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Employability Study in Agriculture

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Contents

List of Acronyms

AA	Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, and Georgia (EU Georgia Association Agreement)
DCFTA	Part of the AA, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Food Business Operator
GOG	The Government of Georgia
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LC	Labour Code
MOEPA	The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
MOF	Ministry of Finance of Georgia
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
WTO	The World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

The report below provides an overview of the labor market in Georgian agriculture and its anticipated development. It was developed by Policy and Management Consulting Group project team, within the UN FAO assignment - Development of an employability study of the Georgian agricultural sector. The project started in October 2021, and was finalized in April, 2022.

The objective of this study was to develop policy document providing general overview of the labor market in Georgian agriculture and anticipated development.

To analyze the existing tendencies, opportunities, and challenges in the Georgian agricultural sector, project team used various information gathering techniques. These techniques contained quantitative as well as qualitative research methods. To be more precise, the very first activity under the project was revision of the previously elaborated assessments and recommendations, surveys and studies, and other relevant documents describing the labor market tendencies. The Desk Study was followed by the job category classification.

Next few steps were mainly about the education institutions and its students. Specifically, the project consultants studied and analyzed the educational programs, curriculum, and annual student enrollment in agricultural programs, which was followed by the meetings with the representatives of these institutions.

Further, six focus-group meetings were also organized with Georgian youth, specifically with people aged 16-25 from different regions of the country.

The information collected through desk study was also approved by the results of the qualitative study. Project team conducted an online survey with students majoring in agriculture studies at bachelor's and master's level from different universities. The survey questionnaire was disseminated to students of agricultural and veterinary programs as well as to students of professional education programs. As a result, 112 responses were collected from students of higher and professional education institutions.

For further information team surveyed business companies (FBOs) engaged in the production, processing, manufacturing, transportation, storage, and distribution of agricultural and food products via telephone. In total 219 companies were interviewed.

Finally, the report contains the analysis of the legal framework and support environment. The legal expertise analyzed the current situation and DCFTA approximation with the main focus on agriculture labor market.

As a result of the qualitative and quantitative studies, PMCG team provided study results and developed a comprehensive report on Agricultural Labor Market in Georgia. The report included comparison of the

existing and anticipated educational opportunities against the requirements of private sector and skills mismatch, and recommendations for further improvement of educational programs, as well as recommendations for encouragement of Georgian youth to develop agriculture careers. Recommendations were prepared based on international best practices, but fully in line with the local context.

The report consists of several parts, namely, it starts with a brief overview of the research results in executive summary. The second chapter outlines the methodologal approaches of the study, followed by the main part of the report – research and analysis. The document is finalized with the conclusions and recommendations developed by the project team based on the information collected through the study.

2. Executive Summary

General background

- Agriculture remains the largest employment sector in the economy of Georgia, as approximately 19-22% of employed persons pursue agricultural activities. Given the magnitude of its contribution to the GDP (less than 10% over the years), it is not surprising that the average wages in the agricultural sector are significantly lower in comparison to other sectors. The agricultural labour is dominated by self-employed small agricultural holders pursuing mixed agriculture. The level of FDIs in the agricultural sector constitutes less than 0.5% of the total FDI inflows.
- The current Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) Strategy for 2021-2027 adopted by the government includes 3 Goals and 16 Objectives, aimed at raising awareness of farmers and entrepreneurs, developing rural infrastructure, promoting rural and ecotourism, elaborating effective food safety systems, veterinary and plant protection.
- Particular links of the ARD Strategy to the agricultural employment and development of skills are of the applied and sector-specific nature. Extension services and vocation education are promoted. Academic goals in the field of agricultural and veterinary sciences are not explicitly mentioned.
- Overall, there are nine higher education institutions and twenty vocational education and training (VET) institutions that offer academic programs in agricultural and veterinary sciences. Apart from agricultural and veterinarian programs, wine-making and food technology is also offered as agriculture-related specializations.

Development and maintenance of human resources in agriculture

- Higher education institutions report that their academic programs in agriculture are based on the accreditation standards and own labour market research, in cooperation with public, private and non-governmental organizations. Introduction of the professional programs in agriculture is predominantly provided by the public VET institutions.

- The interviewed deans and students of the agricultural academic programs note that the growing interest in the agricultural studies is largely attributed to viticulture and winemaking. Food processing was mentioned as an important field by VET institutions. These responses reflect the importance of the economic sectors with relatively high value added.
- On the other hand, the majority of interviewed school students do not see their future in agriculture, and the primary reasons for skepticism included low salaries and limited opportunities in the field. The young people mentioned better access to financing and agricultural units of larger scale as the pre-requisites of the agricultural development.
- The existing survey of VET graduates showed that their large majority is positive about the studies. At the same time, approximately half of the VET graduates found employment, whereas among the working graduates less than 50% were employed in the field of agriculture.
- The conducted survey of agricultural students similarly showed that the vast majority (90%) of the students would choose the same program today. While positively describing their academic interest in agricultural and veterinary studies, almost three-fourths of the surveyed students turned out to be economically active, including 46% being employed and 28% actively looking for a job. Only 20% of the surveyed students indicated that they did not want to work due to their academic efforts.
- When asked about reasons for working, only one-third of the working students mentioned they did it to earn money as the primary reason. The majority of the surveyed students indicated the desire to gain experience and build their CVs as the primary reason to work. Less than 25% of the working students are employed in the field of agriculture or veterinary science.

- Almost two-thirds of the working students worked more than 30 hours per week, while 39% of them mentioned to be working more than 40 hours weekly. Students largely worked during daytime (84% - between 9:00 and 18:00), less than 10% worked remotely. Almost 60% of the working students indicated that their academic performance deteriorated due to employment, deterioration correlated with the number of hours worked per week. In addition, 84% of working students mentioned they regularly miss lectures due to their working schedule.

- The employment details of the working students lead to conclusions that students largely do not see significant benefits to invest time in full-time studies. Most students prefer to start working and gain hands-on experience, even to the detriment of their academic performance. They mostly express their desire to stay in the field of agriculture/veterinary science and not change their profession. Whether there will be sufficient market opportunities for absorbing agricultural graduates at the level of skilled professionals remains unclear.

Business sentiments and employment in the agricultural sector

- In a number of studies agricultural companies are reported to prefer practical (on-the-job) experience to academic training. In this regard, the vocational education is widely regarded by policy-makers and many international organizations as a relevant response to these needs. However, there are diverging views among agricultural producers with regard to vocational education. Larger companies tend to be more positive about VET graduates, while smaller

companies do not see much benefit therein.

- Certain agricultural professionals voice a particular concern with regard to a simplification of academic studies in the field of agriculture which resulted in merging academic programs and eliminating specialized agricultural professions and facilities (such as agro chemistry laboratories). In their view, this led to the lack of agricultural professionals and no generational change in the agricultural academia.

- The review of the existing literature on agricultural employment studies shows an ambivalent picture. On the one hand, the need for agriculture-related professions (agronomists, crop scientists, soil scientists, veterinary scientists, etc.) is stressed by different stakeholders (businesses, local authorities, NGOs, public agencies). On the other hand, the market does not particularly reward these occupations: the number of the above-mentioned agricultural professionals is extremely low, as most companies do not have the ability to provide them full-time employment.

- The surveys of FBO companies and agricultural students further demonstrate that the agricultural market remains inefficient and is based on the labour-intensive approach. As found in the FBO survey, only 16% of employees represented high skill workers, while more than 65% of personnel were low and medium skill workers. The labour-intensive structure of employment in agricultural companies implies fewer possibilities for younger specialists: only 11% of FBOs indicated to employ graduates of agricultural programs, while only a small share of working students was employed in the agricultural field or were doing an internship.

- The bulk of employment in the FBOs represented medium and low skill workers. Managers and high skill workers constituted 15-16% each of the total personnel. Wine technologists and agronomists were two most frequent agricultural occupations among professionals. On average, there were not more than two professionals in one enterprise for each professional position. This was consistent with the desk review findings that despite the declared need of professional agronomists, crop and veterinary scientists, the actual demand for full-time employment in these positions was quite low. Temporary employment in FBOs largely included unskilled workers, pruning and grafting specialists.

- The average net monthly wages of professionals and technicians in the agricultural positions did not exceed GEL1500. The monthly net wages among medium and low skill workers (such as skilled agricultural workers, machine operators and elementary workers) were lower than GEL1000.

Analysis of Legal Framework of agriculture labour related legislation

- Two conventions related to agriculture, one of them Governance conventions and another technical Convention (Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) and Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)), are not ratified by the Parliament of Georgia and they are not part of the Georgian legislation.

- The current analysis of the AA, respective Directives and relevant Georgian legislation, shows that deadlines for approximation with some most important directives, have already passed. Therefore, in most cases, Georgia's obligation is to be approximated with Respective EU directives.

- The current labour legislation, including LC, Georgian Organic Law "On occupational safety" and Georgian law "on labour Inspection", are almost fully approximated with **8 frame directives** in the field of *Employment, social policy and equal opportunity*, and also with **6 directives** in the field of *anti-discrimination and gender equality*. From the rest of 26 Directives in the field of *Health and safety at work,* some of them have to be approximated due to the timetable and some of them would be approximated till 2025.

  According to the Directive 91/383/EEC of 25 June 1991 amended LC doesn't use term – "casual work", but it uses term - "fixed-duration".

3. Methodology

For the preparation of the components of the report a number of approaches have been used. First, the desk research of the existing strategic, legal (including international and, in particular, EU legislation) and analytical documents as well as of relevant web data was applied to produce the overview of the agricultural labour market, characterization of the academic programs in the fields of agriculture and veterinary science, and the analysis of the legal framework and support environment for agricultural employment.

Second, a number of qualitative studies (in the form of in-depth and focus group interviews) were conducted with heads of agricultural academic programs, agricultural students, and young people aged 16-25 in order to understand the details of the agricultural education as well as the motivations of students and young people with regard to pursuing agricultural professions.

Finally, two surveys with i) agricultural students at higher education and professional programs and ii) food business operator (FBO) companies functioning in the field of agriculture and food processing were conducted. The surveys were aimed at obtaining insights into academic and employment motivations of agricultural students, on the one hand, and employment structure and labour needs of agriculture-related companies, on the other.

More specific details on the methodological aspects for each component are provided in the respective parts of the report.

4. Research and Analysis

4.1 Desk Review of the Agricultural Labour Market in Georgia

4.1.1. Introduction

Despite the methodological changes in calculating employment which resulted in exclusion of a large number of subsistence farmers from the category of self-employed persons, agriculture still remains the largest contributor of the total number of employees of Georgia. The agriculture in Georgia is dominated by small self-employed agricultural holders involved in mixed agriculture. The inefficiency of the agricultural sector is manifested in its low share in the GDP (8.4% in 2020) relative to its share in total employment (ca. 19-22% in 2017-2020).

Given its high social and economic impact, development of agriculture is announced as one of top priorities of the government of Georgia. Market orientation, skill development and export promotion in the sector represent main objectives of the national development strategies of agriculture.

The present desk review considers, firstly, the existing tendencies in the agricultural sector and, in particular, in the agricultural labour market based on the official statistical data. Further, the report summarizes different studies and official documents related to the agricultural labour market, supply and demand of human capital skills.

4.1.2. Review of tendencies in the agricultural sector

The rural population of Georgia equaled 1.5 million people at the beginning of 2021, or 40.6% of Georgia's total population.

From the macroeconomic perspective, *the NACE sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery*[1] accounted for 8.4% of the total GDP of Georgia. Although somewhat increasing in annual terms from 7.7% in 2019, the share of agriculture in the GDP is characterized by a downward trend in the last decade from as high as 10.3% in 2011.

In 2020, animal husbandry represented the largest agricultural subsector accounting for 48% of total agricultural production. The share of plant growing equaled 45%, while the contribution of agriculture services stood at 7%.

[1] NACE Rev. 2 - Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community

The *informality* of the agricultural production in Georgia is clearly manifested in the business statistics key metrics below. Given the size of agricultural employment and share in the GDP, the corresponding indicators in the agricultural business sector are significantly falling behind.

The *number of registered business entities* engaged in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery sector amounted to 7.5 thousand (0.9% from total registered business entities), including 2.4 thousand active enterprises, or 1.3% of the total number of active business entities (Geostat, 2021c).

The share of newly born[2] enterprises engaged in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery equaled 1.0% of the total born enterprises in 2019. The rate of enterprise deaths was similar, constituting 1.2% of total enterprise deaths in the country.

Consequently, the level of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery sector was almost non-existent, equalling 0.3% of total FDIs in the country.

4.1.3. Employment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Sector

Employment statistics in the agricultural sector underwent significant changes in recent years, as a result of new census data as well as essential changes in employment methodology employed by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

First, the 2014 Population and Agricultural Census demonstrated that the number of population and, consequently, the number of agricultural holdings was approximately 15% less than the current demographic and agricultural data showed. In particular, the number of holdings decreased from ca. 800 thousand to 642 thousand, which included 640 thousand household holdings and 2 thousand enterprises (non-household holdings) (Geostat, 2014, p.32). The new census data manifested a significant decrease in the population numbers – from ca. 4.4 million to 3.7 million people, resulting in a corresponding contraction of the total labour force and especially of the agricultural population, as the rural areas saw higher rates of population decreases in comparison to the pre-census demographic figures.

