



Twinning Fiche

Project title: Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications

Beneficiary administration: National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement

Twinning Reference: GE 17 ENI OT 01 18

Publication notice reference: **EuropeAid/161-945/ACT/GE**

EU funded project

TWINNING INSTRUMENT

List of Abbreviation

AA	Association Agreement
EFQM	European Framework for Quality Management
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
HEIs	Higher Educational Institutions
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MCA-G	Millennium Challenge Account Georgia
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
MS	Member State
NCEQE	National Centre for Educational Quality enhancement
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PAO	Programme Administration Office
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PL	Project Leader
QA	Quality Assurance
RTA	Resident Twinning Adviser
STE	Short term Expert
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. Basic Information

1.1 **Programme:** Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs – Financing Decision CRIS Number: ENI/2017/040-319 - direct management.

“For applicants from the United Kingdom: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 12.2 of of the General Conditions¹ to the grant agreement.”

1.2 **Twinning Sector:** Other issues

1.3 **EU funded budget:** 1.500,000 EUR

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to human capital development by improving quality assurance, transparency and governance of skills and qualifications in a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective.

2.2 Specific objective:

To support the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) and partners², to implement and monitor the reformed quality assurance framework of education, and the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) through improved institutional capacities, effective instruments and procedures, participative governance, and delivery of relevant information for stakeholders and the population.

2.3 The elements targeted in strategic documents i.e. National Development Plan/Cooperation agreement/Association Agreement/Sector reform strategy and related Action Plans

Georgia aspires to closer integration with the EU, in line with the **Association Agreement** (AA) (signed in 2014, entered into force from 1 July 2016). The proposed Twinning project is fully in line with the Association Agreement. According to Title VI chapter 16, Georgia and the EU shall cooperate in the field of education and training to intensify dialogue and seeking approximation to relevant EU policies and practices. Georgia and the EU shall cooperate to promote lifelong learning, encourage cooperation and transparency at all levels of education and training, with a special focus on higher education. Georgia will conduct and develop policy consistent with the framework of EU policies and practices in accordance with the provisions of Annex XXXII: L 261/609 of the AA, which explicitly mentions the Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01) and to EU Recommendations on education quality assurance - higher education and vocational education and training (VET). For the full updated list of EU policies and *Union acquis* refer to 3.4 and to Annex 4 of this Twinning Fiche.

Quality of education and cooperation for transparency of qualifications are specific items in Article 359 of the AA, which refers to enhancement of quality of all levels of education, and to promoting progress towards recognition of qualifications and competences and ensuring transparency in the area of recognition of qualifications.

The issues targeted by the project also reflect priority directions described both in the **Social-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia 2020** and the **Government Platform 2016-2020**. Education and economic growth are priorities in the Georgia 2020 Strategy that identifies “enhancing skills” as one of the

¹ Twinning Manual Annex A2

² Institutional and partners important for the effective implementation of this projects are listed in section 3.1.

three overarching goals of the country's socio-economic development. The new **Government Programme 2018-2020** comprises the overhaul of the education system and specifically emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning (LLL) principles in all levels of education, It underlines importance of quality assurance and system of national qualifications functioning in accordance with European approaches, which 'will facilitate the establishment of a continuous education system, mobility of students and persons employed in the education system; the education system will be focused on quality, accessibility and inclusion'³.

The **Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021** strategic priorities of education in the mentioned documents include such topics, as ensuring compliance of the education programs with current and future skills and qualifications requirements of the labor market; wider access to pre-school education; improvement of the quality and access of education at all levels, vocational training linked to employment, the relation of higher education, science, technologies and innovations with sustainable development of the economy.

The establishment and further development of the **National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)** since 2010 represented an important pillar of the education reforms carried out in Georgia to improve credibility and quality of education and training, and compatibility with developments in the European Higher Education Area. In parallel Georgia learned from policy developments taking place within the frame of EU cooperation in VET, and actively participated in the Torino process of regular policy review facilitated by the European Training Foundation (ETF)⁴.

NCEQE's Strategy Document 2016-2020 sets the vision that education acquired in Georgia should fully comply with national and international requirements and NCEQE should be a leading institution in the field of quality assurance and improvement, be highly reliable and trusted at national and international levels. More information in 3.1 of this Twinning fiche.

The new **VET Law** modernises the understanding of VET and widens the scope of VET policy. To this end the new VET Law gives a new impetus to non-formal and informal learning, and emphasises the role of the reformed NQF as a policy instrument to support solutions to long-standing obstacles to permeability and progression between VET and higher education, and to recognition of diverse types of qualifications. This Law is a major policy fundament for this proposed Twinning project, which can contribute to consolidate approaches and share good practice related to these novelties of the Law.

3. Description

3.1 Background and Justification:

Background

NCEQE has been established as a legal entity of public law by Ministerial order Nr 89/5 of 14/09/2010 to support the promotion of educational quality assurance and improvement, and has independent management of its functional organisation, staffing and human resource development, budget. NCEQE performs its activities on the principles of transparency and publicity. NCEQE's activities can be grouped in three main components: a) quality assurance of educational programmes and institutions; b) support to quality improvement to educational institutions via information and advice; c) qualifications development and improvement. Besides, NCEQE hosts the Georgian ENIC-NARIC Centre and recognises foreign qualifications. Supervision over the activities of the NCEQE is administered by the Ministry in accordance with the procedure, envisaged by Law of Georgia on Legal Entities of Public Law. Since 2013 NCEQE has the status of affiliated member European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)⁵. Detailed presentation of NCEQE's organisational structure, functional set-up and staffing are provided in chapter 5.2 of this Twinning fiche and in its Annexes 2 and 3. NCEQE's organisational structure is presented at: <http://eqe.ge/eng/structure>

NCEQE's Strategy Document 2016-2020 takes account of lessons from the activities carried out in 2013-2016 and responds to international experts' reviews, notably those conducted in the framework of the

³ Section 4. Education and Youth, Government Programme 2018-2020

⁴ Cooperation in the framework of the Bologna process; acquisition of membership status of the ENQA; cooperation with EQF in the framework of the revised EQF Council Recommendation of 22/May/2017; learning from EQAVET experience

⁵ ENQA: <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/enqa-agencies/affiliates/>

Centre's application for full membership of the ENQA, as well as in the framework of cooperation with European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM)⁶. This Strategy defines key strategic landmarks for organisational development, indispensable to respond to challenges, raise effectiveness, service quality, customer satisfaction, sustainability and reliability as an institution. NCEQE's Strategy Document pursues the following aims:

1. Improve organisational management systems and build capacity of NCEQE, strengthen its institutional independence according to state policy, government priorities and international standards
2. Develop outcomes-oriented quality assurance system for educational institutions and programmes and improve relevant services.
3. Improve services to support educational institutions.
4. Implement the principle of LLL in qualification system, using best international practice to optimise and improve education recognition services.
5. Raise awareness about Georgia in the European Higher Education Area, support internationalisation of education.

The renewed reforms of the Georgian **education quality assurance (QA)** mechanisms and procedures, with the first accreditation processes and renewed authorisation procedures in application since end 2017 respond to the objectives set in NCEQE's Strategy Document 2016-2020. NCEQE prepares the new rules and procedures, and is responsible for the adequate implementation of accreditation and authorisation processes with participation of the relevant actors (experts' teams and decision-making Councils). But effective implementation of the new and revised procedures is challenging, as it requires enhanced capacity at NCEQE, efficient procedures, improved information and support documentation (handbooks and methodological support) for the stakeholders and practitioners; and establishment of monitoring instruments to gather feedback and data necessary for review and recalibration of the new QA mechanisms.

In addition, the 2010 **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**⁷ is undergoing a substantial reform in conceptual and structural terms. In 2018 the legislator is expected to adopt the NQF-related amendments to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education*⁸. NCEQE management recognises that implementation of the revised NQF legislation will require effective planning of key steps; coherence and coordination with the QA reforms; as well as improved capacity at NCEQE (human resources, instruments, and information) to ascertain that the NQF stimulates transparency of qualifications, permeability and the necessary interaction between qualifications and the world of work (demand for skills and qualifications).

Governance of the Georgian educational QA system is mainly under the responsibility of NCEQE for development of legislative proposals, standards, rules and procedures, management of experts' corps. The authorisation and accreditation councils play an important role in decision making in the respective fields. Universities and VET colleges have personnel dedicated to quality assurance. MoESCS is the policy-making body, adopts ministerial orders and supervises NCEQE.

The **governance of the NQF**, as a key policy instrument for transparency of qualifications and facilitation of recognition and mobility, is a matter for further debate and development, in which the proposed Twinning project is expected to provide substantial contribution. The new phase of the Georgian NQF opens new opportunities to include qualifications of different types beyond those from formal education, to promote closer links between education and the market demands, and to be better used by all stakeholders groups. These perspectives will require more participative governance and decision-making, and more active dissemination and information among stakeholders.

