ANNEX 1 – DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

1   General information

Reference of the call for proposals	EuropeAid/164732/DH/ACT/GE-2
[Lot number you are applying to:]	Lot #2
Number of the proposal	ENI/2019/164732-2/22
Name of the lead applicant	United Nations Association of Georgia
Title of the action	Local Investments in Networks for Knowledge for Knowledge and Skill-share (LINKS) Project

2   The action
2.1.   Description of the action
2.1.1.   Description (max 13 pages) -

United Nations Association of Georgia (UNA Georgia) and the Open Society Foundation Georgia (OSGF) are pleased to submit this project proposal that reflects our joint vision, and that of our partners, for a durable and inclusive solution to skills mismatch in four targeted regions of Georgia. Key takeaways that we want to convey through this summary of the action are that it is rooted in evidence, is locally owned, is participatory, focuses on sustainability, and evolves as it learns. All project activities and services directly respond to all three objectives set forth by the Call for Proposals, are inter-connected as amplifiers, and are replicable and scalable during and beyond the proposed project timeframe. Specifically,

- **action design** makes use of existing network and infrastructure of UNA Georgia's youth centres in all target regions, institutional partnerships, established trust with local stakeholders, and tried and tested communication strategies – altogether offering a higher degree of penetration, ownership and sustainability. Starting off the existing resources allows for expedient launch of most of the project activities.

- **implementation approach** is novel and reinvents traditional tactics. While leveraging local partnerships and strengthening stakeholder capacities for a more holistic response to core labour market gaps, the action reverses the channels of communication and directly delivers full-scale lifelong learning opportunities to those most neglected and underserved in the rural and remote areas – young men and women, IDPs, NEETs and other vulnerable groups in 56 villages of the four targeted regions;

- **sustainability strategy** rests on the premise that the sustainability of an action requires sustainable partners. Ability to adopt and deploy improved capacities, approaches and services is a commitment that not every stakeholder can fulfil. Mindful of the challenge, the action prioritizes those with greater degree of commitment and potential for success, to ensure that every unit of labour, time, taxpayer funds, and reputation that the donor and the implementing partners invest - counts.

Both co-applicants have more than 25 years history of working with all key stakeholders of this action – young men and women, families and communities, minority groups, IDPs, PwDs and other disadvantaged groups, teachers and trainers, education providers, civil society, youth organisations, local and national authorities. UNA Georgia has secured sustainable funding for more than 12 regional partner CSOs over the last 15 years, to implement its countrywide network of 14 youth centres, and to dozens more in various areas from advancing ethnic and religious minority rights to anti-discrimination and disinformation. Four of those reliable, sustainable civil society partners that UNA Georgia has coached and mentored for the past decade – one per target region – will become part of this effort. Inviting the Open Society Foundation Georgia (OSGF) into this partnership, Georgia's premier local grant-maker and a long-time collaborator of UNA Georgia, further adds to the efficiency and sustainability of the project and to the human capacity development partnerships that it creates.

Following the requests of the Call for Proposals, UNA Georgia and OSGF have made the human rights-based approach a foundation for the project design. Both applicants are mindful of the limits of time and resources, but propose an ambitious, yet feasible plan to equally and meaningfully enable both the duty bearers and the rights holders. The project offers novel channels and cost-effective tools to accomplish such task, including through an innovative lifelong learning platform – *a traveling university* – which ensures that this project is fair, equal and true to its mission of fully include the most vulnerable populations.

Through Project LINKS, we plan to contribute, directly and verifiably, to the global objective of the Call for Proposals to foster employability and employment of women and men in the selected regions of Georgia. We count on achieving that via **quantifiably improved quality and accessibility of skills anticipation, skills development and skills matching services that are better aligned with Georgia's socio-economic development strategy.** In our theory of change, this will be achieved via the following intermediate results:

- Sustained supply of actionable data, tools and platforms for meaningful public and private collaboration will lead to an intermediate outcome of quantifiably improved skills anticipation and matching by skills training, VET education, career counselling and employment support service providers.

- Evidence-based, market-relevant design and delivery of career guidance and skills development opportunities will lead to reduction in skills mismatch and increase in employability of women and men locally and regionally.

- Accessibility, quality and inclusiveness of entrepreneurial studies and lifelong learning will lead to the most disadvantaged populations – young men and women in rural areas, NEETs, IDPs, PwDs and other vulnerable groups to actively contribute to local social and economic development.