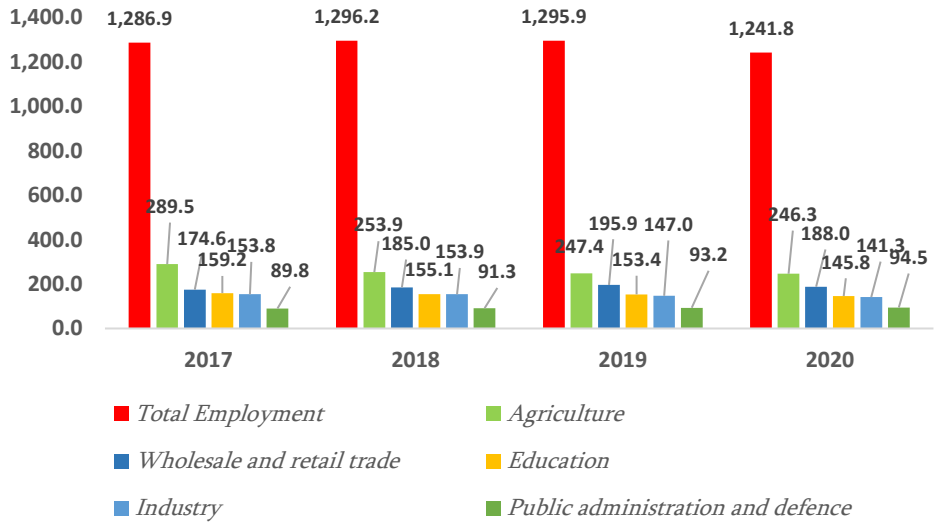
The second important factor which fundamentally affected the employment numbers in the agricultural sector was related to the changes in methodology of calculating employment. The 14th ILO resolution stipulated that workers producing goods and services entirely or mostly for own use (non-market purposes) were excluded from the labour force. Given a particularly large number of subsistence farmers in Georgia, this methodological change led to a drastic decline of self-employed persons in agriculture. As

[2] **Enterprise birth** means the creation of a combination of production factors with the restriction that no other enterprises are involved in the event. Births do not include entries into the population due to mergers, break-ups, split off, or restructuring of a set of enterprises.
Enterprise death means the dissolution of a combination of production factors with the restriction that no other enterprises are involved in the event. Deaths do not include exits from the population due to mergers, take-overs, break-ups or restructuring of a set of enterprises.

a result, the 2020 labour force survey (LFS) results showed that the number of persons employed in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery sector amounted to 246.2 thousand (19.8% of total employed persons) in 2020 (Geostat, 2021e). This is considerably lower than approximately 800 thousand persons employed in (mostly subsistence) agriculture, as calculated by the previous ILO methodology.

However, despite the profound changes related to new demographic data as well as the new methodology of calculating employment, agriculture still remained the largest sector in terms of employment numbers. In 2020 the share of agriculture in the total employment was the highest standing at ca. 20%, while oscillating between 19-22% in 2017-2019. Distribution of employed persons across top five economic sectors in 2020 is shown in Diagram 1.

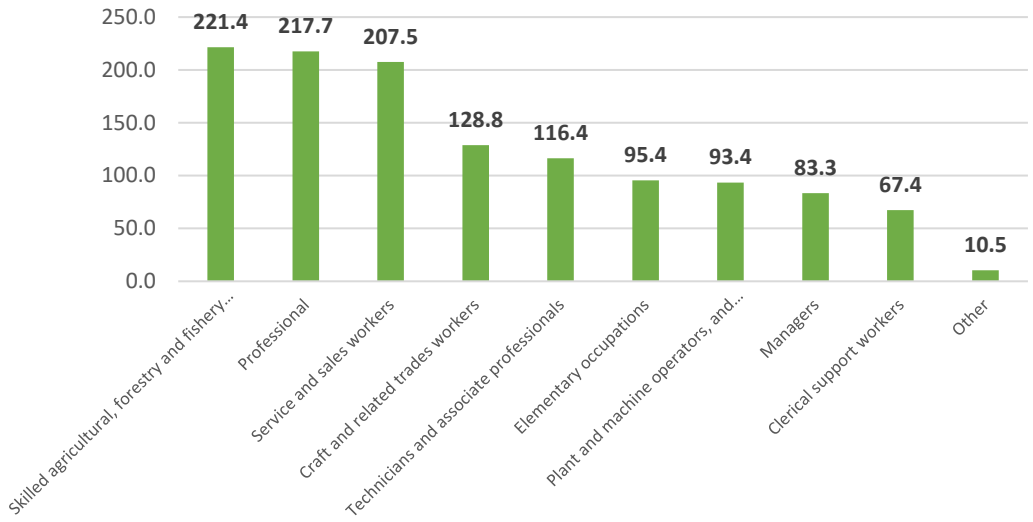
Diagram 1. Employment in top five economic sectors and total employment, thsd. persons



Source: Geostat

According to the Labor Force Survey (LFS), the number of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers was 221.4 thousand persons in 2020. The diagram bellow allows to better figure out entire distribution of employment by occupation according to ISCO 08 (see diagram 2):

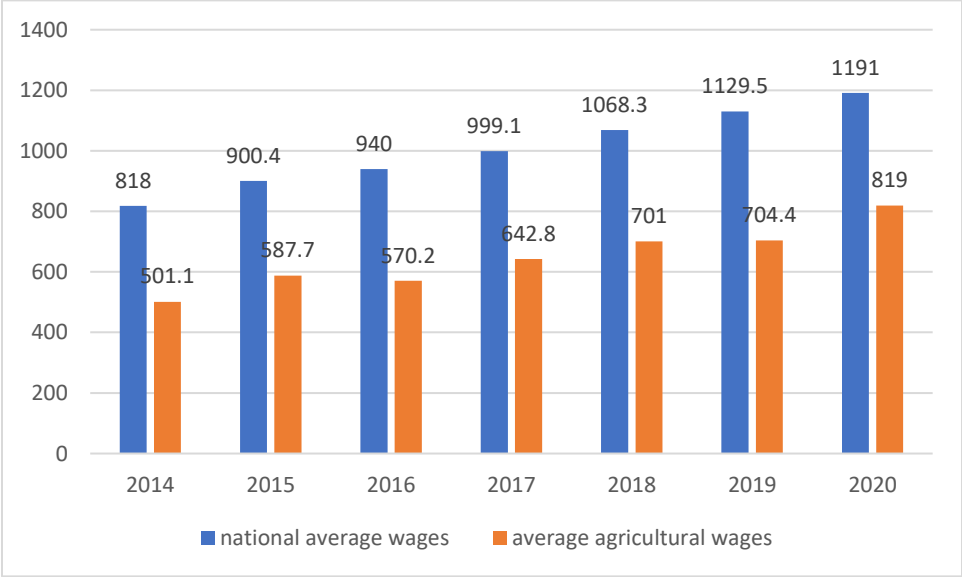
Diagram 2 Employment by ISCO 08 occupations groups, 2020 (thousand persons)



Source: Geostat

The average salaries in the agricultural sector increased faster than in the majority of other sectors in recent years, but they still significantly lag behind the national average (Diagram 3).

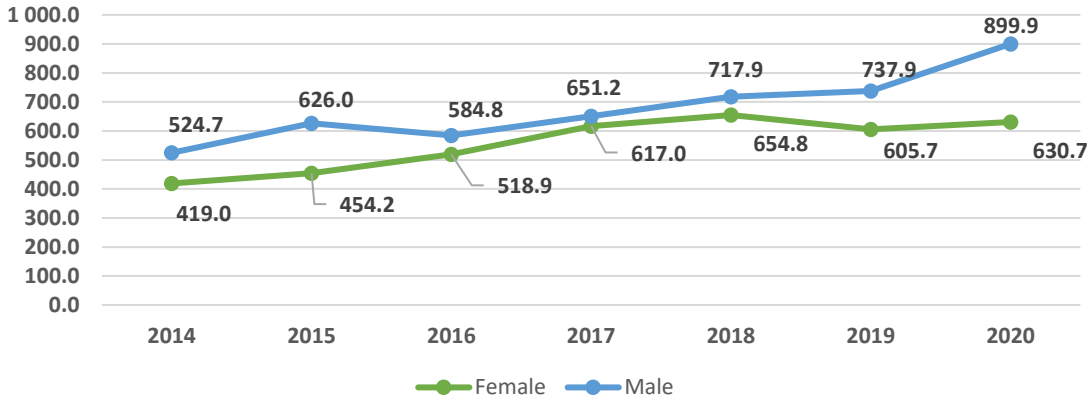
Diagram 3 Comparison of average nominal wages in agriculture sector to the national average nominal wages (GEL)



Source: Geostat

The sex-disaggregated time-series of average salaries in the agriculture sector are given below.

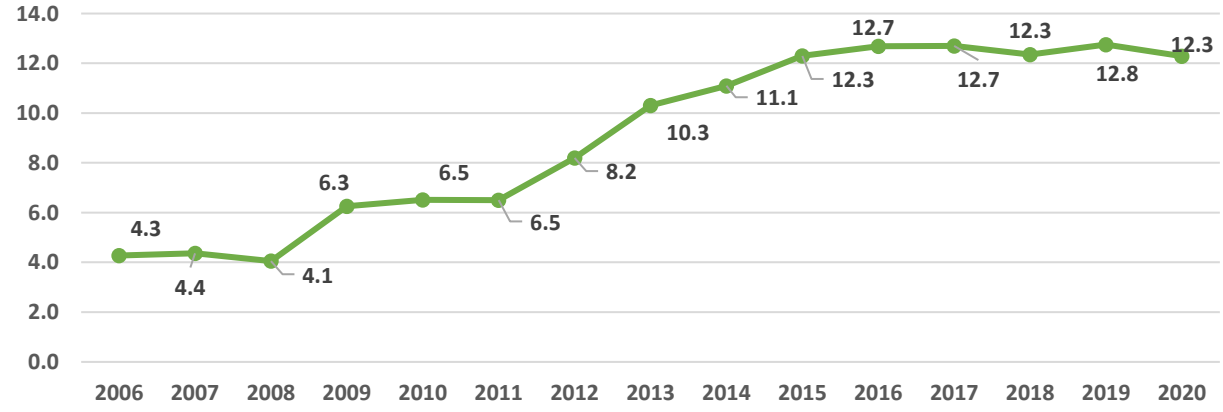
Diagram 4. Average monthly nominal salary in agriculture sector by sex in 2014-2020 (GEL).



Source: Geostat

As it was noted, the scope of the formal agricultural sector is very limited. Despite the fact that the number of employed persons in agriculture businesses almost tripled from 2006 to 2019, the total employment in the agricultural business sector was only 12.3 thousand (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5. Number of Employed Persons in Agriculture Sector, in 2006-2020 (thousand persons)



Source: Geostat

4.1.4. Review of the existing studies

Government Strategy

Before examining the primary results of different studies related to agricultural employment, we briefly outline the respective impact of the current strategic documents on agriculture in the country.

The government of Georgia adopted the 2021-2027 Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy, in close cooperation with the development partners. The Strategy includes 3 Goals and 16 Objectives (MEPA, 2019, p.26-27), as summarized in the table below:

Goals	**Objectives**
Goal 1: Competitive agricultural and non-agricultural sectors	1.1 To raise awareness/knowledge of farmers and entrepreneurs; 1.2 To develop agricultural and non-agricultural value chain by focusing on diversification, innovative technologies, cooperation and support to producers' unions; To increase access to various financial instruments; 1.3 To support integration of farmers/entrepreneurs on the market; 1.4 To stimulate young farmers and entrepreneurs in rural areas; 1.5 To increase access to infrastructure and services; 1.6 To improve the irrigation and drainage systems 1.7 To develop rural tourism and relevant tourism products
Goal 2: Sustainable usage of natural resources, retaining the eco-system, adaptation to climate change	2.1 To disseminate climate-smart and environmentally adapted agricultural practices; 2.2 To support the development of ecotourism; 2.3 Sustainable usage of forest resources; 2.4 To support the implementation of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies and practices;

	2.5 To maintain agro-bio-diversity.
Goal 3: Elaborate effective systems of food/feed safety, veterinary and plant protection	3.1 To approximate the sanitary and phytosanitary regulatory legislation of Georgia to the EU legislation; 3.2 To ensure that the products supplied to the local and export markets comply with sanitary and phytosanitary standards; 3.3 To develop the laboratory capacities; 3.4 Quality assurance agricultural inputs

While all strategic Objectives can be at least indirectly linked to agricultural employment, the following activities from the Strategy Action Plan (2021-2023) can be distinguished:

a) Provision of effective extension services to 60,000-80,000 farmers annually;
b) Annual increase in the number of students in the state vocational agricultural programs (by 5% in 2021 and 3% in 2022-2023);
c) Subsidizing agro-insurance premium for 17,500-22,000 ha. annually;
d) b) Co-financing of agro-loans;
e) Promotion of the Georgian tea sector production;
f) Promotion of the Georgian grape and wine sectors;
g) Rehabilitation of 250 km of local roads annually;
h) Promoting vocational education in at least one additional municipality annually;
i) Construction/rehabilitation of kindergartens in rural areas;
j) Implementation of animal vaccinations
k) Plant treatment against harmful insects

Surveys and studies related to agricultural employment in Georgia

One of the more detailed studies of different aspects of the Georgian labour market represents the *World Bank* publication ***"Georgia: Skills Mismatch and Unemployment, Labour Market Challenges" (2013).*** The study notes that employment is relatively unresponsive to economic growth. Youth unemployment is considerably high. There is a high inequality in wages by European standards.

The demand and supply for workers manifest skill mismatches. The two largest sectors in terms of employment – agriculture and trade – are characterized with low productivity, where the majority of employees do not require higher education. On the other hand, a significant workforce with higher education cannot find suitable jobs which leads to high unemployment, especially in urban areas. The vocational education is seen as a possible solution to partly balance the labour mismatch.

It is noted that working poor represent mostly subsistence farmers. In general, the proportion of households with low work intensity is high, which is not surprising given the lack of work opportunities.

In a later publication of the *World Bank* ***"Georgia at Work: Assessing the Jobs Landscape" (WB 2018)*** it is noted that labour force misallocation remains the problem, as the economic growth does not create enough jobs. Companies still face skill shortages, as more two-thirds of companies complain about lacking appropriate skills in the market, and 70% of them say that the education system is outdated.

The NEET indicator – proportion of young people not in employment, education or training – is 30%, which is significantly higher than in the EU countries of similar size (NEET equaling less than 10% in Czech Republic, Slovenia or Lithuania). Women are more likely than men to remain inactive and out of school after completing studies.

Another *World Bank* publication ***"Georgia: From Reformer to Performer" (2018)*** discusses the underwhelming performance of the agricultural sector during the last two decades, while pointing out that commercializing agriculture has a potential to become a big growth driver. The study notes that deficient agricultural "hardware" (land fragmentation, infrastructure bottlenecks, lack of capital, declining irritation systems, weak access to finance) as well as outdated "software" (skills and knowledge deficit among rural population, a culture of informal business dealings, low motivation) hamper development of the sector.