NCEQE coordinates the activity of the **Sector Councils**, which are entrusted with the role to critically assess new occupational standards qualifications and issue recommendations for final decision by NCEQE director. They are supposed to play an important role in the qualifications development chain. These Councils are inter-stakeholder groups, representing social partners and education providers. The future legal status and sustainability of these Sector Councils, and the ways to strengthen their real capacity are yet to be decided.

NCEQE's departments and divisions highly important in the context of this proposed project are listed in Annex 3. Other Georgian Institutions and partners relevant for this Twinning project are listed in Annex 3.

⁶ <http://www.efqm.org/>

⁷ The key legal acts of the NQF 2010, now being reformed, are accessible at: <http://eqe.ge/eng/static/125/education-system/national-qualifications-framework>

⁸ The new VET Law available at: <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7751&lang=eng>

This Twinning project will thus facilitate the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under the AA, contribute to the further strengthening of quality improvement in education institutions and assist in meeting the challenges in the sector, it will accelerate the enhancement of the professional capacities of the NCEQE and the education institutions, at the same time having transparent procedures and instruments including effective monitoring system of the new NQF and new QA framework.

Specific attention will be paid to ensure that legal approximation process supported under this Twinning project will be according to the national framework on policy and legislative development and to the better regulation approach supported also at the EU level⁹. A better regulation approach requires that policies and legislation are prepared on the basis of the best available evidence (impact assessments) and according to an inclusive and evidence-based approach involving both internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, building on the lessons learnt and the Better Regulation agenda promoted at the EU level¹⁰, this Twinning project will contribute to the overall public administration reform in Georgia by ensuring the introduction of an inclusive and evidence-based approach to policy-making and legal drafting in the respective sector. It will also pay specific attention to accountability and reporting lines between concerned institutions.

The proposed Twinning project is expected to provide space for dynamic dialogue and peer learning, access to good practice and expert contribution to address the mentioned needs for a stronger NCEQE, in cooperation with stakeholders and partner institutions.

3.2 Ongoing reforms:

Globally Georgia is among the top performers in terms of adult literacy (99.8%, 2015). The country results of PISA 2015¹¹ show improvement in science, reading and mathematics compared with the previous rounds. Nonetheless the country's performance in PISA is still below the average, in particular the percentage of low achievers (36.3% in all 3 subjects), which is well above the OECD average (13%)¹². This was achieved by implementing quick changes and improvements: revised and improved national curriculum, new Teacher Professional Development and Career Advancement Scheme. Revision of quality assurance system of general education is in the process. Draft concept paper on QA of general education and draft Authorization Standards for General Educational Institutions have been developed with active participation of stakeholders and is ready for wider consultations and discussions.

Georgia has been implementing vocational education and training (VET) reforms aimed at supporting the socioeconomic development and poverty reduction priorities of the country, as well as the development of human resources to meet the short-, medium- and long-term requirements of the labour market. Between 2015 and 2017 NCEQE and the stakeholders developed new VET programmes and qualifications (NQF levels 3, 4 and 5), based on the learning outcomes approach and structured in modules. New criteria and arrangements to strengthen quality improvement in VET institutions have been proposed in 2018 by the EU VEGE project.

In 2015-2017, NCEQE has revised the system of higher education quality assurance to promote the development-oriented and outcome-based quality evaluation mechanisms and to ensure its compliance with the requirements of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). Specifically, the quality assurance standards and procedures have been revised; students, employer representatives and international experts have been involved in the evaluation expert panels.

From 2018, the NCEQE has started the system-wide implementation of the revised quality assurance standards and procedures at Georgian HEIs, thus this Twinning fiche is drafted in a moment of transition to the new quality assurance framework (authorisation and accreditation procedures and standards).

The NCEQE has been an ENQA affiliate organization since October 2013 and now is applying for ENQA membership.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/better-regulation-why-and-how_en

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-better-results-eu-agenda-0_en

¹² <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

Along with the revision of QA system, from 2014 NCEQE has initiated the process and consultations for revision of the NQF. At the moment of writing of this Twinning Fiche three new legal acts that form the NQF are in the phase of legal adoption:

1. A new section dedicated to the NQF in the *Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education*¹³ (amendment to the Law) – adoption by the legislator is expected by fall sessions of the parliament.
2. An Order of MoES on the NQF and its structure, level descriptors and typical qualifications by level – to be approved upon adoption of the amendment to the Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education.
3. An Order of MoES on the new Classifier of Fields of Study, based on ISCED-F 2013¹⁴ - upon adoption of the amendment to the Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education.

The reforms of QA and NQF have commonalities, as both concern the entire system of education and training, and express the country's determination to improve the compatibility with similar developments in the EU and beyond. NCEQE is the key implementing body of education QA and the NQF, and its resources (human, technical), organisation and leadership will be under pressure to deliver the expected improvements in processes and outcomes. The Sector Councils need further support and reorganisation to strengthen their capacity to deliver the expected contribution for high quality programmes and qualifications.

General Policy and legislative process

The National Policy Planning System Reform Strategy, adopted by the Government of Georgia in August 2015 recognises the current weak link between the policy planning process and legislation drafting, the absence of practice of legislative impact assessment and the weak institutional capacity of ministries in legal drafting. The OECD/SIGMA 2018 assessment in the policy development and coordination area highlights a number of weaknesses in the current (policy-making) and legislative process¹⁵. The assessment will also feed into the new action plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) roadmap. The document specifically notes the reoccurring problem with implementation of laws, which can be attributed to the low quality of laws due to weaknesses in the law-making process. There is a pressure to complete numerous legal reforms in the shortest possible time: "This situation inevitably places enormous pressure on the combined law-making resources of the Government and the Parliament and leaves little time for essential elements of a well-ordered law-making process, such as regulatory impact assessments or proper consultation with civil society." Improvement of the legislative drafting process and quality of legislation is now a priority area of action for the Administration of Government under the Prime Minister (steering the policy-making process) and all line ministries. This primarily involves the Administration of Government, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. In order to meet the targets and obligations in law making process the Government introduced changes in Law on Normative acts (amended on June 13, 2018) and Regulation of the Government (amended on August 24, 2018),

It should be underlined that the Government, with international support, developed a uniform methodology for regulatory impact assessments, to be used by all legal drafters. Similar efforts were made with regards to developing a uniform approach to legal approximation.

To sustain the legal approximation process the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with the support of the EU assistance (below mentioned projects Association Agreement Facility and Legal Drafting projects) elaborated Legal Approximation Guidelines and Manual. These documents provide key principles and techniques of approximation that will guide and orient legal drafters throughout the approximation process.

The documents are under finalization and after official adoption by the Government should be used consistently, not only by MoJ, but also by all line ministries, and institutions tasked with the approximation exercise. Such proceedings will help to ensure the achievement of a steady and sustainable approximation path.

Along the legislative process the government is proceeding with the rational organisation of state administration and clear accountability lines between institutions, including supervision and reporting

¹³ Current (not yet amended) version of the Law available at: <http://eqe.gov.ge/res/docs/2014120816015474706.pdf>

¹⁴ Unesco Institute of Statistics: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced> and <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Report-2018-Georgia.pdf>

between line ministries and agencies. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) is tasked with the development of uniform civil service state policy. Functional reviews of the line Ministries has been already done and currently the CSB is performing an analysis of state agencies with the intention of identifying and putting forward reforms to improve the organisation of PA, to streamline their mandates, enforcement mechanism as well as policy making process.

In this regards the project will ensure consistency between the review of the organizational set-up of the beneficiary institution with the national legislation regulating the organization of the state administrations and above mentioned analysis of the state agencies.

3.3 **Linked activities:**

1. EU Sector Reform Performance Contract Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs (duration 2018-2022, budget €48, 85 M in total).

This Twinning project is a part of the complementary measures component of the sector reform performance contract/budget support programme "Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs". The programme supports Government's capacity to implement their own national sector strategies. The general objective of the programme is to enhance Georgia's economic resilience and sustainable growth through human capital development and skills matching. The specific objective is to improve the employability of women and men in the selected regions (Tbilisi – the capital, Adjara, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo and Shida-Kartli¹⁶). This Twinning project will contribute to the Result 2: Relevant lifelong learning skills provision accessible in the selected regions with a focus on youth. This Twinning project shall be in a good coordination and synergy with the technical assistance another part of complementary measures component (Action Document in Annex 5).

2. EU Sector Support Contract Employment and VET (EVET) (Duration: 2014-2018, budget €27 M in total).

The Employment and Vocational Education Training (EVET) (2013-2018). Its Financing Agreement has allocated €20 million for Budget Support and €7 million for Technical Assistance.

