedures. It is aligned with European quality assurance principles, and the presence of a dedicated QA agency (ANQA) supports the institutionalisation of quality processes. There is also a gradual integration of learning outcomes and qualifications frameworks into accreditation procedures.
		Weaknesses: Stakeholder engagement, particularly from employers and industry, remains limited and not yet systematic. There are also constraints related to human and financial resources, which affect the depth and frequency of evaluations. In addition, QA processes are often perceived as compliance-oriented rather than improvement-driven.



		The most relevant and at the same time most challenging elements in this dimension include: • Development of a strong quality assurance culture focused on continuous improvement • Active involvement of employers and labour market actors in evaluation and curriculum development • Strengthening institutional capacity and staff training • Better alignment between quality assurance processes and learning outcomes
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A M	ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS	In Armenia, quality assurance in VET is mainly coordinated by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development, while the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is responsible for policy development. At institutional level, the college has a dedicated quality assurance specialist who conducts continuous monitoring across all stakeholder groups. The results of this monitoring are used to improve teaching and learning processes. At the end of each academic year, a comprehensive evaluation is carried out. The institution is also planning to apply for institutional accreditation in the near future.
		Strengths: As a structural unit of the university, the college benefits from additional support from the university's quality assurance staff. This includes assistance in monitoring, questionnaire design, programme improvement and implementation of quality enhancement activities. The institution also maintains active collaboration with partners, including agreements for practical training opportunities, and benefits from contributions of external experts who deliver master classes and share practical knowledge with students.
		Weaknesses: Challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, insufficient teacher capacity in using digital tools for teaching, and limited English language proficiency among staff.
		The most relevant and challenging elements in this dimension are quality assurance and alignment with labour market needs.

G		In Georgia, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is the main body responsible for the authorization process,
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E	BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY LLC	ensuring that institutions meet the standards required to issue state-recognised diplomas.
		While vocational colleges must obtain this status, higher education institutions such as BTU can deliver vocational programmes (levels 3-5) without additional authorization. Quality is structured around the National Qualifications Framework, which is currently being aligned with the European Qualifications Framework to ensure international compatibility.
		Strengths: The system promotes transparency and objectivity through decentralised enrolment procedures and mandatory disclosure of programme content, employment prospects and financing. Weaknesses: There is potential inconsistency in the regulatory framework, as selection rules vary across programme levels and work-based models.
		Key challenges include managing work-based learning, particularly where a significant share of learning outcomes is achieved in real work environments, as well as integrating general education into vocational tracks. The transition towards digital models for staff development and the adoption of innovative technologies also represent important governance challenges.

G E	CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE CONSTRUCT 2	In Georgia, accreditation and quality assurance in VET are organised through a combination of external state-regulated mechanisms and internal institutional processes, aligned with European principles. The National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is the central authority responsible for external QA across all education levels, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth. External QA includes institutional authorization, programme approval, monitoring processes, and evaluation based on self-assessment reports and site visits. Internal QA is implemented by VET providers and includes continuous self-evaluation, stakeholder involvement and improvement cycles.
		The system's main strength is its centralised and coherent structure, ensuring consistency in standards and procedures. The use of predefined criteria, self-assessment reports and external evaluations supports transparency. However, institutional capacity remains uneven, particularly in smaller or regional institutions. Internal QA systems are sometimes formalistic rather than improvement oriented. Inconsistencies in interpretation of standards

		and limited stakeholder engagement, especially from employers, also represent key challenges.
		The most relevant and challenging elements include institutional capacity, practical implementation of standards and stakeholder engagement, particularly at regional level.
		In regions such as Imereti, implementation remains uneven due to limited resources and experience. Translating formal QA requirements into practice-oriented training environments requires significant investment and continuous support.
		Employer engagement is often project-based rather than institutionalised, limiting the responsiveness of programmes to labour market needs. However, initiatives such as Construct2 demonstrate that stronger stakeholder involvement improves training relevance and quality.