The 2010 Survey on Demand of Employers on Labour Force conducted by the Targeted Initiative Georgia with the EU support surveyed 2000 enterprises in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi and Zugdidi was one of the earliest surveys aimed at studying demand factors in the labour market. While the description of general factors enhancing or hampering business growth may be somewhat outdated, certain information is related to the agricultural sector. In general, the low qualification of personnel was the top challenge for the employers, and the primary occupation gaps represented the lack of qualified agronomists, veterinarians and financial managers (TIG, 2011, p.55). Vocational education was named as a possible factor that could mitigate the above gap.

GIZ was another partner that started to support The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in conducting labour market surveys. In the ***2012 Pilot Survey of Labour Market Needs in Georgia (Tourism, Apparel, ICT, Food Processing)*** it was found that:

- Experience of potential employees is more in-demand from companies than formal education. This is true for all sectors, but particularly in apparel and food processing. Companies which prefer employees with higher educational qualifications are not necessarily looking for particular skill-sets but believe that university graduates have good general knowledge and are more capable of solving everyday issues by finding relevant information.
- Although many companies across all sectors have been trying to find new employees in the past 12 months, only about half of them have succeeded. Companies have difficulties in finding qualified employees. When they want to find new employees, they use either internet or personal acquaintances, depending on the sector. However, using educational institutions such as VET centres to find new employees is extremely rare.
- In all of the sectors, experience was usually more highly prized than training. However, when employers say they require experience they are generally suggesting that hands-on experience rather than theoretical knowledge is the key to success. This would massively privilege VET

centers as bastions of practical training compared with the more theoretical inclinations of universities. If VET training was seen as offering good skills training or the equivalent of experience, then it would be hugely popular across all of the sectors considered here.

- One aspect which VET centres could take into consideration and apply in all sectors is the development of better professional skills. In all four sectors companies complained about lack of professional manners such as discipline, a sense of responsibility, seriousness and motivation. Such characteristics usually come with experience. Thus, VET centres should create simulations of real-life situation so that students can understand the need for a sense of responsibility.

The ***Study of Labour Market Demand Component*** (MoLHSA 2016), commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs included quantitative and qualitative parts. Again, given the small sample size of the agricultural sector, the sector-specific quantitative conclusions were extremely limited and mostly similar to the survey of business demand on skills, described later in this Section.

More interesting conclusions in relation to agriculture component can be drawn from sector-specific in-depth interviews conducted in different regions of Georgia.

Tbilisi respondents (a LELP company and private bio industry representative) stressed the deficit of qualified personnel in the agriculture sector which was caused, in their opinion, by merging academic programs and thus eliminating specialized professions. They argued that general skills of agronomists cannot replace specialized knowledge of agro-chemists, soil scientists, plant protection scientists, food specialists, etc. An example of agro-chemistry laboratories was named, when 14 existing laboratories were eliminated. Age of the specialists at the academic institutions was another issue of concern, as younger specialists were severely lacking.

Other professions that were mentioned as important in the agriculture sector included nutrition specialists, as well as lawyers (to support farmers' rights). The respondents also noted that development of vocational education would not solve the existing problems and ensuring of high-quality education in the academic institutions was critical.

Practical challenges were voiced by respondents from the other regions, where the need for soil scientists, plant protection scientists, chemicals/pesticides experts was underlined. The respondents noted that these professions were highly sought after, and the available specialists worked for different companies (in different locations) to satisfy the demand.

The survey of business demand on skills was conducted in 2017 and 2019 by Geostat in partnership with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, covering respectively 6,000 and 9,000 business companies, excluding financial corporations. The survey aimed at identification and analysis of demand for professional qualifications and skills in the business sector. Given the overall small size of the agricultural sector, the conclusions related to agricultural businesses were quite limited: it was not possible to single out the high-skilled occupations in the agricultural sector, hence the most results were related to the skilled agricultural workers (ISCO, Group 6).

The survey demonstrated that:

- The number of skilled agricultural workers equaled 3.2 thsd. persons (0.4% the total number of business sector employment), by far the smallest occupation group behind the second last group of plant and machine operators (54 thsd. persons).
- The average salary of skilled agricultural workers equaled GEL 659, ca. 55% of the average national salary level.
- From ca. 58,000 vacancies available during 12 months the number of vacancies in agriculture equaled less than 1% (512 vacancies);
- The number of vacancies for skilled agricultural labour was less than 100, including ca. 50 vacancies for field crop and vegetable growers.
- The share of skilled agricultural workers who received professional training was also extremely low.

The Ministry of Education and Science with the UNDP support conducts annually the ***Tracer Study of Vocational Education Graduates (MES 2020, 2019, 2018).*** The sampling of respondents is done proportional to the size of vacation programs. The share of surveyed graduates of the agricultural programs equaled approximately 20%, including programs in animal husbandry, agronomy, veterinary science. The study found that

- Mostly the graduates have a positive attitude toward the learning process, the absolute majority (more than 90%) would not wish to change their major.
- The majority of graduates note the adequacy of vocational learning to the employment requirements. They say that their professional education helps them in finding employment.
- The share of employed graduates of agricultural programs stood at ca. 49%, which was slightly lower than the average of 50.8%. The majority of graduates are hired employees. The COVID pandemic was named by graduates as the primary reason for being unable to find a job.
- Graduates point out the need for improvement in program quality, methods of studying and evaluation, access to educational resources, and practical learning. When asked about the program quality improvement, the largest share of agricultural graduates who saw the need thereof belonged to agronomy (67%) and animal husbandry (57.%). On the other hand, the share of the agro-engineering program graduates who saw the need for program quality improvement was the lowest among all vocational education graduates (35%).
- Similar to the previous years, the 15-24 age group of graduates showed the lowest employment rates.
- Graduates noted the lack of employment support programs which would assist them in finding employment.
- Approximately a half of employed graduates work in a sphere which is different from their vocational education.

The ***2021 Study on the Identification of Labour Markets and Economic Sectors with Growth Potential*** by Guria Youth Resource Centre with the EU4 Georgia support was conducted in the form of interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders, including local authorities, businesses, NGOs and vulnerable groups in 9 municipalities of three regions in Adjara, Guria and Samegrelo. Overall up to 300 respondents were interviewed.

Given the importance of agriculture for the above three regions, the conclusions of the study contained diverse agriculture-specific information. It was found that

- In general, companies' labour requirements are sector-specific and significantly impacted by company size. Large companies have more complex requirements. Higher education requirement was found to be the least frequent in agriculture.
- Demand for agricultural specialists included the need for professions such as agronomists of different types (e.g., for berry crops, hazelnuts, animal husbandry), veterinarians, fishery biologists, fish-breeding specialists, soil scientists, microbiologists, tea technologists, tea pickers, wine technologists.
- Despite high demand for agricultural specialists, the majority of agricultural companies could not afford hiring those and thus had to cope with the respective issues internally, via seeking advice through personal contacts, etc.
- Many agricultural companies did not have proper general and financial management knowledge. This resulted in missed opportunities related to grant seeking through government and donor projects due to the lack of knowledge on how to fill out the application, justify sustainability of their business, etc.
- More developed companies with complex labour requirements were more positive about professional education, while smaller companies were often sceptical thereof.

4.2. Research of Educational institutions

The study of the Georgian educational institutions, which offer academic programs in agriculture or veterinary science, included two components.

The first component was the review of the websites of selected institutions (Universities and VET Colleges). The summary of the activity is presented below.

The second one covered in-depth interviews with the Deans of the relevant educational faculties of selected Universities and directors of VET colleges. It should also be noted that interviews were carried out according to the guide developed by the project consultant.

4.2.1 Website analysis results

The programs related to agriculture and veterinary science are delivered in 9 Georgian universities and 20 VET colleges.

The review was focused on the following topics - program descriptions, number of students (bachelor, master, doctoral), areas of the potential employment of students, labor market information, etc.

Higher education in agriculture and veterinary studies has three levels – bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies.

The websites of the academic institutions indicate the following potential employment areas for the graduates:

- Public and individual different types of farms and cooperatives
- Expertise and Agricultural Services Consulting Centers
- Governmental and non-government services of agriculture
- Large and medium farms, cooperatives
- Areas of service for greenhouse farms
- Different types of agro-firms
- Agricultural products processing enterprises and companies
- Structural units of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- Public and private laboratories
- Phytosanitary facilities at customs checkpoints
- Forestry and national parks
- Botanical Gardens
- Higher and vocational education institutions.

It should be noted that there are major and minor programs in the universities, which means that the students can define their main and non-core professions. For example, a student majoring in agriculture can master a second specialty as well (e.g., finance, management, etc.).

As for the VET colleges, the focus is on relatively narrow directions, such as market-oriented gardeners and agricultural producers, farmers and gardeners, winemakers-viticulturists, veterinarians, beekeepers, fruit-growers, farmers, manufacturers of dairy products, forestry technicians.

4.2.2 In-depth interview results

As part of the study, in-depth interviews were held with vice-rectors and faculty deans of three universities (Agricultural university of Georgia, I. Gogebashvili Telavi State University and A. Tsereteli Kutaisi State University) as well as with college directors of three professional colleges (LEPL Black Sea College, Swiss Agrarian School Caucasus, and LEPL Ilia Tsinamdzgvrishvili college) which offer academic programs in the field of agriculture and veterinary science. The interviews touched upon the issues related to the creation and modification of academic curricula, impact of different stakeholders, including private sector, on the agricultural studies, motivations of students, needs and challenges in the agricultural education, etc. The summary of the interviews with the heads of academic programs is presented below.

Key Findings

- Market research represents a requirement for academic accreditation. Both private, public and non-governmental organizations participate in the research. The existing educational programs are adapted to the requirements of the labor market based on labor market research and workshops with industry representatives.
- University and college representatives indicated a growing demand for agricultural programs. They mentioned that viticulture and winemaking was the most developed agriculture-related sector in Georgia, which underpinned students' academic interest in the area. There is also an increasing interest in veterinary medicine, but not entirely in relation to agriculture (e.g., interest towards veterinary studies of pet animals).
- Universities mentioned that they worked closely with representatives of the agricultural sector, including in terms of offering student internships in industry-leading agriculture-related enterprises.
- Universities hold workshops with industry representatives. The purpose of the meetings is to determine which and how many specialties are in demand in the labor market. In some cases, workshops are related to employment issues (e.g., "employment forums" organized by the Agricultural University of Georgia).
- Bachelor students studying agriculture and agronomy have the opportunity to complete a secondary (minor) program. Consequently, agricultural students are given the opportunity to study business, management, and finance.
- The market research is also conducted by the vocational colleges in order to identify relevant fields in the agriculture sector. The vocational institutions use market research results to prepare study curriculum.
- The vocational institutions mention a growing interest in the field of food processing. It should be noted that a work-based practice is mainly based on close cooperation with agricultural enterprises.

- Representatives of both university and vocational colleges notice that the agricultural sector is in need of structural changes, which requires introduction of new technologies, availability of financing and overall development of infrastructure.

4.3. Agricultural Students' Employment Survey: Report

4.3.1. Introduction

Organization of the survey

The agricultural students' employment survey was conducted to understand academic motivations and employment goals of the students majoring in agricultural and veterinary studies. The survey questionnaire was prepared in close consultations with the FAO, taking into account the Project requirements.

The list of universities offering academic programs in agriculture and veterinary was received from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Geostat. Further details on the names and size of academic programs and size was obtained from the websites of the educational institutions.

The data collection process from students was essentially hampered by the ongoing COVID pandemic. Due to the online learning mode in the Georgian universities it was not possible to meet students and explain them the survey goals directly. Hence, the survey questionnaire was disseminated to bachelors' and masters' students of agricultural and veterinary programs as well as to students of professional education programs through the deans of a number of academic programs with whom in-depth interviews were conducted[3]. The data collection period continued during December 2021-February 2022. As a result, 112 responses were collected from students of higher and professional education institutions.

Key Findings

The survey results provide the following findings in relation to the education process and motivations for employment of the agricultural students:

- The agricultural students' motivations to select the academic program mostly include positive perceptions of the academic field and employment opportunities. Approximately 90% of the surveyed students mentioned they would choose the same academic program today.
- While positively describing their academic interest in agricultural and veterinary studies, almost three-fourths of the surveyed students were economically active, including 46% being employed and 28% actively looking for a job. Only one-fifth of the students indicated that they did not have time for working due to academic studies.
- More male students were in employment compared to female students (56% vs 33%, respectively).
- When asked about reasons for working, only one-third of the working students mentioned they did it to earn money as the primary reason. More than half of the working students mentioned

[3] The in-depth interviews with deans at higher education institutions covered West Georgia (Kutaisi State University), East Georgia (Telavi State University), and Tbilisi (Agricultural University). In addition, data was collected from agricultural students of the Tbilisi Technical University and professional education institutions.

they wanted to gain experience/build a CV or make connections which would lead to further employment.

- Almost all working students (96%) work as hired employees, with the majority (59%) being employed in the business companies. Almost 50% of the working students indicated that they are employed in high skill jobs, while 37% mentioned being in medium-level jobs.
- Only one-fourth of the working students are employed in the field of agriculture or veterinary. Other students work in different areas, with shop assistants being the most frequently named occupation (10%).
- Almost two-thirds of the working students worked more than 30 hours per week, while 39% of them mentioned to be working more than 40 hours weekly. Students largely worked during daytime (84% - between 9:00 and 18:00), less than 10% worked remotely.
- Approximately 30% of the working students earned a GEL600-1000 net income per month, while another 24% earned GEL300-600.
- Almost 60% of the working students indicated that their academic performance deteriorated due to employment, deterioration correlated with the number of hours worked per week. In addition, 84% of working students mentioned they regularly miss lectures due to their working schedule.
- About 55% of surveyed students are engaged in informal learning, including 79% of bachelor's students. Studying foreign languages (68%) and software programs (27%) represents the primary activities of informal learning.
- Almost 90% of the surveyed students plan to continue their formal education. It is remarkable that the share of students willing to continue their studies exceeded 80% at all levels of education, including students at master's programs.
- The large majority of students (91%) planned to work in near future, of which 30% intended to continue working in the current job. Students looking for a job largely did so through their education institution, job advertisements, and applications to employers.
- Most students (72%) indicated that they wanted to work in the field of agriculture or forestry. More than half of them wished to work as agronomists.
- The employment details of the working students lead to conclusions that students largely do not see significant benefits to invest time in full-time studies. Most students prefer to start working and gain hands-on experience, even to the detriment of their academic performance. On the other hand, they still expect to work in the field of agriculture/veterinary and largely do not plan to change their profession.