The Sector Reform Contract/budget support EVET Programme aimed to stimulate sustainable and inclusive social-economic development through improved transition from education to employment through Employment/Labour Market and VET Reform in Georgia. The EVET Programme includes legislative reforms and policy development, capacity building and support to cohesive and sustainable progress across all involved sectors. To this end the programme contributed to: i) Strengthen the institutional and human resource capacities of the national authorities and to ii) Enhance the quality and relevance of the VET system in a lifelong learning perspective.

The programme provided specific contribution to improve quality of VET qualifications through: i) improved system of VET teacher career development, and initial and continuing teacher training; ii) revised National Qualifications Framework (NQF); iii) developed system of recognition of non-formal learning; iv) offered continuing education, and short, flexible, tailor-made VET pathways, in particular within active labour market measures and programmes.

US-funded MCA-G project (Duration: 2015-2019, budget \$16 in total):

With a sizeable budget, this project has carried out activities to strengthen relevance and quality of the education system, in particular VET and higher education. The project has carried out analysis and proposals for policy development, conducted training and capacity building for the relevant public institutions and run a grant scheme supporting cooperation of training providers with employers and local bodies. The proposed Twinning project can benefit of a number of concept and technical papers delivered by the MCC project, notably those dedicated to: a) development of Sector Councils; b) development of quality assurance in VET and higher education; c) validation of non-formal and informal learning.

¹⁶ Two regions: Guria and Racha-Lechkhumi have been additionally selected for support to be provided within the complementary measures component of this programme

Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) funded and UNDP implemented project:

Modernization of the VET and extension systems related to Agriculture in Georgia, with a grant component on Modernization of Agriculture VET qualifications (Duration: 2016-2018, budget \$0.3 M for this component)). In close cooperation with the VET department of Ministry of Education and Science this project developed a conceptual proposal and methodology supporting the practical piloting of integrated general and vocational education. Piloting is currently taking place in VET programmes related to agriculture. Conclusions and lessons from this pilot phase are expected to contribute to systematize a revised structure and approach of VET programmes and qualifications in line with the new NQF, the new VET Law and granting students' access to the path and procedures towards higher levels of education.

BMZ funded GIZ programme for Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training South Caucasus:

(duration 2017-2020, budget 8,600,000 EUR) supports the Georgian Government to improve the conditions for sustainable economic development and with the reform of the current TVET system by introducing elements of dual education and training or apprenticeship programmes in labour market-relevant sectors like construction, tourism, viticulture, ICT and Logistics and Transportation. In close cooperation with the public (Ministry of Sustainable Economic Development, Ministry of Education and Science, NCEQE, TPDC, VET schools) and private sectors the PSD TVET Programme contributes in Georgia to the improvement of framework conditions for Dual TVET, to the enhancement of skills and capacities of TVET teachers and in-company instructors and to fostering closer cooperation between public and private sector stakeholders.

Related Programmes and Projects

The reform of Public Administration (PAR) is of utmost importance for the country and the process is supported through donor community. The EU total contribution to the "Support to the Public Administration Reform in Georgia" 2016-2021, is EUR 30 000 000 euro. Out of which EUR 20 000 000 is budget support share and EUR 10 000 000 for complementary support. The objective of the programme is to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the public administration of Georgia, in line with the key Principles of Public Administration that have been developed by OECD/SIGMA in close cooperation with the European Commission. It will have a particular focus on the improvement of the policy planning and coordination capacities and processes in the central public administration. The professionalization of the civil service (including the reform of the civil service training system) will also be supported through the programme.

Project Title: Facility for the implementation of the Association Agreement in Georgia; EU funded; Duration: 2015-2018; Description: the project provides policy advice and capacity building support to the Georgian Government in coordinating the implementation of the Association, strengthening the institutional capacities of the line ministries and other public institutions to carry out the required reforms, including on policy development and legal approximation processes.

Project Title: Legislative Impact Assessment, Drafting and Representation; EU funded; Duration: 2015-2018; Description: the project aims to improve the legal drafting process at the central level of government (through promoting better coordination among relevant entities, and introduction of the regulatory impact assessment of draft legislation) as well as the Government's international representation and reporting functions with special emphasis on the Ministry of Justice.

These two projects: AA Facility and Legal drafting supported the elaboration of unified methodologies, and provided capacity building to key institutions (government and parliament) in the legal approximation and RIA processes. These methodologies are to be formally approved by Government.

Two other projects, EU funded – implemented by GIZ, and USAID-funded ("G4G") also support LA and Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) but with focus on economic sphere.

3.4 **List of applicable *Union acquis*/standards/norms:**

In the field of education and training the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) specifies that the EU has a supplementary competence, unlike other fields where the EU has an exclusive or a shared competence. Therefore, according to Articles 165 and 166 of the TFEU, the EU can contribute to the development of quality education and vocational training by encouraging cooperation between EU Member States (EU MS), and by supporting or supplementing their action, excluding the harmonization of laws and regulations of the EU MS. This takes the form of incentive measures (such as Erasmus+) and adoption of Council Recommendations.

The list of main Recommendations relevant for this Twinning project are included in Annex XXXII of the AA. Other more recent Council Recommendations highly relevant for this project are listed in **Annex 4**.

Main Laws of Georgia relevant for this Twinning project:

- Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education (2010) – (NQF-related amendments are currently in the legislative process)
- Law on General Education (2005)
- Law on Higher Education (2005)
- New Law on Vocational Education and Training

3.5 Results per component

The Twinning project will provide advisory support to NCEQE in three main components, as follows:

Mandatory Result 1 (Component 1): Strengthening quality assurance of education and training in a LLL perspective

Short description:

The Georgian policy and legal-regulatory framework of QA of education for all sub-systems (general, vocational and higher) is generally in accordance with the EU policy documents and practice. Georgia has aligned the relevant reforms with the Bologna process and European Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA (ESG), and learned from the Copenhagen process of enhanced EU cooperation on VET. New criteria and arrangements to strengthen quality *improvement* in education institutions, in particular VET, have been proposed in 2018 by the EU VEGE project¹⁷

It is expected that this component will contribute to reinforcement of trust in qualifications and better learning outcomes, compatibility with EU policies and good practice applying various activities including in-house trainings, workshops, joint development of methodology(ies) and their application in practice as well as a study visit to the EU MS partner country.

Result 1.1: Contribution to the review and consolidation of the quality assurance (QA) framework.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Revision /amendment of set of key subordinate acts / bylaws in line with NCEQE policy and legal-regulatory framework for QA in education and training in accordance with an inclusive and evidence-based approach;
- b) Preparation of methodology package for benchmarks' formulation, including new benchmarks for higher education programmes in a number of narrow fields of ISCED- FoE 2013¹⁸;
- c) Development of NCEQE technical proposal for a QA framework, including standards and procedures, for providers, programmes and qualifications of the non-formal domain (e.g. civil society organisations, companies, sector associations) and agreement with relevant stakeholders¹⁹.

Result 1.2: Methodology and procedures on QA - for users in NCEQE, experts, practitioners in education and training institutions and stakeholders (e.g. Sector Councils) consistent and streamlined.

¹⁷ For details on EUVEGE project please visit: <http://eu-ve.ge>

¹⁸ ISCED Fields of Education 2013, at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf>; and <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>

¹⁹ Close cooperation with the relevant associations active in the domain of adult education and LLL is expected, taking into account a good practice and the EU policy framework indicated in section 3.4 of this Twinning Fiche.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Elaboration and dissemination of Handbook(s) / toolkit(s) for practitioners in all authorised higher education (HE) VET institutions and general education institutions on the relevant themes and issues²⁰;
- b) Complementary trainings of all involved NCEQE staff and at least 60% of authorisation and accreditation experts on important and novelty themes²¹;
- c) At least 75% of training participants highly satisfied with the trainings received;
- d) Development and application of methodology for drafting thematic analysis²²;
- e) Conducting at least three evaluations and producing of thematic analysis reports for different levels of education (higher education, VET and general education) institutions and programmes.

Mandatory Result 2 (Component 2): Contribution to the implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework
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Short description:

The reformed (draft) NQF (main legal texts in the approval process) aims to solve the issues caused by the fragmented structured of the NQF 2010, which have proven to adversely affect the lifelong learning-related goals of every NQF. The new (draft) NQF, currently in the approval process, has adopted a unified eight-level structure, with level descriptors compatible with the EQF and redefined several of the typical qualifications allocated to the levels.

