



PROJECT FACTSHEET

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Improving farm productivity in Georgia through dual vocational education and training



Media Pachkoria runs her own greenhouse but from time to time she comes to visit her teachers at the vocational college in Senaki for a piece of advice ©SDC

Agriculture is Georgia's most important sector. However, farming remains uncompetitive as farmers' skills are out of step with the job market and technological developments. Switzerland is continuing to support vocational education and training to improve productivity, farm income and the employment situation for students of agriculture.

Agriculture is the most important economic sector for rural communities in Georgia. 90% of working people in rural areas are employed in agriculture. In the country as a whole, 40% of the workforce makes a living from farming. However, agriculture only accounts for 8% of Georgia's GDP due to a lack of competitiveness in the market. Vocational training in agriculture is patchy and unavailable to farmers in remote areas. These factors hamper the transition to a market economy which the government has sought to bring about since Georgia gained its independence.

The SDC is funding a project, implemented by UNDP, to improve living standards and boost farmers' incomes in Georgia. The project seeks

to increase productivity, incomes and jobs in the agricultural sector by helping farmers and students at agricultural colleges improve their knowledge and skills.

SWISS ADDED VALUE

Switzerland brings to the project its experience and expertise in dual and continuing education and training (lifelong learning) in agricultural skills. Switzerland's expertise may also create vital links between agricultural training and development services, which are well-established in Switzerland, but not in Georgia. Partner colleges, for example, have revised their curricula to improve quality and make programmes more relevant by providing modular and short courses, which are particularly practical for women.

MARKED IMPROVEMENTS

The first stage of the project, undertaken between 2013 and 2018, has had a very positive and tangible impact. Legislation phasing in vocational education and training and a strategy for agricultural development services has been prepared and approved at national level. 800 students graduating from A-VET (agricultural vocational education and training) courses have subsequently found employment. For the first time, 130 students were able to pursue apprenticeships at 16 different businesses. Some 8,500 farmers have taken short courses, increasing their productivity by 33%. They have also had access to customised advice, provided by 400 farming consultants, and the expertise of 300 professional instructors. These results have, in turn, increased the take-up rate, with a 120%

rise in the number of students enrolling on agricultural training courses between 2013 and 2017. At government level, coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education has also improved.

BETTER TRAINING TO IMPROVE YIELDS

A key priority at this stage is to sustain and institutionalise the results achieved, which will mean gradually transferring responsibilities to the private sector and improving the image of A-VET courses. This will involve 24 colleges, including 8 colleges that already provide A-VET courses to some 400 students annually.

The second stage of the project aims to build on the progress made. The following objectives have been set:

- Improving coordination between A-VET and agricultural extension services.
- Promoting public-private partnerships to deliver high-quality services and combined theoretical and practical training.
- Increasing A-VET availability by using digital media to reach farmers and students in remote locations and offering more courses catering specifically to the needs of farmers.

This will enable 12,000 farmers and 1,800 students to upgrade their skills, which will ultimately make the agricultural sector more attractive by increasing productivity and income levels.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

TITLE

Modernising agricultural vocational education and training in Georgia

DEPARTMENT

Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEMES

Agriculture
Training

COUNTRIES

Georgia

PARTNERS

UNDP
Ministry of Education and Science
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture

BACKGROUND

Farming in Georgia is uncompetitive and farmers' skills are out of step with the job market and technological developments.

GOAL

Increasing productivity, incomes and jobs in the agricultural sector by helping farmers and students at agricultural colleges improve their knowledge and skills.

TARGET GROUPS

The Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, farms, farmers' associations, vocational colleges, and private parties involved in vocational education and training.

DURATION

2018–22

BUDGET

CHF 6,352,000

IMPRINT

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