Dimension 2:

VET-Labour Market Cooperation & Employer Engagement

1. How do VET institutions currently cooperate with employers and labour market actors in your country? (e.g. curriculum design, internships, apprenticeships, assessment).
2. What are the main barriers to stronger employer engagement in VET? (e.g. incentives, capacity, coordination, awareness).
3. Which aspects of the proposed cooperation models would be most useful to strengthen labour market alignment? Please refer to your national or institutional perspective.

Answers:

A M	YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS	Cooperation between VET institutions and employers is generally limited and often depends on individual institutional initiatives rather than a fully institutionalised system. Employer participation in assessment processes occurs occasionally, mainly through involvement in final qualification exams or ad hoc evaluation panels. A key issue remains the relatively low level of trust of employers towards VET institutions.
		The main barriers include the lack of financial and regulatory incentives for employers to engage in VET, as well as limited capacity within companies to train students effectively. Employers may also have low awareness of the benefits of cooperation, while institutions may lack experience in building structured partnerships. In addition, procedures for organising apprenticeships or work-based learning are often perceived as unclear and burdensome.
		The most useful elements include expanding dual education and apprenticeship systems with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, introducing incentive mechanisms for employers, providing training for

	both institutional staff and company mentors, and establishing national platforms or intermediary bodies to support long-term cooperation.
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A M	ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS	In Armenia, VET institutions cooperate with employers and labour market actors in several ways. Employers contribute to curriculum design by providing input on the relevance of course content, ensuring alignment with current workplace requirements.
		They also support students through scholarship programmes, offering partial or full financial assistance based on academic performance and potential. Practical training is provided through internships in companies, while employers often participate in final assessments, particularly for evaluating practical skills.
		In some cases, high-performing students are employed on a part-time basis before completing their studies, although this remains relatively limited.
		The main challenges are related to the lack of incentive mechanisms for employers and the generally low level of employer social responsibility. Employers often prefer to hire experienced workers, as college-age students may face difficulties in adapting to workplace conditions.
		The most relevant elements include the expansion of work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships, internships and practical training, as well as stronger cooperation with employers to integrate digital skills and innovation into training programmes.

G E	BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY LLC	In Georgia, cooperation between VET institutions and employers mainly takes place through work-based learning, internships, apprenticeship schemes, employer input in curriculum updates, and participation in sectoral discussions. However, the level of engagement varies depending on the sector and institution. Recent national reforms increasingly promote employer partnerships as a key component of stronger school-to-work pathways and improved labour market relevance.
		The main barriers include limited incentives for employers, weak coordination mechanisms, low awareness of the benefits of cooperation, and the still-developing capacity of institutions to manage structured partnerships. Skills mismatch and relatively low participation in internships and training pathways also indicate that employer engagement is not yet systematic across the country.
		The most useful elements include formalising employer involvement in curriculum co-design, strengthening apprenticeship and mobility models, establishing regular labour market feedback loops, and introducing digital tools for skills intelligence and graduate tracking.

G E	CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE CONSTRUCT 2	In Georgia, cooperation between VET institutions and employers has improved in recent years, although it remains uneven across sectors and regions. Under the national policy framework, employer engagement is promoted in curriculum design, work-based learning and participation in assessments. In regions such as Imereti, and within initiatives like Construct2, cooperation is often practical and hands-on, with companies providing internship placements and occasionally contributing directly to training delivery.
		Despite progress, several barriers limit deeper and more sustainable cooperation. These include the lack of incentives for employers, limited capacity of SMEs to train and mentor students, and weak coordination mechanisms at sectoral and regional levels. In addition, awareness and trust issues persist, while VET institutions may lack the capacity to manage employer relations strategically.
		The most relevant improvements include developing more structured work-based learning models with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, introducing incentive mechanisms for employers, strengthening intermediary structures (such as sector skills organisations), and providing capacity building for both VET staff and company mentors. Greater involvement of employers in assessment and quality assurance processes would further enhance labour market alignment.