❖ *Relevance to the call for proposals and to the needs and constraints of the target country*

Georgia's socio-economic development strategy prioritizes education and identifies skills development and entrepreneurial learning as one of the overarching goals for socio-economic development. The government's 4-Point Program, the main strategic reference document for Georgia's social and economic development, stresses the gravity of youth unemployment and increasing rural-urban divide, and prioritizes aligning the education opportunities to the current and future human capital needs in the country.

Georgian government's strategy, "Georgia 2020", identifies three key challenges to economic prosperity – the lack of private sector competitiveness, insufficiently developed human capital, and limited access to financial resources. To address these challenges, the strategy identifies development of the workforce to meet labour market requirements as one of three priority measures and sets out labour market and education reforms required to at all levels of education. Proposed reforms include the development of a labour market database, a streamlined system for training jobseekers, and programs to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship. To address the skills mismatch, promote economic growth and employment, Georgia and its development partners have significantly scaled up investments in Georgia's VET sector. In 2019, there were 90 providers offering VET programs in Georgia (38 public and 52 private), almost half of which (47.5%) are found in the capital city. Only 27 out of 69 Georgia's municipalities have a VET provider. **Enrolments in the VET sector in Georgia fell markedly from 21,045 in 2013 to 11,159 in 2019.**

Reform agenda for VET envisages significant changes through: (i) ensuring that VET meets the requirements of the labour market; (ii) ensuring that access to VET is based on the principle of lifelong learning; and (iii) increasing the popularity and attractiveness of VET. **Proposed action, in a direct response to the priorities set out by the Call for Proposals, effectively mirrors and supports all three overarching priorities of the reform agenda.**

- *Georgian labour market experienced major economic, political and legal shifts over the last two decades, with actual employment rates remaining at an average of 55%. These employment rates are far below the 70% benchmark set for EU countries in 2010.*

- *Employment structure remains traditional, with low-yield agriculture accounting for almost half of total employment. The industrial sector is small and represents only 11% of total employment. The market service sector is relatively large at 25% of employment but is dominated by trade. Public services - education, healthcare and administration - account for 17% of total employment. Modern business and financial services play a minor role, as their share in non-agricultural employment is less than 6%.*

- *Predominance of self-employed workers is a notable feature of the Georgian labour market. It has remained consistent over time and reflects the resilience of the informal economy and informal employment. Most of the self-employed workforce in rural areas is employed in the low-productivity agricultural sector. Self-employment is mainly comprised of subsistence farming, informal trade or unpaid domestic work, and does not include small businesses.*

- *For many Georgian families, emigration to work abroad enables the household to survive on remittances sent from other countries. Between 7% and 8% of the population has experience of migration, having either emigrated or emigrated and returned. According to the data from the Georgian Integrated Household Survey, approximately 7% of the population residing in the country receives remittances from abroad.*

❖ *Complementarity with other initiatives supported by the EU and by other donors*

Seeking to avoid micro-duplicating existing and planned multimillion investments in the VET sector, we chose to focus the action on **providing information, networking and innovation support to the existing actors** in the field – local youth centres, youth organisations, universities, VETs, teachers, career counsellors and other stakeholders, including the EU-funded programs and activities (e.g. the school-based career guidance activities under the EU-funded ENPARD program that the project will seek to empower).

While meaningfully strengthening the available skills development and career guidance efforts by local stakeholders, including those of the underperforming VET providers, the project will create underlined trusted and sustainable hubs for skills excellence and public and private collaboration – **LINKS Centres** - to be coordinated by local CSO actors and stakeholders. All learning, teaching and sharing activities of the project will serve a single purpose of producing a participatory, inclusive and effective response to unemployment.

While the project will be using existing resources, infrastructure and know-how of co-applicants (including UNAG Georgia's countrywide network of youth centres, or the social entrepreneurship manuals developed by OSGF with EU funding), it does not constitute a continuation of a previous action, nor a part of a larger program. Project beneficiaries, as well as all project costs, activities and their results will be solely, directly and verifiably attributed to the project.