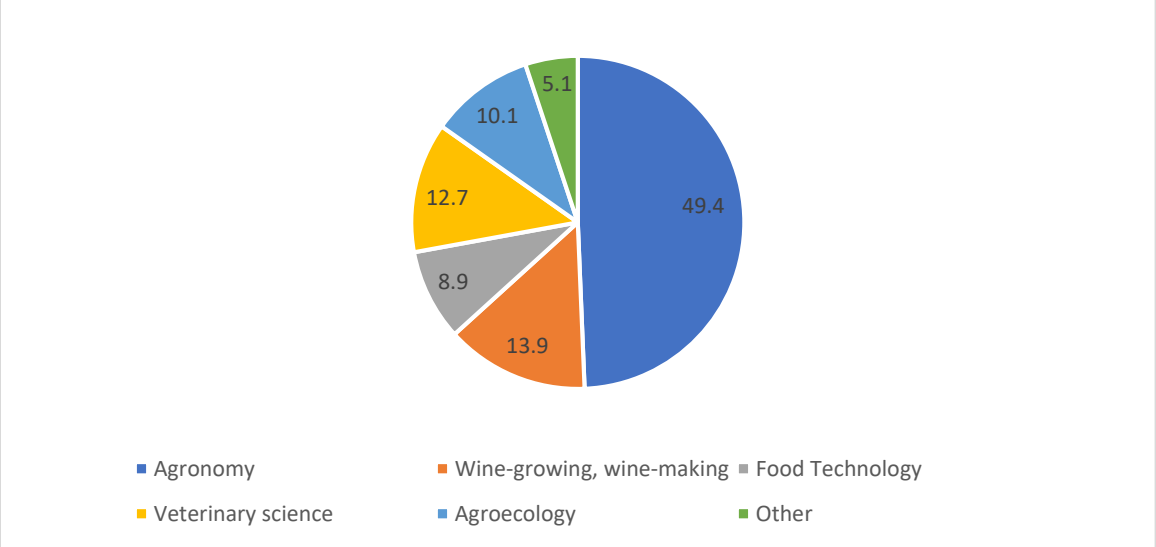
4.3.2. Survey Results

Respondents' characteristics and motivation for program selection

The majority of the respondents represented bachelor's students of agriculture and veterinary science (70%). Students of master's and professional programs constituted about 15% each.

Approximately half of the surveyed bachelors' students studied agronomy. The distribution of students by bachelor's programs is given in Figure below.

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents at bachelor's programs.



When asked to rank the motivations behind their selection of the current academic program, the respondents indicated the opportunity to acquire an interesting profession, good employment opportunities and interest in pursuing academic studies in the field as the most important factors (Figure 2). It should be noted that all of the listed factors received higher than average rating (=3).

Figure 2. Respondents' motivations for selecting the current academic program, average scores (1=not important at all, 5=very important)

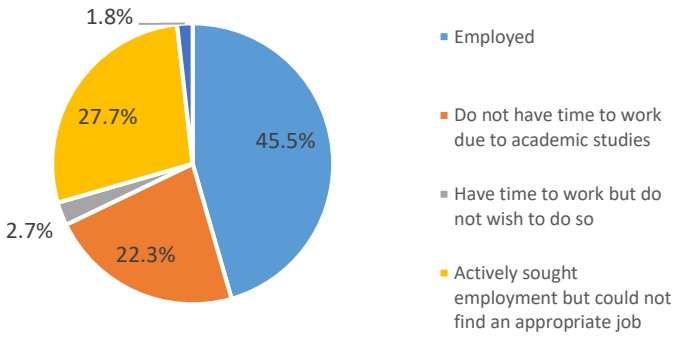
Opportunity to acquire an interesting profession	4.68
Interest in pursuing academic studies in the field	4.37
Prestige of the academic program	4.01
Good employment opportunities	4.57
Ease of admission to the academic program	3.31
Ease of studying at the academic program	3.45
Proximity of the university to the place of residence	3.16
Advice of family members	3.28

The large majority of surveyed students positively answered to the question whether they would choose the same academic program today (91%), with no particular differences across specializations. Those who answered negatively named unfavorable employment opportunities as the primary reason for wanting to change the program.

Students' employment

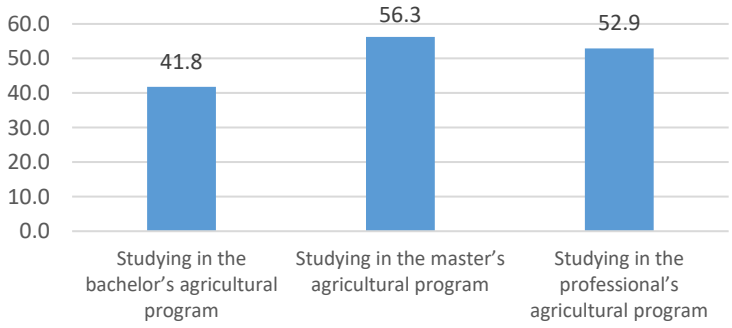
An important part of the questionnaire dealt with the issues of students' current employment. The activity rate of the students turns out to be quite high: 45.5% of the surveyed students had one or more jobs, while 27.7% mentioned that they were actively looking for a job but could not find one. It is remarkable that only approximately 22% of the respondents indicated that they do not have time for work due to academic studies (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Distribution of surveyed students by activity, %



Male students were working more frequently than female students (55.7% vs 33.3%, respectively). The highest share of working students was at the master's programs (56%), as compared to working students at professional (53%) and bachelor's programs (42%).

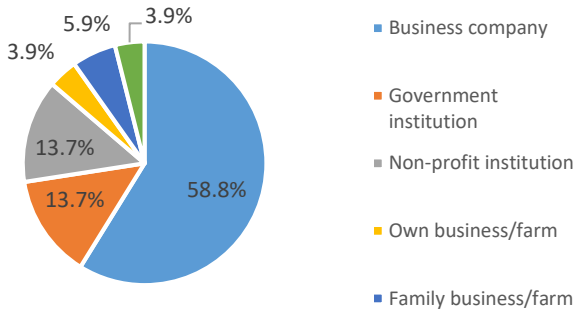
Figure 4. Employment rate of surveyed students by level of academic programs, %



Almost one in seven surveyed students had two or more jobs. Multiple jobs were found most frequently among surveyed students of professional programs (29%) and master's programs (25%). The same share for bachelor's students equaled 9%.

The survey results show that the owherwhelming majority of working students (96.1%) work as hired employees. Their largest part (58.8%) are employed in business companies, while 14.3% work in the public sector. A small share of working students (3.9%) have their own business.

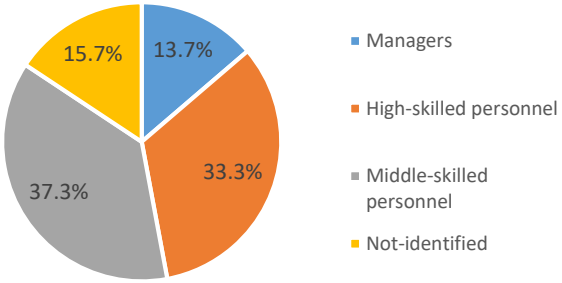
Figure 5. Distribution of working students by sectors, %



In terms of employment by levels of skills, it turns out that a large part of employed students work as high skill employees (47.1%, including managers - 13.7%), while 37.3% belong to the medium skill workers' category. Approximately 14% of working students had managerial jobs, and none of them worked at the low skill level.

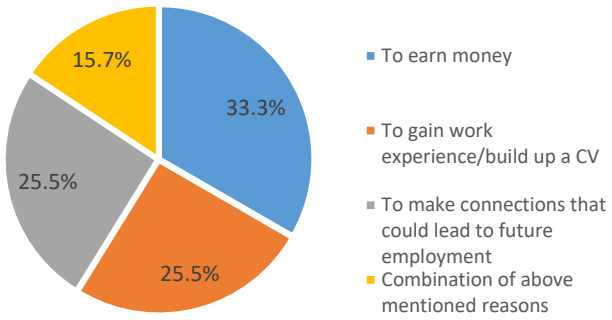
Only 22% of the employed respondents have agricultural employment, while 3.9% are employment in veterinary field. Other students work in different areas, with shop sales assistants being the most frequently cited occupation (9.8%). A number of students indicated their position as sales and marketing managers, cooks and waiters.

Figure 6. Distribution of employed students by skill levels, %



Earning money was the main motivation for work in parallel to their studies for one-third of employed respondents, while more than half of the respondents are mainly driven by gaining experience/building a CV or making connections that could lead to future employement (25.5% each). For the remaining 15.7% a combination of the above factors turns out to be important.

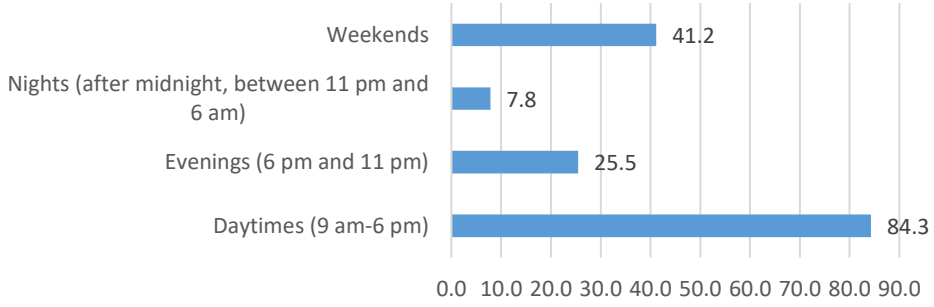
Figure 7. Distribution of students by primary motivation for employment, %



Despite the pandemic-related restrictions, 92% of the employed students indicated that they worked at the workplace, i.e. only a small share of them was teleworking. Such high percentage can be explained by the fact that the types of occupations as well as the sectors in which the students were employed (e.g., trade, other types of services) did not allow them to work remotely.

About 84% of employed students worked during the day (09:00 – 18:00), while 7.8% worked at nights (23:00-06:00). One-third of employed students indicated working in a variable schedule (during the day, and in the evenings or at nights or on weekends). Those who worked only during the day constituted 58.8%, and the students working during the weekends only made up 7.8%.

Figure 8. Distribution of employed students by time period, %



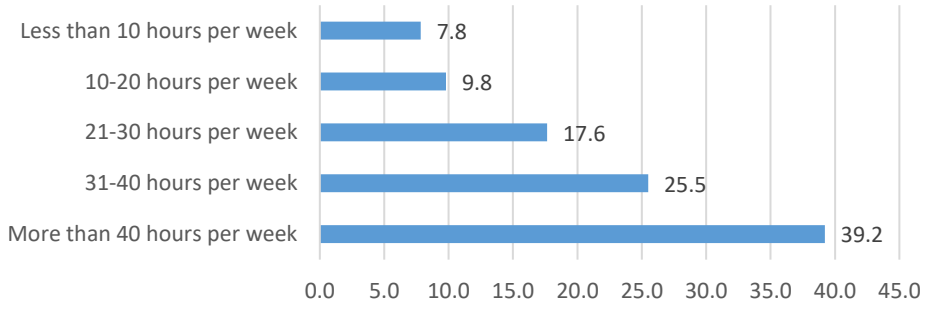
Almost 30% of employed students had the net average monthly job income between GEL600 and GEL1000. Two-thirds of these students worked more than 30 hours per week. Among the employed students who earned between GEL300 and GEL600 per month, 41.7% worked more than 30 hours. About 22% of students indicated that they earned more than GEL1000 per month. All of these high-earning students (except one persons) worked more than 30 hours.

https://jobs.ge/en/ads/?view=jobs&id=433769Figure 9. Distribution of employed students by net average monthly income and weekly working hours, %

	Total	*of which:*	
		Less than 30 hours per week	More than 30 hours per week
The job is not paid	3.9	100.0	0.0
Less than GEL300 per month	2.0	0.0	100.0
GEL300-600 per month	23.5	58.3	41.7
GEL600-1000 per month	29.4	33.3	66.7
GEL1000-1500 per month	9.8	0.0	100.0
GEL1500-2000 per month	3.9	50.0	50.0
More than GEL2000 per month	7.8	0.0	100.0
Refused to answer	19.6	30.0	70.0
Total	**100.0**	35.3	64.7

The survey results showed that almost two-thirds of employed students worked more than 30 hours per week, and about 39% of the employed students exceeded 40 working hours weekly. A small number of students (7.8%) indicated that they worked less than 10 hours per week.

Figure 10. Distribution of employed students by working hours per week, %

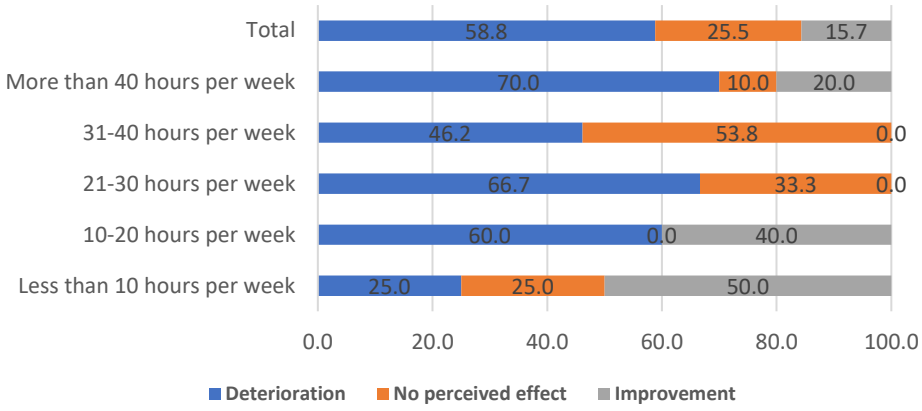


The majority of employed students (58.8%) indicated that working deteriorated their academic performance, whereas 17.6% noted that the deterioration was significant. On the other hand, 15.7% of employed students stated that working actually improved their academic performance, and 11.8% noted a significant improvement of academic performance. A quarter of employed students said that working produced no effect on their studies.