Dimension 3: Inclusive VET Pathways & Support for Vulnerable Students	1. Which learner groups face the greatest difficulties in accessing, participating in, or completing VET programmes? (e.g. socio-economic, geographic, educational or social barriers). 2. What support measures for vulnerable learners currently exist within VET institutions or through external services? 3. How could the Governance Framework help improve inclusion and learner support in your context? Please focus on governance, coordination or institutional aspects.
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Answers:

A M	YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS	Several learner groups face difficulties in accessing and completing VET programmes. These include young people in rural and remote areas, where limited infrastructure and transport reduce access to institutions. Persons with disabilities also face barriers due to limited physical accessibility and lack of adapted learning materials, both in educational settings and in workplace training environments. Displaced populations
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		and vulnerable social groups, including those affected by conflict or migration, may encounter additional integration challenges.
		Existing support measures include state-funded scholarships and financial support schemes, which help reduce economic barriers. Inclusive education initiatives, often supported by donor-funded projects, provide some adaptations for learners with disabilities. In addition, cooperation with social services allows for the provision of psychosocial or material support in specific cases.
		Improvements could include establishing unified national standards and clear institutional responsibilities for inclusive VET provision, ensuring stable and targeted funding for inclusion measures, and strengthening staff capacity through training on inclusive education and differentiated teaching approaches.

A M	ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS	Key barriers include socio-economic challenges, particularly for students from low-income families who face difficulties covering transport, accommodation and living costs. Educational barriers also exist for students with lower prior attainment or gaps in basic skills, making it more difficult to complete VET programmes successfully.
		The institution provides financial support in the form of full or partial assistance based on individual needs. For learners with disabilities or special educational needs, individual learning plans are developed and teachers receive training in inclusive teaching and assessment methodologies. In addition, tuition fees for socially vulnerable groups are reimbursed by the state.
		Further improvements could include expanding institutional staffing to include specialised support professionals and strengthening collaboration with external stakeholders such as the Ministry of Labour, NGOs and disability advocacy organisations.

G E	BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY LLC	In Georgia, the main groups facing barriers include rural learners, low-income youth, ethnic minorities, learners with disabilities, and students in remote mountainous regions.
		Support measures include career guidance services, psychosocial support, inclusive education initiatives, bilingual learning materials, and public employment services. Additional support is provided through targeted outreach and EU-funded initiatives, which contribute to improving access to VET pathways.
		A stronger governance framework could improve inclusion by clarifying institutional responsibilities, strengthening data-based monitoring of

	participation and dropout rates, and improving coordination between VET providers, social services and local authorities.
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G E	CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE CONSTRUCT 2	Several groups face barriers, including low-income youth, rural learners, early school leavers, women in traditionally male-dominated sectors, and persons with disabilities. In regions such as Imereti, limited infrastructure and economic constraints further affect access and participation.
		Support measures include state-funded programmes, basic student services, targeted social support, inclusive education policies, and project-based initiatives such as Construct2, which provide tailored support and mentoring.
		Key improvements include strengthening coordination between education and social services, defining clear institutional responsibilities for inclusion, ensuring dedicated funding, improving data monitoring systems, and building institutional capacity to support diverse learner groups. Scaling up successful pilot practices into national systems is also essential.

Dimension 4: Policy Coordination & Multi-Stakeholder Governance	1. How is policy coordination in VET currently ensured across institutions and stakeholders in your country? (e.g. ministries, agencies, VET providers, employers, social partners). 2. What coordination or governance challenges most affect the effectiveness of VET policies and reforms? 3. Which proposed governance mechanisms could most realistically improve coordination and stakeholder participation? Please explain briefly.
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Answers:

A M	YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS	Policy coordination is led by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, with contributions from other ministries and stakeholders.
		Coordination mechanisms include collaboration with VET providers, employers, trade unions and other actors through formal and semi-formal structures.
		Key challenges include limited systematic collaboration across sectors, irregular stakeholder engagement, overlapping responsibilities between institutions, and insufficient use of labour market data for decision-making.