The set of goals of the reformed NQF reflects a renewed vision, now explicitly open to such novel topics as: interconnection and coordination of general education, VET and higher education; non-formal education; transparency in understanding the professional profiles for all types of users; responsiveness to changing requirements and renewal of qualifications. These are novelties have big potential to improve the links between the qualifications system and the world of work and the society; and to quality assure and include all types of learning and qualifications, and fulfil the new ambition to be a framework for citizens' LLL.

It is expected that this component will contribute to entering into force the new National Qualifications Framework based on improved institutional capacity at NCEQE and the education institutions, and transparent procedures and instruments applying various activities including in-house trainings, workshops, joint development of methodology (ies) and their application in practice, as well as study visits²³ to the EU MS partner country.

Result 2.1: Detailed action plan (2019-2021) for implementation of the new NQF coherent with the QA framework and other relevant policies and strategies (e.g.: education, employment, economic development) developed.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Revision of NQF Implementation Plan based on dialogue with the key partners and agreement with NCEQE and the Board in charge of strategic governance of the NQF²⁴.

Result 2.2: Transparent and streamlined procedures and methodology for inclusion of qualifications from various learning settings in the digital NQF register drafted and agreed.

²⁰ Indicative themes and issues to be included: analysis and formulation of benchmarks for higher education; developing programmes (including joint programmes) and aligning them with QA and NQF; formulating learning outcomes; aspects of teaching; students' assessment; new accreditation standards; adapting processes and methods aligned with the new authorisation standards, e.g., involving stakeholders; and using labour market information and data from tracking graduates (tracer studies); defining internal QA mechanisms and development of relevant guidebooks for general educational institutions

²¹ Study visits and other staff and stakeholders' training activities in Georgia are to be organized in close synergy and coordination for all components of the Twinning project.

²² Methodology shall include how to write comprehensive reports of thematic analysis for levels of education, to conduct discussions and dissemination procedures.

²³ At least one study visit to one regular meeting for Advisory Group EQF for 3-4 national representatives

²⁴ Action Plan can include activities and milestones related with e.g.: completion of coherent legal base (subordinate acts), methodology support, registration of qualifications according to transparency principles; review of existing qualifications; feedback from practitioners; public awareness campaigns and tools; adequate information in all education and training institutions; training of NQF resource (contact) persons; establishment of revised governance of the NQF; discussion with stakeholders of regular monitoring reports.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Development of handbook / toolkit to guide transparent inclusion of qualifications (all levels) in the digital NQF register;
- b) Trainings of all involved NCEQE staff, representatives of the Sector Councils (or their revised / new formats, such as inter-stakeholders' working groups) and representatives from at least 50% of education and training institutions and among important partners (at least one per education institution and partner)²⁵;
- c) At least 40% of female participation in different project activities and trainings.

Result 2.3: The comprehensive concept and specifications for the digital NQF register²⁶ drafted and agreed with NCEQE.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Development and agreement a concept, architecture and specifications for the digital NQF Register, suitable for the national context and legislation;
- b) Development of a practical short Handbook on managing and quality assuring the digital NQF Register;
- c) Training of all responsible NQF staff to manage, maintain and quality assure the digital NQF Register;
- d) At least 75% of trained staff satisfied with the quality of the trainings received and capable to use the knowledge gained in their practical work.

Result 2.4 Conditions and capacity for future comparison of the Georgian NQF with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) ²⁷reinforced.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Development of analysis report on implementation of the Georgian NQF;
- b) Elaboration and agreement with NCEQE a roadmap (plan) for comparison of the NQF with EQF and establishment by NCEQE of dedicated inter-stakeholder NQF working group to support the process;
- c) Trainings and on-the-job support to the NQF working group and to core group in charge of drafting the evidence-based comparison report;
- d) Best performing staff participate in study visit to the partner EU MS country.

Mandatory Result 3 (Component 3): Contribution to improved model of governance, monitoring and dissemination of NCEQE's outputs
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Short description:

NCEQE is the main institution supervising and coordinating NQF-related activities, and has led the reflection and consultation process of the new NQF. The transition to the new NQF is a good opportunity to launch a stronger NQF governance setting, and a monitoring system, based on stakeholders' and users' feedback and data. The new NQF governance setting is in discussion, and could be based on two-tier governance: i) strategic - entrusted to a new Board; ii) operational - entrusted to NCEQE.

²⁵ As reference for the monitoring of this indicator use the following information: there are 68 higher education institutions, 67 public + private VET providers, 70 resource centres for general education. Other partners include e.g.: Georgia Adult Education Association, Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of private VET, social partners, Sector Councils. At moment of writing there are 11 VET and 5 higher education Sector Councils, whose shape and institutional setting can be modified.

²⁶ This result requires close cooperation with all relevant departments and divisions at NCEQE, e.g.: Qualifications Development division; Register division; three departments of QA: higher education, VET and General education. The actual development and coding of the IT platform and online portal is outside the direct responsibility of the proposed Twinning project.

²⁷ In accordance with the criteria and procedures to be defined by the Advisory Group EQF and in accordance with the EQF Council Recommendation of 22/05/2017: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017H0615%2801%29>

It is expected that the third component will contribute to improved model of governance, monitoring and dissemination of NCEQE's outputs applying various activities including in-house and experience exchange trainings, workshops.

To raise awareness on on-going developments and requirements in the field it would be essential to reinforce existing practice of communication by organizing promotional events for different stakeholders and interested parties. At least one stakeholders' and experts' conference dedicated to QA and NQF developments, challenges and way forward, open to international good practice and representatives from Advisory Group EQF. Any activities performed under this component in regards to revision of organisational setting of NCEQE will be consistent with the horizontal rules on organisational setting of all state administrations with the same status/functional category as defined in national legislation and in close coordination with the concerned authorities.

Result 3.1: Organisational setting and capacities of NCEQE in view of its strategic objectives 2020 and the renewed NQF governance setting reviewed.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Discussion and agreement with NCEQE a synthetic report on revised organizational setting and functions of NCEQE²⁸;
- b) Agreement on concept, functions and links of the renewed NQF Governance, based on strategic and operational levels;
- c) Capacity building trainings for the selected staff of institutions and stakeholders involved in the renewed NQF governance, at strategic and operational level, in line with the EU MS relevant approaches;
- d) At least 75% of trained staff highly satisfied by the quality of the trainings received.

Result 3.2: Monitoring system of the new NQF and new QA framework revised.

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Development and agreement with NCEQE and MoESCS technical proposal for a revised monitoring system for NCEQE²⁹.
- b) Capacity building trainings for at least 70% of relevant NCEQE staff on revised monitoring system;
- c) Joint conduction of at least 2 monitorings with the support of MS experts.

Result 3.3 NCEQE communication and awareness raising practices strengthened (result dedicated to awareness raising added for your consideration in case you find it relevant we can keep the result).

Indicators of Achievement

- a) Elaboration of the communication and awareness raising plan with relevant stakeholders;
- b) Development of communication tools and various visibility/information materials (like: leaflets, brochures, promotional articles, on line infos and etc.) and dissemination to at least 70 % of education institutions and other interested parties;
- c) Update of NCEQE website in order to make it more user friendly; at least 1000 visitors by the end of the first year;

²⁸ Report shall be developed in consultation with MoESCS and take into consideration proposals from other reports and analyses elaborated by previous EU TA and other international sources (e.g. ENQA and EFQM experts).

²⁹ It is expected that the monitoring system is developed in close cooperation with stakeholders' and focus on QA and NQF operations, including indicators, feedback mechanisms and review processes for improvement. Technical proposal shall have a specific attention to monitoring of QA of general education, with particular attention to continuous quality improvement of schools.

- d) A least 75% of participants of visibility activities satisfied by events organised and quality of information received.

3.6 Means/input from the EU Member State Partner Administration(s):

3.6 Means/input from the EU Member State Partner Administration(s)/Mandated bodies*:

Member State(s) is/are kindly requested to develop activities in the submitted proposal, which are needed in order to achieve the results stipulated in the fiche.

The MS PL will be expected to devote a minimum of 3 days per month to the project in his/her home administration. In addition, he will coordinate from the Member state side the work of the Project steering Committee (PSC). MS Project Leader may participate in the project also as short-term expert (STE). In this case the MS Project Leader should satisfy requirements stipulated in the fiche for both the Project Leader and the relevant STE profile.

The RTA will be located in the premises of the NCEQE in the beneficiary country on a full time basis and will be responsible for the direct implementation of the project under the overall supervision of the MS Project Leader.

The RTA will maintain day-to-day cooperation with the beneficiary administration and coordinate the work performed by the STEs. The RTA will have a key role in the coordination of the inputs required for the successful implementation of all the project activities.

Minimum two visibility events will be organized in the course of the implementation of the project; Kick-off meeting at the start of the implementation and the Final meeting at the end of the implementation of the project activities.

