

MODERNIZATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND EXTENSION SYSTEMS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN GEORGIA

Minutes of the Project Board Meeting N 3
held on 3rd February 2015, 11-13 h, UNDP Conference Room

Agenda

1. Opening Remarks: MoES, MoA, UNDP and SDC
2. Overview of the Project and its progress in the second half of 2014
Ruediger Heining, Project Manager
3. Questions and Answers
Discussion of the project steering issues:
 - Steering issues:
 - Upscaling of modular programmes – initial VET
 - Work-based-learning Working Group
 - Sustainable support to teaching and learning materials
 - New VET colleges in agriculture (Tsinamdzgvriantkari)
 - Cooperation with TPDC
 - Extension services at VET colleges in cooperation with ICCs
 - VET Council support
 - National Platform
4. Activity work-plan for 2015, discussion and approval
5. Concluding remarks

Participants:

Ms. Ketii Natriashvili	First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia
Mr. David Galegashvili	Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Georgia
Mr. Shombi Sharp	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili	Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP
Mr. Rudolf Schoch	Regional Director, SDC
Mr. Beka Tagauri	Head of Programme, SDC
Mr. Gaga Nikabadze	National Programme Officer, SDC
Mr. George Nanobashvili	Economic Development Team Leader, UNDP
Mr. Ruediger Heining	Project Manager, UNDP
Ms. Tamar Sanikidze	Agriculture Extension Specialist, UNDP
Ms. Elene Mikaberidze	Project Administrative/Finance Assistant, UNDP

Minutes of Meeting

- Shombi Sharp opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. He underlined the importance of the project and mentioned that this project is of highly strategic part of the reform agenda in Georgia. Inclusive economic growth and a mismatch of skills on the labor market as well as self-employment in agricultural sector affects the income of rural livelihoods as the largest portion of the population.
- Rudolf Schoch highlighted the importance of this project and its role in reducing unemployment in Georgia. He emphasized the need of the vocational skills and noted that countries with high rate of school graduates enrolling in vocational schools have lower rate of unemployment. He expressed appreciation of the support for the project by the Ministries.
- Ketii Natriashvili mentioned that the project has been very instrumental in facilitating implementation of the Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy for 2013-2020. She discussed MoES plans to pilot the elements of dual education in Georgia. MoES expects from the dual education approach a better image of the vocational education and the facilitation of early relationship with private sector. In accordance with the indicated strategy, MoES advised Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to include implementation of modular approach, work based learning/piloting elements of dual education in the terms of reference of its VET grant component.
- David Galegashvili informed that MoA has completed working on the Agriculture Development Strategy that inter-alia includes development of extension services among other topics. Presentation of the strategy is planned in the nearest future. He said that one of the most important priorities is to improve the education as such, but especially the skills and knowledge delivery. MoA needs to identify number of farmers and identify people who want to become farmers. Therefore farmers' certification is important. For extension services ten most relevant areas to start with need to be identified.
- Ruediger Heining reported on the project activities implemented in 2014.
 - a. Georgia has done a lot (more than many countries) to increase their knowledge and skills system that is a major component for developing rural areas. He stressed importance of sharing Swiss experience for VET and extension in Georgia's agricultural sector.
 - b. Modular programs development (modular programs for the extension workers as well)
 - c. Seven professional standards, eight modular programs (level 3 and 4), textbook for farmers, textbook for plant grower.
 - d. Study tours conducted for exchange of information, ideas and experience.
 - e. Agriculture calendar designed and printed.
- Rudolf Schoch noted the need to add information in minority languages in the calendar. He also asked about the structure of the job description of the ICCs.
- Ruediger Heining replied that 1/3 of the ICC work is dedicated to extension and 2/3 - to administrative work. This ratio shall be changed to increase efficiency of extension work. In total, 260 people are working in the ICCs.

- Ketí Natriashvili raised an issue of the National Platform and suggested not to set up a new entity but set it up under the existing VET Council. VET Council comprises of thematic groups participants. MOA is represented there. A thematic group for agriculture and extension should be facilitated by the VET project and led by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Project Plans for 2015:

- VET Conference with participation of the VET teachers (about 60 teachers). The question was raised whether or not VET teachers are ready to implement modular programs. Ms. Ketí Natriashvili noted that we need to study this topic thoroughly and share the assessments and reports on the needs existing in the system for application of modular programs.
- Extension Conference will be organized in 2015 in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and international donors.
- The company ACT was contracted to implement Farmers' Survey on knowledge needs. Shombi Sharp suggested complementing this with focus groups study.
- Ketí Natriashvili said that opinion of the MoA should be considered here as well.
- David Galegashvili said that, first of all, we have to identify who is the farmer (not everybody living in the rural areas is a farmer).
- Ketí Natriashvili suggested considering opinion of the banks making agriculture loans as well as other entities in order to have different perspectives.
- David Galegashvili mentioned that there are different players who could contribute to the survey and focus groups with whom MoA cooperates in the state insurance programs also banks and enterprises – beneficiaries of state programs for supporting agriculture.
- Ruediger Heining talked about planned teachers exchange program. Ketí Natriashvili said that the language problem could be solved by accompanying interpreter. For good students MoES could finance language modules as part of the program or/ standalone (if the language module is not part of student's program, note: this possibility needs to be further explored by MoES prior to confirmation) as well.
- Ruediger Heining discussed extension activities of the colleges in cooperation with ICCs.
- Ketí Natriashvili raised a question on monitoring and evaluation of the programs. Gaga Nikabadze replied that about 15 trips are implemented for monitoring together with representatives of MoA Department of Vocational Education. Ketí Natriashvili kindly requested that there is a monitoring and evaluation plan developed for monitoring and evaluating the modular programs developed by UNDP and emplaced at the colleges with MoES funding within the framework of the project. She also requested the project to follow through with the monitoring and evaluation plan for identifying the interim gaps to tackle and final results to show and to build upon further. The MoES staff shall be included in these processes. The monitoring and evaluation component should cover full implementation of the vocational education modular program, not just an academic year.
- Ketí Natriashvili noted that the tracer study is also important to track how the graduates perform on the labor market (employment rate). She mentioned that MoES developed a long term, consolidated strategy of education and science system. She talked about the need to have a linkage of the vocational education and higher education. Ruediger Heining replied that we only work on the 3rd and

4th levels of vocational education so far; a future focus can be as well to support the development of the 5th level for agricultural educational programs. Support to Tsinamdzgvriantkari College: Ketí Natriashvili said that the MoES has channeled GEL 2mln for the rehabilitation of the old College building. The College needs an action plan. World Bank experts put together development plan basing on the interviews with stakeholders. The indicated plan has officially been provided to UNDP for revision and approval, as well as for distribution of tasks between the project and MoES (e.g. the rehabilitation of school building – MoES, design, development and equipment of workshops – UNDP project). The response is still awaited. She noted that would be good to teach the college students some entrepreneurial skills. Successful students could get 0% or low interest loans to set up their production. The country is in the process of introducing food safety standards and farmers should be assisted to adapt to this novelty. It would be worthwhile if the MoA could step in the initiative with due funding, since providing the loans to start up and entrepreneurship is beyond the MoES competence. Ketí Natriashvili also suggested exploring the possibility for offering (the project to cover) cross cutting or related programs that may be related to agriculture and useful for farmer's activities (e.g. carpentry, adopted modules on tourism for supporting development of agricultural/eco tourism and helping farmers to generate more income with on farm activities, etc).

- Shombi Sharp inquired whether there were any modules to increase awareness of cooperatives. Ruediger Heining replied on that we have social-economic parts in the modular programs that reflect all type of cooperation of single farmers.
- Rudolph Schoch questioned setting up workshops with the colleges. In his view, practical trainings should take place in private enterprises. Ketí Natriashvili replied that the private sector is not much developed in Georgia, so capacities and capabilities of the farmers might not be sufficient. In such case, we need to have workshops available on College level. She suggested to explore through feasibility whether suitable options for farm-based learning in the area are available.
- Ketí Natriashvili proposed a project cooperation with Iberia College and Lakada College (Jvari, Tsalenjikha). The Lakada College is located close to the border with Abkhazia and Gali citizens could take advantage of it. The MoES has funded rehabilitation of Lakada. Ketí Natriashvili also suggested considering possibility of creating database for modular programs and other electronic resources.
- We have obligation to work with 8 colleges by the project document. The project document envisages setting up one in Kvemo Kartli (Marneuli). Natia Natsvlishvili suggested replacing Marneuli with Jvari. Ruediger Heining replied that the project will discuss this issue.


Final remarks:

The project Board Members decided the following:

- Progress Report 2014 is approved
- Activity Work Plan 2015 is approved.
- The project will follow up and elaborate the options for extending support to new colleges (Tsinamdzgvriantkari College, Lakada, and Iberia)
- The Board members shall review the methodology of the farmers' needs study.

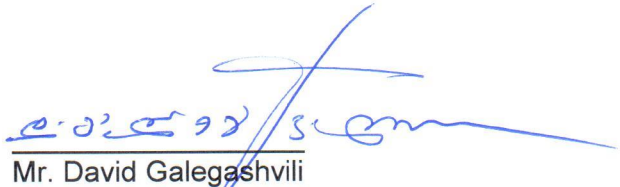
- Monitoring system shall be elaborated for piloting the modular programs.
- Level 5 shall be introduced in VET to enable transfer to the level of high education.

Ministry of Education and Science



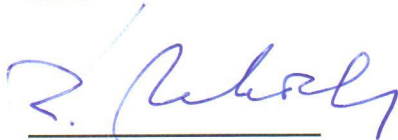
Ms. Ketil Natriashvili
First Deputy Minister of Education
and Science

Ministry of Agriculture



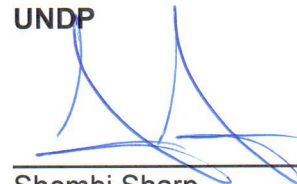
Mr. David Galegashvili
Deputy Minister of Agriculture

SDC



Dr. Rudolf Schoch
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