		Improvements could include establishing a permanent coordination body and developing integrated data systems linking education and labour market information.
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A M	ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS	Policy coordination involves the Ministry, the National Centre for VET Development, and ANQA, each responsible for policy, implementation and quality assurance respectively.
		Challenges include limited coordination between stakeholders, insufficient institutional capacity, slow feedback loops, and resource constraints.
		Suggested improvements include staff training in governance and stakeholder engagement, and the development of a unified digital monitoring platform.

G E	BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY LLC	Coordination is ensured through the Ministry, NCEQE, VET providers and sectoral stakeholders, supported by national strategies.
		Challenges include limited stakeholder participation, weak use of data, regional disparities and inconsistent employer engagement.
		Key improvements include multi-stakeholder platforms, regular consultation cycles, digital monitoring systems and clearer quality indicators.

G E	CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE CONSTRUCT 2	Coordination is based on a centralised system led by the Ministry and supported by NCEQE, with additional mechanisms such as sector skills organisations and project-based cooperation.
		Challenges include fragmentation, weak institutionalised employer engagement, limited regional coordination and capacity constraints.
		Key improvements include strengthening sector organisations, creating regional coordination platforms, formalising employer involvement, developing digital systems and clarifying institutional roles.

Cross-country synthesis of partner inputs

Area	Armenia – common elements	Georgia – common elements
Accreditation & QA system	Centralised QA system with strong role of national bodies (ANQA, NCVETD); combination of external and internal QA; processes still perceived as compliance-driven	Centralised QA system led by NCEQE; alignment with European frameworks (EQF/EQAVET); structured but with variability in implementation
Main QA challenges	Limited stakeholder (especially employer) involvement; resource constraints; need to shift from compliance to improvement-oriented QA	Uneven institutional capacity; inconsistencies in implementation; limited systematic employer engagement; challenges in applying QA in practice-oriented environments
Employer engagement in VET	Generally weak and not systematic; often based on individual initiatives; low trust from employers	Improving but still uneven; often project-based or sector-dependent; stronger in some sectors (e.g. construction)
Barriers to cooperation with employers	Lack of incentives; low employer awareness and engagement; limited institutional capacity to manage partnerships; unclear WBL procedures	Lack of incentives; limited capacity of SMEs; weak coordination mechanisms; trust and awareness issues; regional disparities
Priority improvements for labour market alignment	Expansion of dual education and apprenticeships; clearer cooperation frameworks; incentives for employers; capacity building for institutions and companies	More structured WBL systems; formalisation of employer roles; stronger intermediary structures (e.g. sector organisations); improved coordination and feedback mechanisms
Inclusion challenges	Barriers for rural learners, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups; limited systematisation of inclusion measures	Barriers for rural and low-income learners, minorities, women in some sectors and persons with disabilities; regional inequalities
Support measures for learners	Scholarships and financial support; donor-supported inclusion initiatives; limited but growing cooperation with social services	State-funded programmes; student services; inclusive policies; project-based support initiatives; broader but still uneven support system
Governance & coordination	Centralised system with multiple actors; coordination exists but is often fragmented; overlapping roles and weak data systems	Centralised governance with multi-level coordination; combination of formal structures and project-based cooperation; regional coordination gaps



Key governance challenges	Limited cross-sector coordination; unclear division of responsibilities; weak data-driven decision-making	Fragmentation between actors; weak institutionalised employer engagement; limited regional coordination capacity; inconsistent stakeholder communication
Priority governance improvements	Establishment of coordination bodies; development of integrated data systems; strengthening institutional capacity and stakeholder engagement	Strengthening sector and regional coordination platforms; formalising employer involvement; improving digital monitoring systems; clarifying institutional roles

The inputs collected through this Annex will be used to:

- Validate the Governance Framework against national realities
- Highlight contextual similarities and differences between Armenia and Georgia
- Support implementation discussions and future policy dialogue