The required MS experts must either be civil/public servants of the relevant MS administration or be permanent staff of authorised mandated bodies. All experts must comply with the requirements set in the Twinning Manual 2017.

The RTA should be supported by a permanent RTA Assistant. The RTA assistant should be in close collaboration with the BA. The RTA assistant will perform general project duties and providing translation and interpretation services as necessary, practical arrangements for the project, such as organizational issues of expert missions, conferences, training, seminars, maintaining project records and etc. Until the RTA can select and hire an assistant, the Beneficiary administration makes a member of its staff available to support the RTA in his/her daily tasks.

A full-time language assistant should also be recruited. She/he should perform most of the required interpretation/translation services. She/he will provide day-to-day interpretation/translation to the RTA and project experts during missions.

Whenever required and needed for simultaneous interpretation during seminars and workshops, translation of large volume of documents additional interpretation may be procured and funded by the project.

Proposals shall include only the CVs of the proposed PL, of the RTA and of the Component Leaders

3.6.1 Profile and tasks of the Project Leader

Profile:

- A high ranking Member State official, or assimilated agent with a sufficient rank to ensure an operational dialogue at political level;
- Considerable experience at least 3 years in governance and quality assurance of qualifications and education in the EU MS relevant administration / institutions;
- A good knowledge of management of quality assurance agencies;
- Deep understanding of the relevant policies, instruments and experience in the EU, notably: EQF, ESG, ENQA, EQAVET, Bologna process;
- Overall understanding of the relevant issues in the sector and area related to QA and NQF;
- Good leadership skills;

Tasks:

- Overall direction, supervision, guidance and monitoring of the project; ability to mobilise the necessary expertise in support of the efficient implementation of the project;
- Signature of project progress reports and the final report prepared with the support of RTA;
- Timely achievement of the project results;
- Co-Chairing of project steering committees; Provision of legal and technical advice and analysis whenever needed.

3.6.2 Profile and tasks of the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA)

Profile:

- University degree in law, education, public administration MBA, or similar discipline or equivalent professional experience in a field relevant to the project;
- Minimum 3 years of experience in the field of education and training;
- Sound comparative knowledge of relevant EU legislative and institutional requirements related to the project components;
- Solid knowledge of international cooperation instruments, conventions and ongoing developments related with QA, NQF;
- Previous experience in project management would be an asset;
- Good training, communication and advisory skills;
- Exceptional time management, organization, and prioritization skills;
- Excellent computer literacy;

Tasks:

- Overall coordination project implementation and of all activities;
- Coordination of the activities of the team members in line with the agreed work plan to enable timely completion of project outputs;
- Provide technical input to the project whenever needed and provision of advice in his field of expertise;
- Liaise with MS and BC PLs and daily contacts with BC RTA counterpart;
- Preparation of the initial and subsequent work plan(s) and project progress reports, together with PL, to be submitted to the Steering Committees;
- Liaison with EUD Project Manager and Programme Administration Office (PAO);
- Liaison with other relevant projects and relevant Georgian institutions;

3.6.3 Profile and tasks of Component Leaders:

Component 1: Strengthening quality assurance of education and training in a LLL perspective.

Profile:

- University degree in similar discipline relevant to the project or equivalent experience of minimum 5 years in a related field;
- At least 3 years of progressively responsible experience in QA of education and training;
- Experience in setting QA standards, criteria and methodologies;
- Excellent knowledge of principles and experience of the ENQA, EQAR, ESG and other relevant QA frameworks, as well as good practice in the EU MS;
- Experience in legal drafting coordination process relevant to the project scope;
- Solid experience of developing and executing strategy and delivering results;
- Relevant experience in capacity building activities;
- Exceptional time management, organization, and prioritization skills;
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Tasks:

- Component coordination, guidance and monitoring;
- Conducting analysis of the area relevant to the component;
- Preparing and conducting training programs, information and dissemination seminars with various stakeholders and users' groups;

- Drafting thematic / technical contributions and documents relevant for the results of the component, in close cooperation with the BC counterparts and other project experts;
- Timely proposals for any corrective measures;
- Liaise with MS and BC PLs and daily contacts with RTA and BC counterpart.

Component 2: Contribution to implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework

Profile:

- University degree in discipline relevant to the project or equivalent experience of minimum 5 years in a related field;
- ;
- At least 3 years of progressive experience in governance of education and training systems, notably NQF and qualifications development;
- Demonstration of a strong understanding of qualifications development and qualifications reforms aligned with EQF experience, NQF principles;
- Excellent knowledge of the EQF experience and NQF developments in the EU and beyond;
- Knowledge of EQF referencing (process, criteria and working methods of the EQF Advisory Group);
- Relevant experience in capacity building activities;
- A good understanding of human resource management, training and professional development of personnel;
- Proficient with Microsoft office;
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly and articulately, in a constructive manner (both orally and in writing);
- Previous experience in similar projects would be an asset;
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Tasks:

- Component coordination, guidance and monitoring;
- Conducting analysis of the area relevant to the component;
- Preparing and conducting training programs;
- Drafting thematic / technical contributions and documents relevant for the results of the component, in close cooperation with the BC counterparts and other project experts
- Provision of legal and technical advice and analysis whenever needed;
- Timely proposals for any corrective measures;
- Liaise with MS and BC PLs and coordination with RTA and BC counterpart.

Component 3: Contribution to improved model of governance, monitoring and dissemination of NCEQE's outputs

Profile:

- University degree in similar discipline relevant to the project or equivalent experience of minimum 5 years in a related field;
- At least 3 years of experience in management positions in one of the areas: education and training, NQF, QA
- Demonstration of a strong understanding of model and experiences of organisational change and review of functional set-up of public agencies, and experience in standard setting or other relevant regulatory experience will be an asset;
- Demonstration of a strong experience and understanding of performance monitoring systems of public agencies in similar domains relevant for the component;
- Relevant experience in capacity building activities;
- A good understanding of human resource management, training and professional development of personnel;
- Experience of leading on organizational change projects including restructures programmes;
- Proficient with Microsoft Office;

- Ability to communicate ideas clearly and articulately, in a constructive manner (both orally and in writing);
- Previous experience in similar projects would be an asset;
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Tasks:

- Component coordination, guidance and monitoring;
- Conducting analysis of the area relevant to the component;
- Drafting thematic / technical contributions and documents relevant for the results of the component
- Preparing and conducting training programs;
- Provision of legal and technical advice and analysis whenever needed;
- Timely proposals for any corrective measures;
- Liaise with MS and BC PLs and coordination with RTA and BC counterpart.

3.6.4 Profile and tasks of other short-term experts:

Specialist civil servants/staff of approved mandated bodies will be made available by the Twinning Partner (MS) to support the implementation of the activities and agreed with the beneficiary administration. Specific and technical matters relevant to this Twinning project will be taken over by a pool of STEs. The detailed expert input shall be established when drawing up the Twinning work plan.

Below some indicative qualifications and tasks: (NB: STEs CV should not be included in the MS proposal).

Qualifications of short-term experts:

-
- A university degree in similar discipline relevant to the project or equivalent experience of minimum 5 years in a related field;
- A minimum of 3 years of experience in a respective field;
- Good command of written and spoken English;
- Considerable experience in a relevant area related with: QA of education and training systems; implementation and governance of the NQF; qualifications development and QA; development of online registers of qualifications; validation of non-formal and informal learning; recognition of prior learning in the framework of higher education; LLL and adult learning; communities of practise; information and dissemination methods and tools on NQF and QA for users (wider public and practitioners in the qualifications system);
- Proven experience working on legal approximation issues;
- Solid knowledge of relevant international conventions and their application and recent amendments, EU acquis, EU institutions and instruments (EQF Advisory Group, relevant groups of the open method of coordination in the EU, relevant web-resources managed by the European Commission related with the new Skills Agenda for Europe, Learning Opportunities and Qualifications, ESCO, Europass);
- Experience in developing strategy documents and methodology packages / toolkits and handbooks;
- Proven experience in developing, managing and improving registers of qualifications (online);
- Good understanding of education, training and professional development in QA agencies and NQF bodies;
- Relevant experience in capacity building activities;
- Proven experience in Human Resources Management;
- Experience in preparing regulatory framework, including impact assessments, public consultations and inter-institutional coordination;
- Computer literacy.

Tasks of short term experts:

- Effective contribution and assistance with drafting project related documents in accordance with the planned results of the respective components and taking account of the national rules for legislative development and preparation of trainings, study tours, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Contributing to the sustainability of the project by ensuring that aspects of the project related to their field of expertise are implemented timely;

- Supervision and on-site coordination of all activities related to their field of expertise and performed under this project;
- Timely proposals for any corrective measures;
- Liaise with RTA and BC counterparts.