Those students who worked less working hours more frequently indicated the positive effect of work on their studies: half of those who worked less than 10 hours noted that their academic performance improved, whereas none of the employed students working from 21 to 40 hours per week indicated

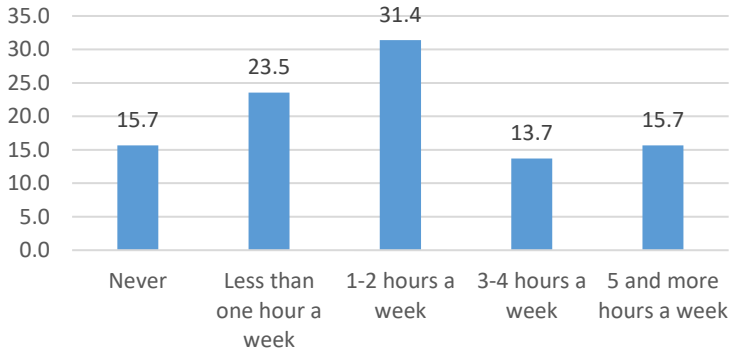
improvement in academic performance. Finally, 70% of students working more than 40 hours per week said that their academic performance deteriorated.

Figure 11. Distribution of employed students by academic performance and working hours per week, %



Approximately 84% of employed students indicated that they regularly miss lectures due to their working schedule. Almost 16% noted that they miss 5 and more hours of lectures per week.

Figure 12. Distribution of working students who regularly miss lectures, by number of hours of academic studies per week, %



Apart from academic studies, 55.4% of students are engaged in informal learning for acquiring additional skills. The majority of them (79%) are bachelor's students. The involvement of students at professional

and master's programs in informal learning turned out significantly lower, at 12.9% and 8.1%, respectively. About 71% of female students and 43% of male students participated in informal learning.

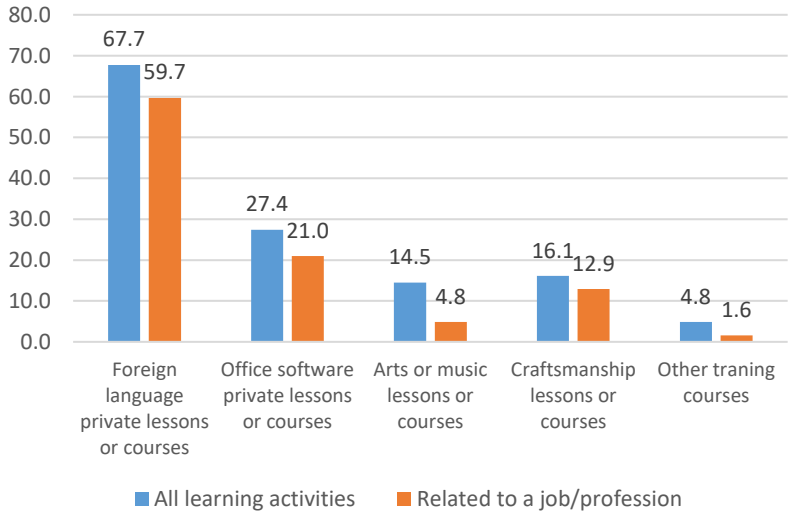
More than two-thirds of students involved in informal training study a foreign language, 27.4% learn software programs. Students also indicated participation in arts, music, crafts courses and different types of trainings.

Almost 80% of students noted in informal training indicated that this activity was related to their work/profession. About 37% of these students were employed. None of the students was employed among those who indicated participation in arts and music as related to their future profession.

Importance of informal learning may be explained by the fact that those skills which are developed by educational instiutions providing formal learning (schools, higher education institutions, colleges) are not sufficiently targeted to the labour market. Thus, students try to look for alternative ways for improving their competitiveness.

The diagram below shows the details on surveyed students' engagement in informal learning by types of activities.

Figure 13. Distribution of students engaged in informal learning by types of activities, %



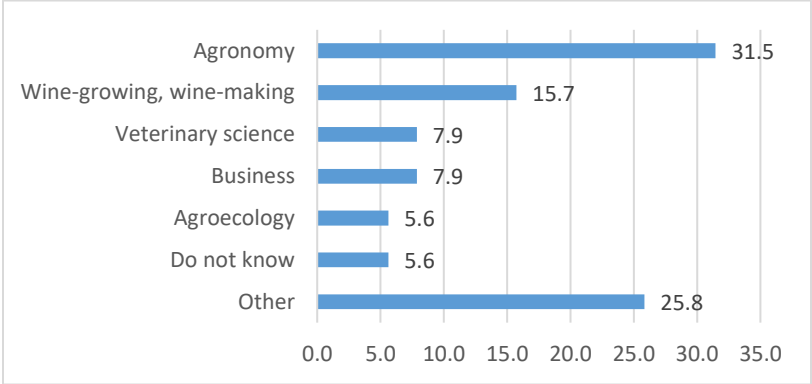
Students who indicated that their engagement in informal learning is related to their work/profession spend on these activities 10.4 hours per week on average. Among them employed students spend more time on these activities than not employed (12 hours vs. 9.3 hours), and male students spend more time compared to female students (11.4 hours vs. 9.7 hours).

Future plans

The survey included questions on students' future plans. According to the results, the large majority of surveyed students (87.5%) plan to continue their studies after completion of the current program. It is remarkable that no significant difference was found in this regard among students at different levels of academic programs: plans to continue studying were indicated by 86.1% of bachelor's students, 87.5% of master's students, and 82.4% of professional students.

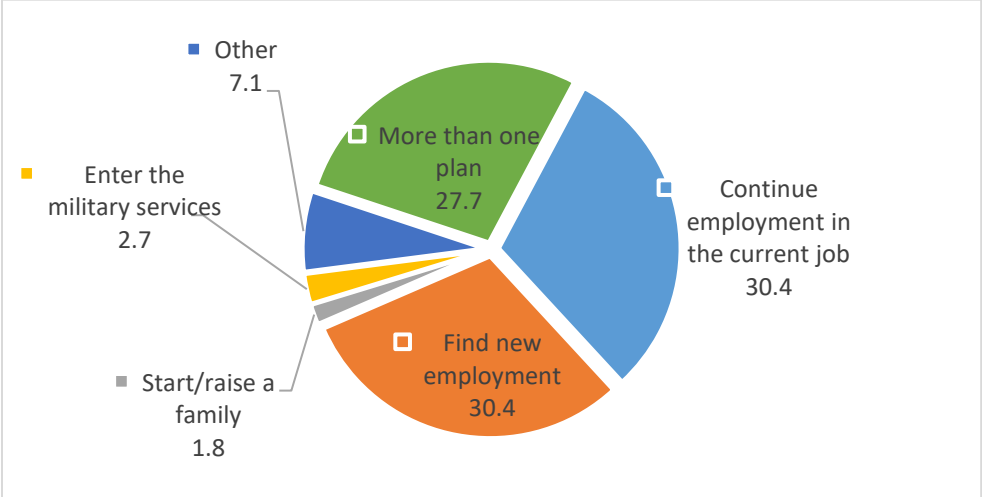
Almost a third of students planning to continue their studies choose agronomy as their preferred field of study. About 16% were willing to study winemaking/silviculture. A small share of students (5.6%) said they had not yet decided on the field of future studies.

Figure 14. Percentage distribution of students planning to continue continue studying, by fields of studies



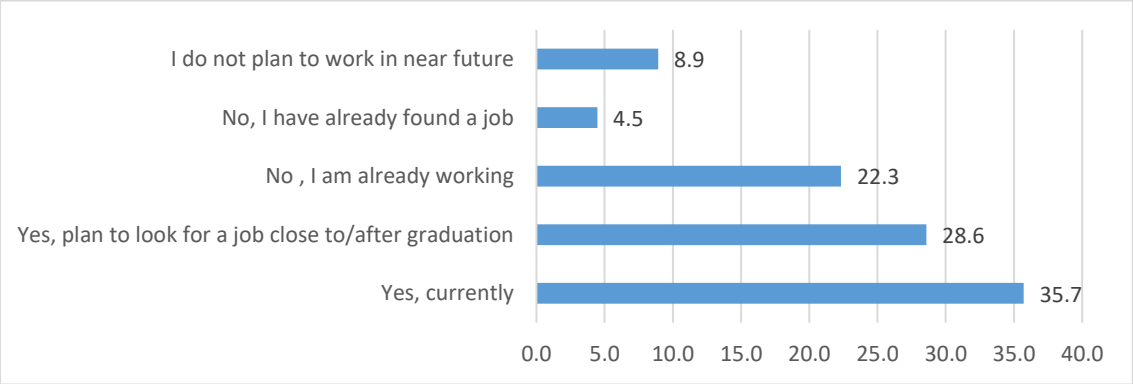
Approximately 61% of students plan to continue working in the current job or finding a new job (30.4% each). About 28% of the students wanted to pursue a number of activities.

Figure 15. Distribution of students by future plans after graduation of the current programs



Students were asked questions whether they looked for a job which they wanted to pursue after the graduation. The responses show that 35.7% of the respondents were looking for a job, while 27% already worked or already found a job. Only 8.9% of the surveyed students did not plan to work in the near future.

Figure 16. Distribution of students in terms of their working plans, %

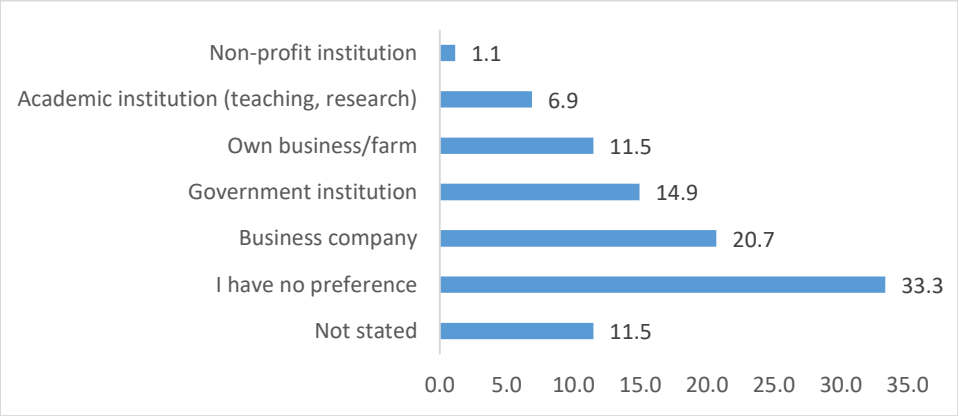


The surveyed students who were looking for a job and planned to start looking for a job after graduated mainly searched the job-related information through their education/training institution (42.7%), job advertisements (39%), and applications to employers (39%). It should be noted that 29.3% of the students looked for a job through relatives or friends.

Figure 17. Distribution of students looking for a job by types of job-related channels, %

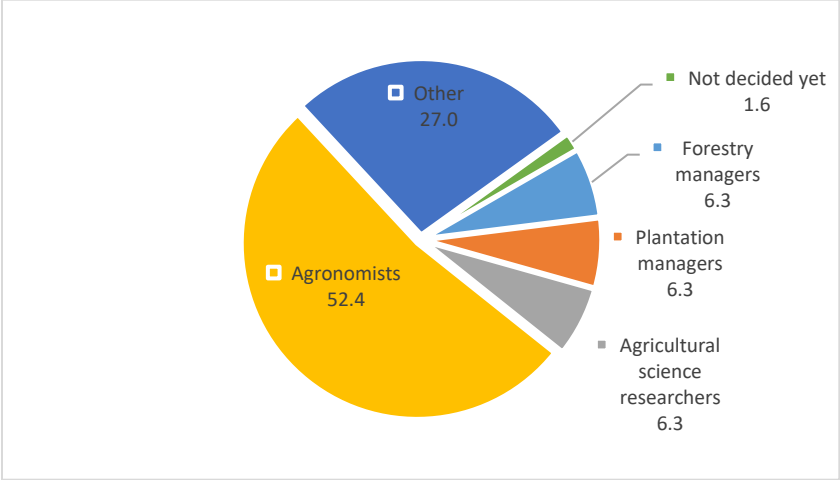
About 21% of surveyed students who already found or were looking for a job planned to be employed in business companies. For one-third of students the employment sector did not matter. Working in an academic institution was in the plans of 7% of the surveyed students.

Figure 18. Percentage distribution of students by sectors for their planned employment



Finally, the survey results showed that 72.4% of the students planned to work in the occupations related to agriculture or forestry. Almost a half of them preferred to work as agronomists.

Figure 19. Distribution of students by occupations they planned to work



4.4 Survey of Agricultural Employment in Food Business Operators

4.4.1 Introduction

Organization of the survey

The survey of agricultural employment in food business operator companies (FBOs) was conducted to study the employment structure in the FBOs, their challenges and opportunities in the agricultural market.

The sampling frame for the survey represented the food business operator companies, registered by the national agency of public register (NAPR) and Food Security Agency. In agreement with the FAO, it was decided to survey companies operating in the field of i) agriculture, ii) production and processing of hazelnuts; and iii) production of grape wines, in line with the classification of economic activities NACE rev. 2.

The full list of FBOs was received from the Food Security Agency containing approximately 20,000 enterprises. The list contained unique identification codes (enterprise IDs) which were linked to the Business Register of the National Statistics Georgia (Geostat). As a result, it became possible to obtain the area of economic activity for practically all FBOs. Based on the obtained data, the number of enterprises eligible for the survey equaled 470 enterprises operating in agriculture and fishing and aquaculture, 80 producers and processors of hazelnuts, and 360 producers of grape wines.

The data collection for the survey was conducted in February and March, 2022 via telephone interviews. Those companies were interviewed which employed at least 5 persons. In total 219 companies were interviewed, which was equivalent to a response rate of approximately 35% of eligible enterprises.

Data analysis and processing was conducted in April, using SPSS and MS Excel software.

Key findings

The survey results provide the following findings in relation to the employment structure of the agriculture-related enterprises:

- The surveyed FBOs mostly operated in agriculture and fishery/aquaculture (53%) and production of grape wines (40%). The surveyed agricultural FBOs predominantly represent limited liability companies (81%). Cooperatives made up 14% of the surveyed FBOs.
- The share of women in the total employment of the surveyed companies equaled 40.1%. The 30-54-year-olds represented more than two-thirds of the total employment. Approximately 40% of employees had higher education.
- Managers and high skill workers constituted 15-16% each of the total personnel in the surveyed companies. The bulk of employment in the FBOs represented medium and low skill workers. In the companies belonging to the manufacture of food products (hazelnut-related) and fishery/aquaculture the share of high skill workers was particularly low.