4. Budget

Maximum Budget available for the Twinning Grant 1,500,000 Euro

5. Implementation Arrangements

5.1 The European Union Delegation in Tbilisi, Georgia, will be responsible for the tendering, contracting, payments and financial reporting, and will work in close co-operation with the Beneficiary. The person in charge of this project at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia is:

Ms. Nino Kochishvili
 Delegation of the European Union to Georgia
 38 Nino Chkheidze St, 0102 Tbilisi, Georgia
 E-mail: Nino.Kochishvili@eeas.europa.eu

5.2 Institutional framework

The main beneficiary Institution of the Twinning project is the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Web portal: <http://eqe.ge/eng>.

NCEQE has been established by Ministerial order Nr 89/5 of 14/09/2010 to support the promotion of educational quality assurance and improvement. NCEQE's activities are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science, and can be grouped in three main components: a) quality assurance of educational programmes and institutions; b) support to quality improvement to educational institutions via information and advice; c) qualifications development and improvement. Besides, NCEQE hosts the Georgian ENIC-NARIC Centre and recognises foreign qualifications. NCEQE is an affiliate member of ENQA and currently seeks to fulfil the conditions to become a full member.

NCEQE's organisational structured is presented at: <http://eqe.ge/eng/structure>. More detailed information on the structural and functional set-up of NCEQE is presented in Annexes 2 and 3 of this Twinning fiche.

NCEQE operates with a total of 51 staff working with fixed term labour attachment; in addition, 102 staff members are contractual agents.

The following additional information can be found in the Annex 3 of this Twinning fiche:

- NCEQE's Departments and divisions more important in the context of the proposed Twinning project
- Other Georgian institutions and stakeholders / partners relevant for involvement in this Twinning project

All stakeholder representatives will be evolved in the project implementation according to their mandate and responsibilities.

5.3 Counterparts in the Beneficiary administration:

The PL and RTA counterparts will be staff of the Beneficiary administration and will be actively involved in the management and coordination of the project.

5.3.1 Contact person

Mr. Marina Zhvania
 Head of Strategic Development and International Relations Department NCEQE
 Merab Aleksidze str., Tbilisi 0193, Georgia
<http://eqe.ge/eng>

5.3.2 PL counterpart

Mr. George Vashakidze
Director of NCEQE
Merab Aleksidze str., T'bilisi 0193, Georgia
<http://eqe.ge/eng>

5.3.3 RTA counterpart
Mr. Marina Zhvania
Head of Strategic Development and International Relations Department
NCEQE
Merab Aleksidze str., T'bilisi 0193, Georgia
<http://eqe.ge/eng>

6. Duration of the project

Duration of the execution period: 24 months. [The execution period will end 3 months after the implementation period of the Action (work plan) which will take 21 months].

7. Sustainability

The achievements and benefits of the project will have permanent and ongoing beneficial effects on the effectiveness of NCEQE, its capacity and human resources, key outputs and cooperation with MoESCS and the stakeholders. NCEQE will continue to be supervised by the MoESCS and funded by the state budget for the near future.

The sustainability of the project will be achieved through a suitable implementation of the project activities and availability of trained personnel in NCEQE and as well as provision/development of relevant documents and training material for further use in Georgia.

In order to contribute to develop implementable legislation, the Twinning project will support preparation of analytical prerequisites i.e. preparation of concept and technical notes, action plans, handbooks and toolkits, training materials, estimates of implementation costs and will support NCEQE on conducting inter-institutional and public consultations, including publication of consultation results.

The Beneficiary Institution is fully committed to ensure the long-term impact of the Twinning project. Staff benefiting from different project activities trainings, practical exercise, inspections carried out, study visits shall transfer knowledge step by step to their colleagues. Smooth and effective functioning of the achieved results will be guaranteed by the relevant human and financial resources contribution. The relevant operational documents will be introduced based on the discussions / consultations with the relevant parties in a reasonable timeframe. Trained staff should be maintained within the administration to successfully fulfil their tasks.

At the project level, sustainability of project results will be guaranteed by ensuring that all procedures, management practises and tools, are embedded in the work routine of the MoESCS and NCEQE. The sustainability of the project will be achieved through a suitable implementation of the project activities and availability of trained personnel in different departments of the beneficiary.

Development of any strategic document and legislation/amendments will be carried out respecting all national procedures and practices. Any guidelines or procedures developed under this action will not contradict to any legal provision of the country.

Any internal procedure developed with the support of the project will be consistent with the formal decrees on the organisational structure and job requirements for the organisation and any by-laws that exist for all government bodies regarding job descriptions and written procedures. In addition, any written procedural manual or guidelines developed with the support of the project will be simple enough to be regularly updated and changed by the staff of the respective organisations without external support.

Since results should be sustainable, the Beneficiary should describe how in its Strategy, work plan and budget planning it has planned necessary resources ensuring the sustainability.

8. Crosscutting issues (*equal opportunity, environment, climate etc...*)

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, NCEQE will ensure equal opportunities between male and female in the management and implementation of the Project,

including equal opportunities in training, site visits and participation in all of the Projects' missions and events; contributing thus to the promotion of gender equality. The principle of implementation of this Twinning project will be based on environment friendly atmosphere. This in particular guarantees, minimising paper use during project implementation by the maximum feasible use of electronic tools and resources.

9. Conditionality and sequencing

There is no precondition set for this Twinning project as the new legal base for quality assurance of education is in place and reforms of accreditation and authorisation have been started. The NQF-related amendments in the law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education have been consulted with stakeholders and adoption is expected in April 2018. It is foreseen that a series of activities / measures would have been undertaken by NCEQE in order for the project to start in satisfactory conditions.

NCEQE commits itself to provide the contributions stated in the Fiche. They include:

- Strong commitment and support of NCEQE management throughout the Project implementation period;
- Strong involvement and commitment of NCEQE staff at all levels;
- Assigning dedicated staff according to the project components and substantive contribution to the agreed results
- Joint reflection of EU MS and NCEQE staff related to the project activities;
- Ensuring coordination between departments and institutions connected with the Project;
- Ensuring access to indispensable information and documents;
- Supporting active and necessary involvement of stakeholders and partners in the relevant activities (see list of possible partners in Annex 3)
- Adequate conditions for the STEs to perform their work while on mission to the BI;
- Providing suitable venues and equipment for the training sessions and meetings that will be held under the Project;

The Twinning project will enable NCEQE to face implementation challenges in operationalizing all responsibilities given to NCEQE under the Law. Leveraging similar experience and progress made in EU Member States would assist NCEQE in its tasks and contribution to quality of education and transparency of qualifications.

The project specific activities will be defined and prioritized based on close coordination between the MS and BC partners according to the Logical Framework.

10. Indicators for performance measurement

The Indicators for performance are described in chapter 3.5 together with the project results as well as in the Logical Framework Matrix (annex1). The project MS and BC partners will ensure the smooth implementation of the project activities and assess the performance measurement in accordance with the logical framework which will be reviewed during contract signature or during the drafting of the initial work plan.

The relevant staff from BA will be involved in the project implementation and nominated for the overall coordination and project management; providing the information/documents in regards with the national regulatory basis and arranging the relevant information/consultation meetings. The Work Plan will further detail and give final shape to indicators. The BA will ensure:

- Relevant staff from NCEQE (higher management and field specialists) will be involved in the project implementation and nominated for the overall coordination and project management.
- Providing the information/documents in regards with the national policy and legislative basis and arranging the relevant informative meetings.
- Coordination and meetings with other stakeholder organizations, donors or interested parties related to the NCEQE field of operation.
- Action Plan reports provided and updated.

11. Facilities available

The BC commits itself to deliver the following facilities:

- Adequately equipped office space for the RTA and the RTA assistant(s) for the entire duration of their secondment.
- Supply of office room including access to computer, telephone, internet, printer, photocopier.
- Adequate conditions for the STEs to perform their work while on mission to the BC.
- Provide suitable venues for the training sessions and meetings that will be held under the Project.
- Security related issues will be assured according to the standards and practices applicable for all Georgian public institutions.

ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format
2. NCEQE's Organizational Chart
3. NCEQE's set up and responsibilities
4. Full list of relevant *Union acquis*
5. Action Document

Annex 1. Logical framework matrix

Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications		Programme name and number	Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs – CRIS Number: ENI/2017/040-319
National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement		Total budget: 1,500,000. EUR	Financing: 100% 1,500,000. EUR
Overall objective (impact)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
The overall objective of the project is to contribute to human capital development by improving quality assurance, transparency and governance of skills and qualifications in a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications aligned with labour market and societal needs; • Quality of process performed increased and standardized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and monitoring reports NCEQE; • Monitoring/assessment reports by international organizations; • Tracer studies of graduates of VET and higher education; • Statistics; • AA implementation report. 	
Specific Objective(s) (outcome)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
To support the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) and partners ³⁰ , to implement and monitor the reformed quality assurance framework of education, and the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) through improved institutional capacities, effective instruments and procedures, participative governance, and delivery of relevant information for stakeholders and the population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional and human capacity of the NCEQE enhanced in line to the responsibilities and requirements of the policy and legal framework and NCEQE's Strategy Document 2016-2020 till the end of the project; • At least 75 % of relevant staff trained and satisfied by the quality of the trainings; • At least 40% of female participation in different project activities and trainings; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual activity reports of NCEQE and Action Plans; • NCEQE annual budget planning and execution, including provisions for staffing; • Project documentation (monitoring reports and feedback, training programmes, technical and conceptual notes, recommendations); • Project interim and final reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commitment on fulfillment of AA requirements continued; • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE • Strong support and commitment from twinning partner(s) • Relevant staff of NCEQE involved in the process

³⁰ Institutional and partners important for the effective implementation of this projects are listed in section 3.1.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 75% of Study visit participants satisfied by quality of exchange with the MS partner administration; • Participation of relevant stakeholders in project information and visibility events ensured; • At least 1 Team Leader of a similar projects in the country participated to at least one steering committee meeting • At least 85% staff trained by end of project 		
Mandatory Results (outcomes)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumption
<u>Component 1. Strengthening quality assurance of education and training in a LLL perspective</u>			

<p>Result 1. 1 Contribution to the review and consolidation of the quality assurance (QA) framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision /amendment of set of key subordinate acts / bylaws in line with NCEQE policy and legal-regulatory framework for QA in education and training in accordance with an inclusive and evidence-based approach; • Preparation of methodology package for benchmarks' formulation, including new benchmarks for higher education programmes in a number of narrow fields of ISCED- FoE 2013; • Development of NCEQE technical proposal for a QA framework, including standards and procedures, for providers, programmes and qualifications of the non-formal domain (e.g. civil society organisations, companies, sector associations) and agreement with relevant stakeholders; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical proposal of QA framework for institutions, programmes and qualifications of non-formal learning domain; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports; • Legislative amendments and explanatory note Minutes of the stakeholder consultations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;
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<p>Result 1.2 Methodology and procedures on QA - for users in NCEQE, experts, practitioners in education and training institutions and stakeholders (e.g. Sector Councils) consistent and streamlined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration and dissemination of Handbook(s) / toolkit(s) for practitioners in all authorised higher education (HE) VET institutions and general education institutions on the relevant themes and issues; • Complementary trainings of all involved NCEQE staff and at least 60% of authorisation and accreditation experts on important and novelty themes; • At least 75% of training participants highly satisfied with the trainings received; • Development and application of methodology for drafting thematic analysis; • Conducting at least three evaluations and producing of thematic analysis reports for different levels of education (higher education, VET and general education) institutions and programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbooks / toolkits (final versions) • Information on dissemination of handbooks / toolkits; • Agenda and report of study-visit to EU; • Agenda and reports of complementary training in Georgia; • Report of thematic analysis of evaluation of education institutions and programmes; • Training materials, lists of participants; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;
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Component 2: Contribution to the implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework

<p>Result 2.1 Detailed action plan (2019-2021) for implementation of the new NQF coherent with the QA framework and other relevant policies and strategies (e.g.: education, employment, economic development) developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of NQF Implementation Plan based on dialogue with the key partners and agreement with NCEQE and the Board in charge of strategic governance of the NQF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final draft of the Action Plan; • Information on dissemination of Action Plan; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions and MoESCS • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available
<p>Result 2.2 Transparent and streamlined procedures and methodology for inclusion of qualifications from various learning settings in the digital NQF register drafted and agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of handbook / toolkit to guide transparent inclusion of qualifications (all levels) in the digital NQF register; • Trainings of all involved NCEQE staff, representatives of the Sector Councils (or their revised / new formats, such as inter- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbooks / toolkits (final versions); • Information on dissemination of handbooks / toolkits; • Agenda and report of study-visit to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff;

	<p>stakeholders' working groups) and representatives from at least 50% of education and training institutions and among important partners (at least one per education institution and partner);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 40% of female participation in different project activities and trainings. 	<p>EU;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and reports of complementary training in Georgia • Training materials and lists of participants; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports; • At least 1 thematic event organised by year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant documentation/information available
<p>Result 2.3 The comprehensive concept and specifications for the digital NQF register³¹ drafted and agreed with NCEQE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and agreement a concept, architecture and specifications for the digital NQF Register, suitable for the national context and legislation; • Development of a practical short Handbook on managing and quality assuring the digital NQF Register; • Training of all responsible NQF staff to manage, maintain and quality assure the digital NQF Register; • At least 75% of trained staff satisfied with the quality of the trainings received and capable to use the knowledge gained in their practical work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document on Concept and specifications for the online qualifications Register; • Handbook • Information on consultation with public institutions and stakeholders • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Readiness of NCEQE and MoESCS to undertake the complementary actions such as development and coding of the IT platform for the register (under responsibility of NCEQE) • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;

³¹ This result requires close cooperation with all relevant departments and divisions at NCEQE, e.g.: Qualifications Development division; Register division; three departments of QA: higher education, VET and General education. The actual development and coding of the IT platform and online portal is outside the direct responsibility of the proposed Twinning project.

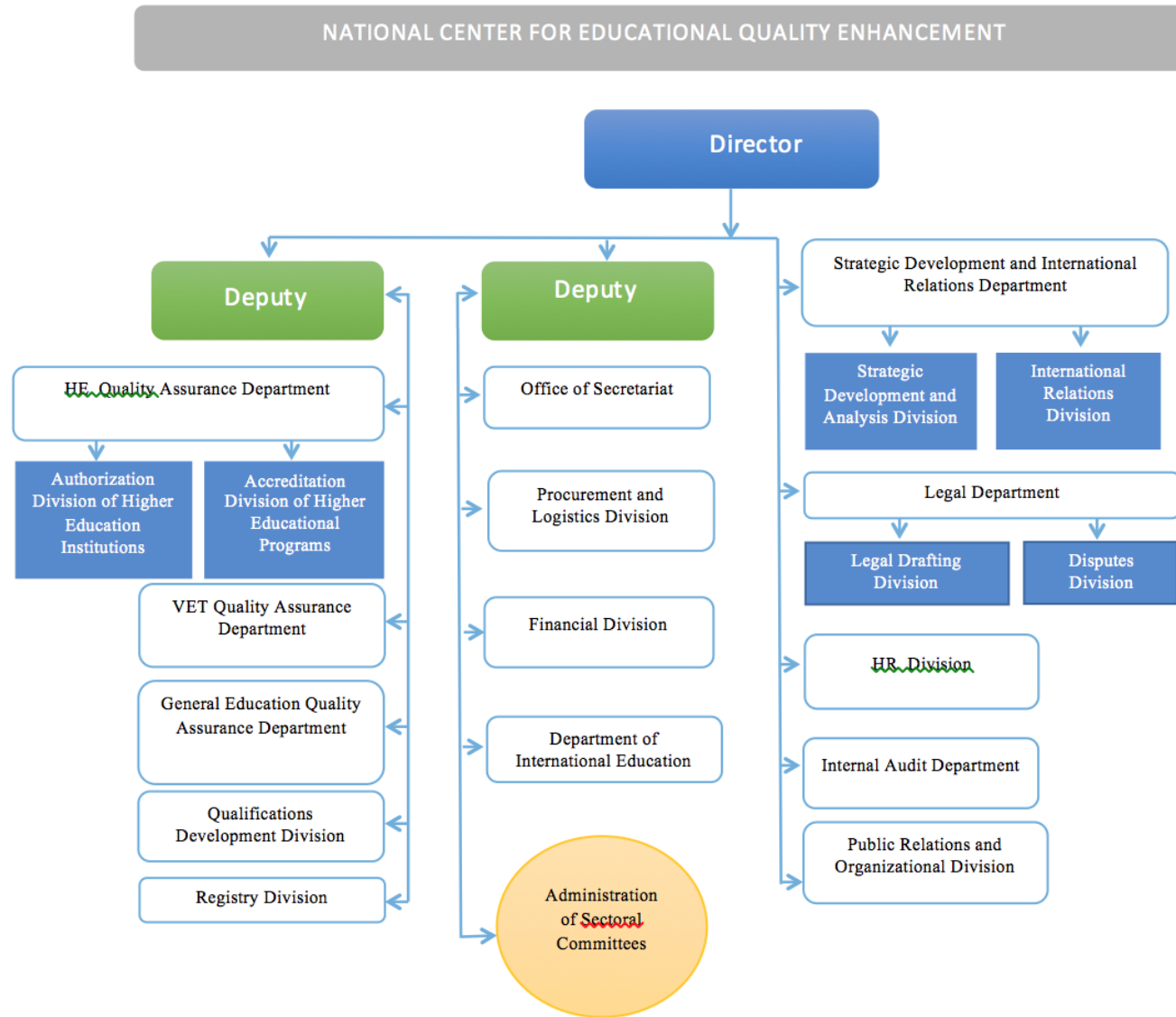
<p>Result 2.4 Conditions and capacity for future comparison of the Georgian NQF with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) reinforced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of analysis report on implementation of the Georgian NQF; • Elaboration and agreement with NCEQE a roadmap (plan) for comparison of the NQF with EQF and establishment by NCEQE of dedicated inter-stakeholder NQF working group to support the process; • Trainings and on-the-job support to the NQF working group and to core group in charge of drafting the evidence-based comparison report; • Best performing staff participate in study visit to the partner EU MS country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document on consolidated concept for validation of non-formal and informal learning; • Action plan for piloting validation of non-formal and informal learning; • Document on concept, methodology for recognition of prior learning in the context of higher education; • Information on consultation with public institutions and stakeholders • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions and MoESCS; • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available.
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Component 3: Contribution to improved model of governance, monitoring and dissemination of NCEQE's outputs