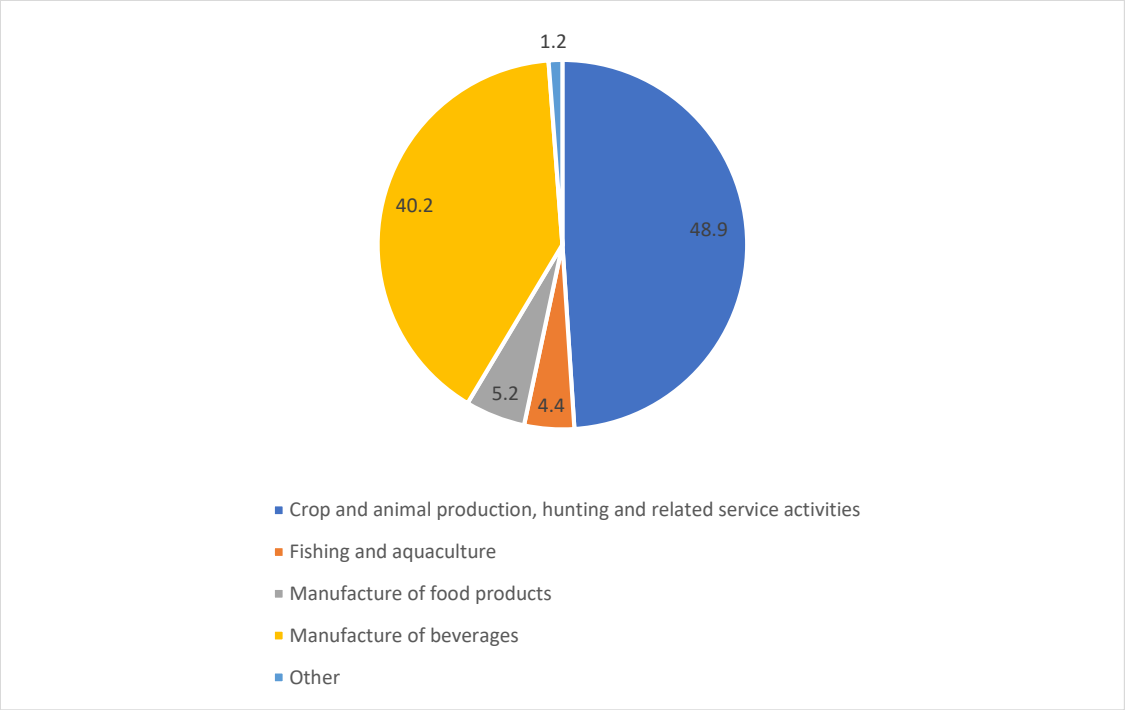
- The share of agricultural employment in the surveyed enterprises oscillated between 24% in manufacturing of food products and 77% in fishery/agriculture. Unskilled agricultural workers represented by far the largest category of agricultural employment.
- Wine technologists and agronomists were two most frequent agricultural occupations among professionals (Group 2, ISCO). On average, there were not more than two professionals in one enterprise for practically every professional position.
- Approximately one-fourth of the surveyed enterprises had temporary employment throughout 2021. The large majority of temporary personnel included unskilled workers, pruning and grafting specialists.
- The average net monthly wages of professionals and technicians in the agricultural positions did not exceed GEL1500. The monthly net wages among skilled agricultural workers, machine operators and unskilled workers were lower than GEL1000.
- Approximately 11% of the surveyed enterprises indicated employment of students and new graduates of agricultural professions in the enterprise. About 10% of the enterprises cooperated with educational/academic agricultural institutions.
- Problems with hiring staff for agricultural positions in the labour market were faced by about 38% of the enterprises. Almost all mentioned the lack of required qualifications as the primary reason for these problems.
- Communication and teamwork skills were indicated by the surveyed enterprises as the most valuable skills for their personnel.

4.4.2 Survey Results

General characteristics of the surveyed companies

The distribution of the surveyed companies by area of economic activity (NACE rev. 2) showed that almost half of the companies operated in agriculture, while 40% were the manufacturers of beverages (wine).

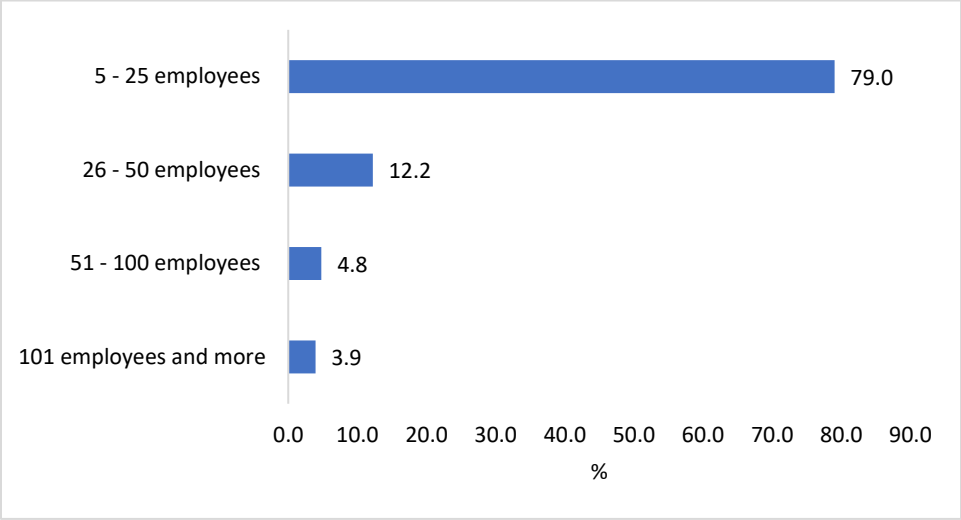
Figure 1. Distribution of surveyed companies by area of economic activities (NACE, rev. 2), %



Limited liability company (LLC) represented the primary legal form, constituting 81% of the surveyed companies. Cooperatives accounted for 14% of the sample. In terms of geographic location, the surveyed companies in Kakheti accounted for 36%, while Tbilisi-based companies constituted 28% of the total sample. The shares of companies from the other regions of Georgia did not exceed 6%.

The total number of employed persons in a surveyed company ranged from 5 (minimum number of employed staff for the survey purposes) to more than 300 persons. The large majority of surveyed companies (79%) employed 5-25 persons (Figure 2). In terms of employment, the overwhelming majority of the agricultural enterprises represent small enterprises, as only about 4% of companies had more than 100 employees.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of companies by number of employees



The survey included quantitative questions on the distribution of employed persons by categories of qualifications: managers, high skill workers, medium skill workers, and low skill workers. For this purpose, the international classification ISCO-2008 was used at a single-digit level. ISCO-2008 divides occupations into 9 main groups (Figure 3).[4] For analytical purposes, the aforementioned groups were united as follows:

Figure 3. Classification of occupation at ISCO 1-digit level and grouping by qualification categories

Group name	**Correspondence with ISCO-2008**
Managers	1. Managers
Highly Skilled Personnel	2. Professionals 3. Technicians and associate professionals
Medium-Skilled Personnel	4. Clerks 5. Service and sales workers 6. Skilled agricultural, fishery, and forestry workers 7. Craft and related trades workers 8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
Low-Skilled Personnel	9. Elementary occupations

[4] Group 10 of standard employment classification (ISCO – International Standard Classification of Occupations) includes army personnel, which is incompatible for the purposes of the survey

It turned out that the *managers and high skill workers constituted 15% to 16%* each in the surveyed companies. Thus, *medium and low skill workers constituted the bulk of employment* in food business operator companies (ca. 69% of total employment). Extremely low numbers of high skill workers were presents in hazelnut-related companies (manufacture of food products) and fishery/aquaculture. The distribution of the employees by economic sectors and skill levels in provided in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Distribution of employees by qualification levels and types of economic activity

	Managers	High-skilled personnel	Middle-skilled personnel	Low-skilled personnel
Crop and animal production, hunting, and related service activities	13.3	17.3	42.2	27.2
Fishing and aquaculture	15.5	3.1	14.7	66.7
Manufacture of food products	13.6	1.3	39.9	45.2
Manufacture of beverages	18.4	17.2	20.8	43.5
Other (less than 5 enterprises)	…	…	…	…
Total	**15.2**	**15.9**	**34.0**	**34.9**

Women constituted 40.1% of employees, while the share of 30-54-year-olds in the total employment equaled 70%. Approximately 40% of employees were reported to have higher education. The breakdown of employees of the surveyed FBOs is provided in the table below (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Distribution of employees by some characteristics

Employee characteristics:	**%**
Gender	
Female	40.1
Age	
15-29	14.9
30-54	69.9
55+	15.2
Educational attainment	
Higher Education	40.5
Professional Education	38.0

Agricultural occupations

Apart from the information on company employees by skill levels, more detailed data on agricultural occupations was collected. As it was mentioned above, the bulk of total employment fell on medium and low skill workers. Hence, it is not surprising that unskilled agricultural workers constituted the largest share of agricultural employment.

According to the survey results, in agricultural companies (crop and animal production, hunting and related services activities) the share of employees in agricultural positions constituted 60.6%. Apart from unskilled workers (19.4% of total employment), the most frequently named positions included poultry farmers (14.8%), and drivers.

In fishing and aquaculture more than three fourths of personnel occupied agricultural positions, with unskilled workers making up 67% of total employment.

More than half of personnel (55.1%) employed in companies manufacturing food products occupy agricultural positions. As – by the survey design - the companies of this manufacturing sectors were predominantly involved in production of hazelnuts, the share of unskilled workers in horticulture turned out to be the highest (35%).

The details on the top agricultural positions in the surveyed companies across different sectors are provided in the table below (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Top 5 agricultural positions and types of economic activity

Crop and animal production, hunting, and related service activities	**Fishing and aquaculture**	**Manufacture of food products**	**Manufacture of beverages**
Unskilled workers **(19.4%)**	Unskilled workers in fishery **(66.7%)**	Unskilled workers in horticulture **(35.0%)**	Unskilled workers in horticulture **(10.4%)**
Poultry farmers **(14.8%)**	Producers of livestock and other domestic animals **(3.1%)**	Meat, fish, and related products processing workers **(8.6%)**	Wine technologist **(4.4%)**
Apiarists and sericulturists **(5.2%)**	Aquaculture workers **(3.1%)**	Unskilled workers in crop farming **(7.0%)**	Pruning specialists **(3.4%)**
Tractor/harvester driver / Mechanization	Fisheries adviser **(2.3%)**	Tractor/harvester driver / Mechanization	Vineyard specialist **(1.7%)**

(2.3%)		**(1.6%)**	
Drivers **(2.2%)**	Fish, meat, and milk processing machine operators **(1.6%)**	Horticultural scientist **(0.8%)**	Grafting specialists **(1.4%)**
Other **(16.8%)**	Meat, fish, and related products processing workers **(0.8%)**	Other **(2.1%)**	Other **(2.4%)**
Total **(60.6%)**	Total **(77.5%)**	total **(55.1%)**	Total employees **(23.7%)**

The detailed numbers on employed personnel by agricultural positions and the corresponding number of enterprises where individual positions were found are given in Figure 7.

As already discussed, the largest positions included unskilled workers in different areas of agriculture, such as horticulture (510 persons), crop farming (332 persons), animal husbandry (148 persons). The poultry farmers (478 persons) were by far the largest category of skilled agricultural workers (Group 6, ISCO), which indicates that poultry companies are relatively large-scale incorporated businesses.

Among professionals (Group 2, ISCO), the agricultural positions with most persons employed included wine technologists (93 persons) and agronomists (87 persons). It should be noted that, at the exception of horticultural scientists, an average number of all professionals per enterprise is less than 2.

Figure 7. The number of personnel and the number of enterprises by agricultural occupations

	Number of employees	**Number of enterprises**
Agronomist	87	53
Field crop specialist	13	7
Horticultural scientist	40	10
Floriculturist	1	1
Vineyard specialist	57	31
Veterinarian	43	35
Animal husbandry adviser	9	4
Fisheries adviser	3	3
Wine technologist	93	71
Soil scientist	3	1
Pesticide specialist	1	1

Plant nutrition specialist	3	3
Drip irrigation specialist	32	3
Field Crop Technician	6	4
Horticulture technician	12	3
Animal technician	2	2
Veterinary technician	3	1
Food safety/Food technologist	16	12
Artificial insemination technician	1	1
Greenhouse technician	11	3
Chief of Brigade	64	14
Crop and vegetable farmers	15	3
Horticulture and berry farmers	22	3
Nursery workers	39	6
Grafting specialists	35	8
Pruning specialists	86	12
Producers of livestock and other domestic animals	61	12
Milkers	55	8
Poultry farmers	478	26
Apiarists and sericulturists	166	19
Aquaculture workers	4	2
Meat, fish and related products processing workers	34	1
Tractor/harvester driver / Mechanization	83	15
Drivers	80	24
Fish, meat and milk processing machine operators	7	2
Unskilled workers in crop farming	332	10
Unskilled workers in animal husbandry	148	12
Unskilled workers in horticulture	510	34
Unskilled workers in fishery	86	9

The companies were also asked whether they had temporary employment in 2021. Approximately 24% of the surveyed companies responded positively to the question, indicating that predominantly unskilled workers, pruning and grafting specialists were employed on a temporary basis.

Agricultural wages

The question on agricultural wages was added to the questionnaire. Despite the sensitive nature of such questions, the companies mostly reported wages for their agriculture-related personnel.

The data on all monthly net agriculture-related mean and median wages, as well as the frequencies by enterprises are provided in detail in Figure 8. It can be noted that net monthly wages for all professionals and technicians do not exceed GEL1500 on average (a number of exceptions to this fact for a few agricultural positions must be due to a very small number of enterprises reporting). The monthly net wages for lower-level professions – such as skilled agricultural workers (Group 6, ISCO), machine operators (Group 7, ISCO), elementary occupations (Group 9, ISCO) – do not exceed GEL1000.