<p>Result 3.1 Organisational setting and capacities of NCEQE in view of the strategic objectives 2020 and the renewed NQF governance setting reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and agreement with NCEQE a synthetic report on revised organizational setting and functions of NCEQE; • Agreement on concept, functions and links of the renewed NQF Governance, based on strategic and operational levels; • Capacity building trainings for the selected staff of institutions and stakeholders involved in the renewed NQF governance, at strategic and operational level, in line with the EU MS relevant approaches; • At least 75% of trained staff highly satisfied by the quality of the trainings received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on revised organizational setting; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions and MoESCS • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;
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<p>Result 3.2 Monitoring system of the new NQF and new QA framework revised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and agreement with NCEQE and MoESCS technical proposal for a revised monitoring system for NCEQE; • Capacity building trainings for at least 70% of relevant NCEQE staff on revised monitoring system; • Joint conduction of at least 2 monitoring with the support of MS experts. • At least 75% of trained staff very satisfied by the trainings conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical proposal and Action Plan; • Reports and feedback on capacity building; • Reports of Sector Councils; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports; • Relevant monitoring reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions and MoESCS; • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;
<p>Result 3.3 NCEQE communication and awareness raising practices strengthened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of the communication and awareness raising plan with relevant stakeholders; • Development of communication tools and various visibility/information materials (like: leaflets, brochures, promotional articles, on line infos and etc.) and dissemination to at least 70 % of education institutions and other interested parties; • Update of NCEQE website in order to make it more user friendly; at least 1000 visitors by the end of the first year; • A least 75% of participants of visibility activities satisfied by events organised and quality of information received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical proposal for monitoring system; • Agenda and thematic materials of the conference, and list of participants; • Reports of meetings of NCEQE monitoring; • Project activity reports (consultations, discussion); • STE mission reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and commitment from the senior management of NCEQE/MoESCS; • Participation of stakeholders, relevant NCEQE departments and divisions and MoESCS; • Twinning MS partner commitment; • Availability of local staff; • All relevant documentation/information available;

Annex 2 – NCEQE’s Organizational Chart



Annex 3: NCEQE Organizational Set Up and Responsibilities

NCEQE has been established as a legal entity of public law by Ministerial order Nr 89/5 of 14/09/2010 to support the promotion of educational quality assurance and improvement. NCEQE is an affiliate member of ENQA and currently seeks to fulfil the conditions to become a full member. More information on the statute, activity reports, legislation, key activities, ongoing initiatives and projects can be found on NCEQE's website: <http://eqe.ge/eng>.

NCEQE's director decides the organisational structure and functions of the different units. Two deputy directors coordinate the activities of operational departments and divisions, as indicated in the organisational structure in Annex 2. NCEQE operates with a total of 51 staff working with fixed term labour attachment; in addition, 102 staff members are contractual agents.

The most important NCEQE's departments and divisions for the scope of the proposed Twinning project are:

- Higher education Quality Assurance Department
- VET Quality Assurance Department
- General Education Quality Assurance Department
- Registry Division
- Qualifications Development Division
- International Qualifications Department
- Legal Department
- Strategic Development and International Relations Department

A brief overview of key functions and staffing of these most important departments follows:

- The Department of Higher Education QA has two structural divisions: one focusing on authorisation; the other – on accreditation. This department is in charge of aligning the national quality assurance mechanisms with the European Higher Education Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines (ESG); carry out the authorisation and accreditation processes and monitor them; promote involvement of international experts in development of new standards and procedures and manage the experts' corps.
- The VET QA department has a very extensive list of functions and areas, going from implementation of authorisation and accreditation processes, to management of experts' corps, monitoring and control of VET programmes and participation in the development and improvement of standards and methodologies.
- The General Education QA department is entrusted of a wide range of functions, including authorisation and accreditation processes, improvement of standards and procedures, as well as monitoring mechanisms and counselling to stakeholders. In total this department has the lowest number of staff (5 in total), compared with the other QA departments, which might be a constraint given the high number of educational institutions of this sub-sector.
- The Registry division has an important role: assure reliable and updated documentation of the key processes of NCEQE, in form of electronic registers, which include data on educational institutions, students enrolment, student mobility, educational programmes (qualifications). The division has started development of a new database, with better integration with other databases and takes into account information aligned with the NQF.
- The Qualifications development division has a wide range of tasks, while the number of its staff is low (in total: 4). This division responds for the development of the NQF and its key instruments (such as the NQF register), and the NQF legal base (bylaws, rules and procedures) necessary for operationalization of the amendments (in adoption process) to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education*. Besides, this division bears the responsibility to develop methodology and rules for elaboration of occupational standards and VET programmes (modules, curriculum), to manage the VET standards and programmes, and to develop and promote "recognition of non-formal education".
- The International Education Department is responsible for all activities related with recognition of education received abroad, for communication and coordination with European Information Centres and National Academic Recognition Network (ENIC-NARIC Network). Recognition decisions of the

department are binding. This is a department handling a substantial workload, expressed by several thousands of applications annually. This department has the highest number of staff (23 in total).

Besides these important operational departments and divisions, the Twinning project will cooperate as well with the Legal Department and in particular with the Strategic Development and International Relations Department (see organisational chart in Annex 2).

The Legal Department deals amongst others, with the legal coherence of legislative and normative texts (amendments to primary Laws, bylaws, rules and procedures), and represents NCEQE in legal cases.

The Strategic Development and International Relations Department assures the coordination and smooth operations of activities carried out together with international partners and projects, and will play an important role in the oversight of this Twinning project.

Table 1: Selected structural units of NCEQE and their staffing

NCEQE - Department/Division	Staff	
	Fixed Term	Contracted
Higher education Quality Assurance Department	5	9
VET Quality Assurance Department	3	5
General Education Quality Assurance Department	2	3
Registry Division	3	9
Qualifications Development Division	2	2
International Education Department	5	18
Total staff at NCEQE	51	102

Other Georgian Institutions and partners relevant for involvement in this Twinning project are:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports: <http://mes.gov.ge/index.php?lang=eng>, in particular:
 - International Relations and Strategic Development department
 - Higher Education Department
 - General Education Curriculum Department
 - VET department
- National Centre for Teacher Professional Development: <http://www.tpdg.ge/eng/>
- VET Council
- Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry: <http://www.gcci.ge/>
- Georgia Adult Education Association and its partners (DVV International): <http://www.gaea.org/>
- Association of private VET providers
- Social partners

The National Examinations Centre (NEC) was created to run fair and transparent examinations, and free from corruption the admission to higher education. NEC is in charge of the Unified National Examinations for admission to higher education, ascertaining credibility of the system.

The National Centre for Teacher Professional Development was established to guarantee the continuing professional development of teachers.

Annex 4 – Full list of EU policies and *Union acquis*

Selected items from the Annex XXXII of the AA listed below give an indication of the relevant EU policies:

- Council Recommendation of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education (98/561/EC)
- Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 on further European cooperation on quality assurance in higher education (2006/143/EC)
- Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EEC)
- Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01)
- Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (2009/C 155/02)
- Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/01)

More recent EU legal acts highly relevant for the proposed Twinning project (refer to 3.4 of the Twinning fiche):

- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION^[1] of 20 December 2012^[1] on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01)
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION^[1] of 19 December 2016^[1] on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016/C 484/01)
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03)
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 November 2017 on tracking graduates (2017/c 423/01)

Other key policy documents:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education. At: <https://enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>