Figure 8. Mean and median agricultural wages (monthly, net) by FBOs

Agricultural positions	Mean wages (GEL)	Median wages (GEL)	Number of FBOs responded	Number of FBOs refused to answer
Agronomist	1,387	1,225	40	13
Field crop specialist	1,425	1,125	5	2
Horticultural scientist	1,240	1,000	5	5
Floriculturist	1,700	1,700	…	
Vineyard specialist	1,521	1,500	20	11
Veterinarian	1,175	900	29	6
Animal husbandry adviser	2,100	2,100	…	
Fisheries adviser	1,933	2,000	…	
Wine technologist	1,463	1,500	47	24
Plant nutrition specialist	500	500	…	
Drip irrigation specialist	975	975	…	
Field Crop Technician	1,400	1,500	…	
Horticulture technician	1,750	1,750	…	
Animal technician	3,000	3,000	…	
Veterinary technician	1,500	1,500	…	
Food safety/Food technologist	1,380	1,375	10	2
Artificial insemination technician	2,000	2,000	…	
Greenhouse technician	1,338	1,338	…	
Chief of Brigade	1,030	950	10	4
Crop and vegetable farmers	700	700	…	
Horticulture and berry farmers	650	650	…	
Nursery workers	785	800	5	1
Grafting specialists	696	625	6	2

Pruning specialists	724	625	9	3
Producers of livestock and other domestic animals	783	750	10	2
Milkers	800	800	5	3
Poultry farmers	642	625	21	5
Apiarists and sericulturists	468	500	19	
Aquaculture workers	1,350	1,350	…	
Meat, fish and related products processing workers	1,000	1,000	13	2
Tractor/harvester driver / Mechanization	800	700	21	3
Drivers	809	700	…	
Fish, meat and milk processing machine operators	800	800	7	3
Unskilled workers in crop farming	700	600	7	3
Unskilled workers in animal husbandry	582	600	11	1
Unskilled workers in horticulture	840	613	26	8
Unskilled workers in fishery	544	600	9	

Note*: … *implies a small number of observations

Links to educational institutions and employment needs

The breakdown of employees by age in the surveyed companies showed that young persons in the 15-29 age group constituted approximately 15% of the total employment. Hence, the fact that 89.1% of the companies indicated that they did not employ students or new graduates of agricultural academic programs was consistent was the above age distribution pattern.

Approximately 10% of the surveyed companies mentioned that they cooperated with educational institutions in the field of employment, internship or training. Among them about one-third mentioned the Agrarian University as their partner.

When asked about different ways of hiring employees, more than half of the surveyed enterprises indicated they did so “through family or friends”. This number goes up to almost 70% if we add to them optional answers such as “local residents” (15% of total). Approximately 40% of the companies use advertisements. Other options were less than 4% each.

About 38% of the companies encountered difficulties in hiring personnel for agricultural positions. The overwhelming majority (94%) of these companies named the lack of required qualifications as the primary reason for these difficulties.

Finally, the companies were asked which skills they found useful in hiring employees. As average scores in Figure show, companies consider communication and teamwork skills as the most important (4.7/5

average score). Ambition, knowledge of foreign languages and good appearance turned out to be the least important skills for companies, with the average score being less than 2.

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of companies by important qualities for hiring persons (1 = not important at all, 5 = very important)

	1	2	3	4	5	Average score
Information technology skills	41.5	3.1	14.0	18.3	23.1	**2.8**
Scientific or technical qualifications	46.7	16.6	20.5	10.9	5.2	**2.1**
Command of languages	66.8	9.2	8.3	4.4	11.4	**1.8**
Knowledge of the business world	34.9	4.8	9.6	17.9	32.8	**3.1**
Communication skills	0.9	0.0	3.5	17.0	78.6	**4.7**
Teamwork skills	1.7	0.4	3.5	16.2	78.2	**4.7**
Good general education	17.9	12.7	28.8	19.2	21.4	**3.1**
Good appearance	73.4	10.5	7.9	3.9	4.4	**1.6**
Ambition	48.9	19.2	19.7	8.7	3.5	**2.0**
Leadership skills	39.3	0.9	12.2	21.4	26.2	**2.9**
Organizational skills	38.0	0.4	7.9	19.2	34.5	**3.1**

4.5 Analysis of legal framework and support environment

4.5.1. Hierarchy of Georgian labour related legislation

Georgia is a part of international agreements and as an ILO member state, has ratified respective labour related ILO conventions. As it is known, according to the basic legal principle established by the national legislation, an international treaties have superior power over the domestic laws of Georgia, except of the Constitution of Georgia. Due to the above argumentation, the national labour legislation is based on international labor standards and the ratified conventions regulating these relations.

According to the Georgian Organic Law "On Normative Acts", Constitution of Georgia and constitutional law are main laws of Georgia, they are on the first place in the hierarchy of normative acts and have superior power among other legislation normative acts are in the first place in the hierarchy and have superior power among other legislations. International agreement and contract are in the second place and are strongest among other normative act except constitution of Georgia. In the third place is Organic Law of Georgia and next is ordinary law.

Based on above hierarchy, ratified ILO labour related conventions and AA, as international agreements, are strongest part of Georgian legislation except of Constitution of Georgia. After this conventions and agreement, main regulatory act in the field of labour related issue is Georgian Organic Law Georgian Labour Code and Georgian Organic Law "On Labour Security" (LC). After these normative acts, we have Georgian laws (ordinary laws) "On Labour Inspection" and "On Labour Migration" and also, sub law regulations such are Resolution of Government of Georgia[5] and other normative acts.

According to obligations received in the international conventions and agreements, Georgia has to incorporate provisions of the international legislation in organic laws, laws and other internal legislation. it should be mentioned that labour related legislation covers all fields where labour relations exist, but there are some conventions, agreements or provisions which are regulate labour relations, specificaly in the field of agriculture.

4.5.2. Labour related international legislation in Georgia

ILO requirements and international conventions

As of today, according to ILO official information[6], 18 labour related ILO conventions, from the 3 different fields of regulation have been ratified by the Parliament of Georgia. These ratified conventions include most important **8 fundamental conventions** (2 conventions in each directions) as well:

Collective bargaining:

[5] https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3215791?publication=0
[6] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102639

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948, No 87
- Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949, No 98

Abolition of forced labour:

- Forced Labour Convention, 1930, No 29
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957, No 105

Abolition of labour by children before the end of compulsory school:

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973, No 138
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, No 182

No discrimination at work:

- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, No 100
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958, No 111

Also following 10 ILO Conventions are ratified in following fields:

- **Governance Conventions (Priority)** - **2** of 4 conventions
- **Technical Conventions** - **8** of 178 conventions

According to the official information "out of 18 Conventions ratified by Georgia, of which 18 are in force, no Convention has been denounced; none have been ratified in the past 12 months"[7].

These 2 **Governance Conventions** are:

- Employment Policy *Convention*, *1964* (No. 122)
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)

Next 8 **Technical Conventions** are:

- Holidays with Pay Convention, 1936 (No. 52)
- Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)
- Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987 (No. 163)
- Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)
- Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, 1962 (No. 117)[8]

[7] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102639
[8] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C117

- Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)[9]
- Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185)[10]

As of today, these conventions are part of the Georgian legislation, and as we already noted, they have superior power over other Georgian laws exempt of Georgian constitution. Therefore, provisions of these conventions are obligatory for enforcement, and it is important to reflect all of them in the laws of relevant field.

> It should be mentioned, that according to the official information on ILO web site, Georgia has not yet ratified **2** of 4 **Governance conventions**, such are: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). **Also, only 8 technical conventions from 178 are ratified as today.**

Above-described main principles of the ratified labour conventions, such are: the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, are effectively reflected in Georgian Organic Law of Georgian Labour Code (LC) and also in Organic Law of Labour Security.

> It should be noted, that agriculture focusing 2 conventions, one of them Governance conventions and another technical Convention **(Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) and Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)),** are not ratified by the Parliament of Georgia and they are not part of the Georgian legislation.

AA and description of labour related directives

As we have already mentioned all EU countries have ratified the **Fundamental and Governance Labour Conventions** intended to be in line with standards referred on freedom of association, collective bargaining, forced and child labour, equal remuneration and the elimination of discrimination. EU countries have also ratified the ILO 'Governance Conventions' on labour inspection, employment policy and tripartite consultations, as well as quite big number of the other ILO conventions.

Based on above-mentioned ILO conventions, AA presents almost same conditions and requirements for neighboring contracting countries. There is much common ground in the content of EU Directives and ILO conventions, with EU law reinforcing ILO standards. For example, Directives on issues such as working time and young workers explicitly, seek to take into account relevant ILO standards and etc. In 2009, also in cooperation with the ILO, Georgia set up the Tripartite Commission as a dialogue forum to address labour issues with the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation and Georgian Employers' Association.

[9] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312296
[10] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312330

AA has been adopted on 27 June 2014 and it will be entered into full force after 1 July 2016. The AA is based on common values of EU and intends to establish political association and economic integration between the EU member countries and Georgia. AA intends to promote development of Georgian democracy, peaceful conflict resolution and integration of Georgian internal legislation in line with EU best practice. It should be highlighted, that the Association Agreement is quite broad and deals with numerous aspects of governance, whereas the consequent action plan contains more specifications.

The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) is an integral part of the AA and due to reducing tariffs in trade and increasing efficiency of custom procedures, it is granting access to the free movement of goods, capital and services from Georgia to the EU member states. The creation of the free trade area will abolish tariffs on imports which will facilitate the Georgian economy to grow.

According to the articles 228-230 of AA, Georgia has obligation to fulfil requirements of ILO and "ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 86th Session in 1998". Also, Georgia is committed to be in line with internationally recognized labour standards, included in 8 fundamental labour related conventions, discussed in above-mentioned 3 fields. **Georgia obliges to effectively implements principles of ILO conventions in internal legislation and will also consider the ratification of the remaining priority and other conventions that are classified as up to date by the ILO.** According to the Article 235 of AA the Parties recognize that **"it is inappropriate to encourage trade or investment by lowering the levels of protection afforded in domestic environmental or labour law."**

According to the article 348 of AA, "The Parties shall strengthen their dialogue and cooperation on promoting the Decent Work Agenda, employment policy, health and safety at work, social dialogue, social protection, social inclusion, gender equality and anti-discrimination, and corporate social responsibility and thereby contribute to the promotion of more and better jobs, poverty reduction, enhanced social cohesion, sustainable development and improved quality of life." Also, article 349 provides conditions for Cooperation, based on exchange of information and best practices, which may cover a selected number of issues to be identified among the following directions:

- poverty reduction and the enhancement of social cohesion;
- employment policy, aiming at more and better jobs with decent working conditions, including with a view to reduce the informal economy and informal employment;
- promoting active labour market measures and efficient employment services, as appropriate, to modernise the labour markets and to adapt to labour market needs of the Parties;
- fostering more inclusive labour markets and social safety systems that integrate disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities and people from minority groups;
- equal opportunities and anti-discrimination, aiming at enhancing gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between men and women, as well as combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- social policy, aiming at enhancing the level of social protection and the social protection systems, in terms of quality, accessibility and financial sustainability;

- enhancing the participation of social partners and promoting social dialogue, including through strengthening the capacity of all relevant stakeholders;
- promoting health and safety at work;
- awareness and dialogue in the field of corporate social responsibility.

According to the article 354 of EU Georgia Association Agreement Georgia will approximate its legislation to the EU acts and international instruments in accordance with Annex XXX of the AA. The Annex XXX provides a comprehensive and detailed agenda for Georgia to approximate with following EU Directives represented in 3 different directions:

Employment, social policy and equal opportunity - 8 frame EU directives**:**

- Council Directive 91/533/EEC of 14 October 1991 on an employer's obligation to inform employees of the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship. This is most important directive, and it establishes obligation of the employer to inform their employees of the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship. The Directive provides better and improved protection for employees, and it is intended to avoid uncertainty and insecurity about the terms of the employment relationship and to create greater transparency in the labor market[11]. This is very important Directive and realization of its provision making guarantees about better protection, no uncertainty and insecurity and the terms of the employment relationship.

  The Directive states that every employee must be provided with a document containing information on the essential elements of his contract or employment relationship. This Directive is important for all type of labour relations, and it is relevant for agriculture labour relations as well.

- Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP. The Directive aims to improve the quality of fixed-term work by ensuring the application of the principle of non-discrimination and to prevent abuses arising from the use of successive fixed-term employment contracts. A basic principle is that open-ended contracts are and remain the general form of employment relationships and fixed-term contracts should be the exception[12].
- Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work. This Directive sets out to eliminate unjustified discrimination against part-time workers and to improve the quality of part-time work. "The purpose of the agreement on part-time work as negotiated by the social partners in 1997 is to provide for the removal of discrimination against part-time workers and to improve the quality of part-time work. It is also intended to facilitate the development of part-time work on a voluntary basis and to

[11] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31991L0533
[12] https://www.worker-participation.eu/EU-Social-Dialogue/Interprofessional-ESD/Outcomes/Framework-agreements/Fixed-term-work

contribute to the flexible organization of working time in a manner which takes into account the needs of employers and workers."[13]

It should be mentioned that this Directive is one of the most important in the field of agricultural labor relations.

- Council Directive 91/383/EEC of 25 June 1991 supplementing the measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship.

This Directive aims at ensuring that workers with an employment relationship governed by a fixed-duration contract or on a temporary employment are afforded the same level of protection as that of other workers. This Directive is also, important for agricultural workers.

- Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies. The Directive sets out requirements for the information to be given to workers on the reasons, the numbers and categories of workers concerned, and of redundancy compensation payments[14].
- Council Directive 2001/23/EC of 12 March 2001 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of undertakings or businesses. This Directive sets out the EU-wide rights of employees when there is transfer of ownership of a company or business in which they work, as well as the obligations of the transferor and transferee.
- Directive 2002/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community - Joint declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on employee representation. "This Directive establishes a general framework setting out minimum requirements for the right to information and consultation of employees in undertakings or establishments within the Community"[15].
- Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time[16]. The Directive sets out limits for working hours and rest time..

The Directive was designed for the worker's protection by limiting the individual working hours per week and by setting minimum standards for rest

[13] https://www.worker-participation.eu/EU-Social-Dialogue/Interprofessional-ESD/Outcomes/Framework-agreements/Part-time-work
[14] https://www.worker-participation.eu/EU-Framework-for-I-C-P/Information-and-Consultation/Collective-redundancies-Directive-98-59-EC
[15] https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/directives/directive-2002-14-ec-establishing-a-general-framework-for-informing-and-consulting-employees-in-the-european-community
[16] EUR-Lex - 32003L0088 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

time and for the annual leave.. This Directive has comprehensive character and it is important for agriculture labour related legislation as well.

Anti-discrimination and gender equality - 6 EU directives**:**

- Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. This is a key part of EU labor law, which seeks to combat discrimination on grounds of disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age in the workplace. The directive applies to both public and private sectors and covers all aspects of employment and work. Following 2 Directives are based on this frame Directive and regulates gender and racial related issues.
- Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. The Directive implements the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. It gives protection against discrimination in employment and training, education, and social protection. It gives victims of discrimination a right to make a complaint through a judicial or administrative procedure.
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services. The Directive prohibits any less favorable treatment of men or women on grounds of gender, or of women due to pregnancy or maternity. It also prohibits sexual harassment. The directive establishes only minimal requirements, allowing EU countries to be able to maintain higher or more extensive levels of protection.
- Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation. The objective of this Directive is to simplify, modernize and merge existing Community legislation in the area of equal treatment for men and women in employment and occupation[17].
- Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.[18] The directive prohibits work that risks endangering health and safety and for leave before and/or after confinement of 14 weeks.
- Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978[19] on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security. "The purpose of this Directive is the progressive implementation, in the field of social security and other elements of social protection provided for in Article 3, of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security, hereinafter referred to as 'the principle of equal treatment".

[17] https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/directives/council-directive-2006-54-ec
[18] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:373:0037:0043:en:PDF
[19] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31979L0007

It should be noted that almost all above mentioned Directives of this direction have general purpose and they cover the agriculture labour relations as well.

Health and safety at work - 26 EU directives are presented in the third direction and timetable for approximation to these directives are **5-9 years period after date of enforcement of AA[20].** One of the main Directive in the health and safety at work direction is The **Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989** on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work. The Directive is applying applies to all sectors, "including industry, **agriculture,** commerce and services"[21]. The directive describes obligation of employer on provision of safety training, firefighting, consulting with workers and their representatives regarding the health and safety related issues. Workers are obliged to correctly use respective equipment and machinery.

This directive is to be approximated by Georgia in five years after AA date of enforcement. This means that it has deadline till 2022 and it must be already approximated. Other directives are also related to the health and safety and all of them are very important for all kind of labour relations and as well for agriculture labour relations among them.

Timetable for approximation of 8 employment, social policy and equal opportunity related Directives are 4-6 years after the date of enforcement of the AA.

So, if we consider 1 July 2016, as a date of entry into force of the agreement, deadline for approximation of above 8 Directives will be no later than 1 July **of 2022. This means that all these 8 directives must already be approximated according to the timetable of the AA.**

The timetable for approximation to 6 anti-discrimination and gender equality related Directives are 3-4 years after date of enforcement of AA.

If we consider 1 July 2016 as date of enforcement of AA, deadline for approximation of above 6 Directives will be the end of 2020. This also means that all these 6 directives must be already approximated in 2020. Also, as we see in most cases, we should consider that the time for approximation to above mentioned *14 Directives of first two directions,* has passed and the requirements of these directives must already be reflected in the internal laws.

In case of above-mentioned 26 Directives of third direction, we haven't clear picture of approximation status.

[20] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22014A0830%2802%29
[21] https://www.ceps.eu/download/publication/?id=10718&pdf=RLI_Georgia2_Master.pdf

With more analysis it is clear that the main Directive (Council Directive 89/391/EEC) of this direction is mostly approximated and is in line with stated timeline. Also, according to AA timetable, more than half of Directives from this direction must already be approximated and rest of them stayed to be approximated till 2025.

It should be mentioned that Proposal for Council decision 2022/0073(NLE)[22] "on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Association Council established under the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part, on the adoption of the EU-Georgia Association Agenda", taking into consideration the importance of the approximation with international and EU labour related legislation. This document envisages short-term and medium-term priorities in different important directions and declares willingness to "continue cooperation with Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and the representative social partners (trade-unions and employers' organisations) as stakeholders and watchdogs in areas prioritised by the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA), including labour rights". "Support non-discrimination on the labour market and implementation of the equal pay for equal value work principle" and also "continue to amend the Labour Code and other relevant legislation and bring them further in line with ILO standards". This document provides other important and very valuable recommendations which are absolutely in line with our analysis and recommendations.

4.5.3. Description of LC and related laws against to the approximation to the EU legislation

As we have already discussed, Georgia ratified and therefore took obligation to be in line with all major ILO conventions and based on AA some listed EU Directives as well. In this regard Georgia started approximation with above-listed EU Directives. This part of the research provides detailed description and analysis of Georgian labour related laws and provides information about the approximation status and condition.

As we have already mentioned current labour code (LC) was enacted in the end of 2010. The code, as an organic law, has higher status and importance, and it is directly based on the constitution of Georgia. In the 11 years since its enactment, the code has been amended periodically, and today it is in effect with a final version that includes 21 amendments. The main purpose of these amendments was technical improvement of the organic law, and also to bring the norms of the law in line with the ILO Conventions and EU Directives reflected in the AA. It is noteworthy that some of the changes are of a technical nature, and some of them are enacted due to the obligations towards EU and ILO. Among these 21 amendments we can highlight 3 of them (30 December 2012, 04 June 2013 and 29 September 2020) which have significant impact on the formation of current version of the code and also for approximation with EU legislation.

[22] EUR-Lex - 52022PC0103 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

First important amendment of 2012 was related to the social responsibility. 2013 amendment provided important principles of ILO conventions, according to this amendment structure and approaches of the law was changed in line with ILO convention requirements.

Most important amendment was made on 29 September 2020. This amendment was provided according to the AA requirements, and it was shearing main principles of above-described Directives. It is crucial/ necessary that this amendment provides provisions regarding the prohibition of discrimination in employment, are based on the following AA directives:

- Council Directive 2000/78 / EC of 27 November 2000;
- Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000;
- Council Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006.

Based on these directives, the LC became more in line with ILO anti-discrimination conventions and EU related Directives. Code represents direct and indirect definitions, it introduces the principle of equal pay for equal work, clarifying the scope of the prohibition of discrimination and regulates special measures of protection and assistance. The Directive 2006/54/EC sets out requirements for the equal protection of women and men and proposes the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment. Based on the above Directive, the amendment provides the main anti-discrimination and gender-equality principles (including defensive measures for pregnant women), as well as among other provisions on notification before firing, collective redundancies, overtime working remuneration and fixed working hours.

Based on Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999, according to the amendment, the requirements for oral and fixed-term employment contract and the substantive terms of the employment contract were adopted. According to Directive 91/533/EEC of 14 October 1991, amended code provides rules for oral and fixed-term employment contracts and the establishment of additional substantive conditions related to the content of the employment contract, such as components of remuneration, the rule of termination of the employment contract. The amended code envisages the regulation of the legal status of the intern and also provides a specified regulation regarding the right to strike. Changes related to part-time work are introduced in accordance with Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997. The law protects the rights of a person employed part-time and generally regulates issues related to part-time employment.

It should be noted that above mentioned three Directives are directly related to the labour relations in the agriculture field. Regulation of part time and seasonal workers related issues, is very important for development of Georgian agricultural labor market.

Working time, leisure, break and leave, as well as overtime and rates of minimum wage, also issues related to the occupational safety have been presented in LC and Georgian law “On Occupational Safety, in line with EU Directive 2003/88/EC of 4 November 2003. The principles and requirements of EU Directive 98/59/EC on obligations regarding the mass dismissals of employs are also taken into account and reflected in the amended LC.

The 2020 amendments also includes the requirements of Directive 2001/23/EC and Directive 2002/14/EC regarding the right to information and consultation of employees in undertakings or establishments, safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of undertakings or businesses.

Based on the Council Directive 91/383/EEC of 25 June 1991, amended code provides same protection level for all type contract duration. The code regulates fixed-duration employment relationship which also includes temporary, seasonal, and part-time workers as well**.**

LC doesn't use term – casual work, but we can say that it could be regulated under the term of fixed-duration. Overlay, we can conclude that this amendment also provides regulation for agriculture related employment.

According to article 229 of AA, Georgia has obligation to be in line with ratifaied ILO conventions and also, to ratifay other conventions for the purpose of better regulation of labour related issues.

Georgia has obligation to ratify a lot of Conventions. As a sample, we can again indicate agriculture focusing 3 conventions: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), **Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), which are not ratified by the Parliament of Georgia and therefore are not part of the Georgian legislation**.

The Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and Directive 2003/88/EC of 4 November 2003 are reflected in the internal legislation, and they are approximated, but as we above indicated, special conventions related to the Labour inspection and particularly agriculture labour inspection, are not yet ratified. So, as we see, due to the above Directives, these requirements are reflected in Georgian legislation, mainly in the Georgian Law "On Labour Inspection" adopted on 29 September 2020, and also sub law legislation such is Resolution of Government of Georgia N112 of 7 March 2016 "On Adoption of rule of Prevention and monitoring of Forced Labour and labour exploitation".[23]

But Georgia still needs to ratify Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81). Here we can conclude that this requirement is fulfilled partially.

Finaly, we can say that due to the 2020 amendment, current labour legislation, including LC, Georgian Organic Law "On occupational safety" and Georgian law "on labour Inspection" are almost fully approximated with all 8 frame directives from the direction of Employment, social policy and equal opportunity. Also, it is approximated with almost all directives from 6 directives of direction of anti-discrimination and gender equality, but with 26 EU directives presented in the third direction - Health

[23] https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3215791?publication=0

and safety at work aren't fully approximated and according to the timetable, process of the approximation will be completed till 2025.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

- In the last 10 years the agricultural sector has been announced a priority area and a large increase in public investments followed. State government strategies address the issues of employment in direct or indirect ways through promotion of sector-specific or thematic activities.

  Recommendation: *For the purposes of increasing efficiency and fostering productive agricultural employment it is recommended to include in the government strategies the chapter on strategic development of high-skilled human resources in the agriculture and veterinary science taking into consideration modern international requirements. This will ensure a sustainable supply of high skill professionals to the respective areas of agriculture and support prospective growth opportunities.*

- The existing small-scale structure of the agricultural businesses results in labour-intensive employment of predominantly low and medium skill personnel in the Georgian agricultural companies. Accordingly, the companies largely favour practical, on-the-job experience of their employees, and the employment of high-skilled professionals is not economically justified. Strong demand for high skill professionals in the agricultural sector will emerge only under the conditions of higher sectoral efficiency.

  Recommendation: *Government and international partners should continue investing in reforms related to fundamental changes in agriculture, as mentioned in different sectoral assessments (addressing the issues of fragmented land, inadequate and obsolete infrastructure, such as irrigation, access to capital, cold storage, logistics, etc.). Only creation of efficient environment in agriculture will ensure an increased demand of skilled agricultural specialists.*

- Currently the academic programs in agriculture and veterinary science are based on the state accreditation and the labour market research in cooperation with different stakeholders.

  Recommendation:
  - *It is recommended to adapt academic curricula to the current needs of the market (such as agronomists, veterinarians, wine-makers and strategic goals of human resource development.*
  - *Representatives of the universities stated that programs are developed in accordance with the market needs. Conducting thorough market research requires a complex approach and the inclusion of significant human and financial resources. It is recommended to develop a complex methodology to conduct the market research, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods tailored to the agriculture field and increasing universities' research capacity. Piloting the methodology in selected universities will ensure sustainability and applicability. Developing and piloting of the market research methodology in universities and VET institutions should be facilitated through donor support.*
    In addition, development projects in the field of agriculture should be designed with the view of strengthening the links between enterprises, academic institutions and employment agencies in order to maintain the exchange of information on the needs of businesses, on the one hand, and academic curricula, on the other.

- *Organizing job fairs are recommended to match students' job needs and the demand of the agribusiness companies. Job fairs allow students to present their talents to potential employers. While employers and businesses have the opportunity and availability to meet with short-listed students. In addition to this, it creates the opportunity to promote agricultural professions. Due to the stereotypes and attitudes, agricultural professions are not very well perceived by the Georgian youth (indeed, this was stated in the focus group discussion with the youth). Furthermore, agricultural jobs are not popular, and it is perceived that these positions are not well-paid. In this regard, an effective communication strategy targeting high school students will facilitate awareness-raising about the most demanding and promising agricultural professions and increase interest among youth to pursue career in agriculture field.*

- It is noteworthy that agricultural students are eager to find employment in parallel to their studies, despite realizing that long working hours lead to deterioration of academic performance. ***Recommendation:*** *It is recommended that this issue is closely studied, and effective mechanisms are implemented with the view of encouraging full-time studies while also providing students with the opportunities of gaining professional experience by means of internships in the enterprises. Student loans and development of programs facilitating access to finance for young graduates will also help. The establishment of the scholarship fund by the private sector and the contribution of the non-profit organizations in Agriculture could also facilitate and encourage high school graduates to apply for the agriculture professions.*

- The current analysis of the AA, respective Directives and relevant Georgian legislation, shows that deadlines for approximation with most important directives, have already passed. Therefore, in most cases, Georgia's obligation is to be approximated with Respective EU directives. In this regard, current situation with approximation process is:

b. It should be noted that all fundamental 8 Labour related ILO Conventions are ratified. Georgia not yet ratified **2** of 4 **Governance conventions**, such are: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). **Also, only 8 technical conventions from 178 are ratified as today. Also,** agriculture focusing 2 conventions, one of them Governance convention and another technical Convention **(Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) and Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)),** are not ratified by the Parliament of Georgia and they are not part of the Georgian legislation. Due to the above circumstances Georgia isn't fully in line with article 229 of AA and accordingly, not fully in line with its obligations.

Recommendation: *Based on best practice of EU countries, other developed countries to be in line with article 229 of AA, it is recommended to ratify above-mentioned conventions. It is recommended that Georgia start process of ratification of unratified 172 ILO conventions. Among them we can highlight agriculture focusing 3 conventions:*

- *Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81).*
- *Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129);*

- *Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)*.

It is important that ratification of all conventions and particularly, first two governance conventions are very important.

c. The current labour legislation, including LC, Georgian Organic Law "On occupational safety" and Georgian law "on labour Inspection", are almost fully approximated with **8 frame directives** in the field of *Employment, social policy and equal opportunity*, and also with **6 directives** in the field of *anti-discrimination and gender equality*. From the rest of 26 Directives in the field of *Health and safety at work,* some of them have to be approximated due to the timetable and some of them would be approximated till 2025.

Recommendation: *It is recommended that Georgia follow timetable and process of the approximation.*

d. According to the Directive 91/383/EEC of 25 June 1991 amended LC doesn't use term – "casual work", but it uses term - "fixed-duration".

Recommendation: *It is recommended to start use term of "casual work" and reflect this term in LC.*

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