The action will map and monitor the main activities of Georgia's principal development partners, especially those of the EU's Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs Program, 2019−2023, which provides a mix of budgetary support and targeted project support for enhancing employability of vulnerable groups. The project will be seeking to collaborate, among others, with EU's ENPARD (2018-2022, with additional €77.5 million for development of rural areas in Georgia), Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), EU4Digital and other relevant EU programs, whose local representatives, partners or affiliates will be invited to join the Human Capital Development Workgroups of the project. Thematically, the project tentatively identified several thematic opportunities for synergies, which it will explore at lengths as part of the baseline and task mapping activity with the first three months of project implementation: (i) career guidance services, which are currently offered at SSA/ESS offices, in pilot secondary schools, VET colleges and universities; (ii) training and retraining of jobseekers; (iii) internships, (iv) wage subsidy programmes for PwDs; (v) job intermediation and job fairs.

Number of large development stakeholders are active in the VET sector in Georgia, especially under EU funding, including the GIZ, GGF, UNDP, and more recently- KfW. Many of these programs focus on the improvements in the quality and relevance of VET, support dual approaches, strengthen industry-led skills development, and increase industry involvement in VET to improve relevance. KfW will be developing a centre of excellence in the field of construction technologies. The World Bank is preparing the $102.7 million Georgia I2Q – Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project, which will mostly support general education, but may provide limited support to VET, focusing on testing dual and work-based learning approaches. The Ministry of Economy plays a prominent role with its Produce in Georgia programme, which invested GEL 493.3 million since it started and created 10 075 jobs. Another programme is Start-up Georgia, implemented by GITA, which targets general public and focuses on technology innovation.

The project will meet and consult with these stakeholders within the first 3 months of project implementation, as part of its task mapping and baseline activity, and will actively seek to coordinate with them throughout the project lifetime through annual follow-up meetings and public events to ensure synergy and complementarity.

❖ *Target groups and final beneficiaries, attitudes, capacities, consultations, and how action address their needs*

While Georgia puts official unemployment at 12.7%, 60% of Georgians reported being unemployed in CRRC's Caucasus Barometer 2019 survey. Staggeringly high 39% of those have never had a job and the similar 39% having been out of employment for longer than 6 years. Unemployment is higher in younger populations and among ethnic minorities. Interestingly, 54% of the unemployed reported they were not interested in a job at all, and a significantly larger portion of those - 64% - were female. The interest in finding employment seems to drop proportionally to the number of years being out of it. Remarkably, **interest in finding a job increases dramatically with the knowledge of a foreign language, computer skills and frequency of internet use.**
The project plans to leverage this via its digital literacy and language competency training.

Nearly every study in Georgia confirms the skills mismatch atop the key challenges and that the young people are among the first to suffer. Different studies also show that as many as 35% of employed youth do not work in the professions for which they were educated, while both over-qualification and under-qualification are observed among young people (around 30% each), which are obvious signs of skills mismatch. A STEP skills study carried out by the World Bank in 2014 indicated that the most important skills that young (under 30) workers often lack are **technical competences and problem-solving skills, as well as a lack of English, leadership skills, and creative and critical thinking**. * *This list of gaps is directly and comprehensively addressed by the proposed action's "Key Competencies, Communication, Management, Digital Literacy, Conversational English Language Classes at project-funded LINKS Centres and targeted VETs".*

The average length of the school-to-work transition is one to two years in Georgia. The main determinants of the transition are geographical location, gender and education level, as good, modern and better-paying jobs are available in the cities. Gender is another important factor which negatively affects young women's transition. Limited availability of well-functioning career guidance and employment services and the lack of internship and traineeship opportunities make the transition even more difficult. **Young people residing in rural areas, dropouts, belonging to ethnic minority groups or having various types of disabilities are further disadvantages and these youths face far greater challenges when making the transition to the world of work.** * *This gap is directly and comprehensively addressed by the proposed action's Lifelong Learning and Traveling University, which targets 56 villages and 1680 rural beneficiaries within year 1.*

Project target groups and final beneficiaries are women (50% of all final beneficiaries will be women), youth and young adults (total of 800, selected via VET partners and the LINKS centres, run by local partner CSOs), NEETs (at least 50% of all final beneficiaries will be NEETs), teachers and career counsellors, training providers, VETs, local youth centres and civil society organisations. Project will also target IDP populations in Shida Kartli (Gori) and ethnic and religious minority communities in Kvemo Kartli. Gender-sensitive approach will be applied to all the activities (training, career counselling, professional secondments / subsidies, social innovation grants).

Stakeholders	Final Beneficiaries
• civil society organisations	• Young men and particularly young women;
• businesses, business/sectorial associations	• Low achievers, early school leavers, NEETs
• youth workers, youth centres	• Disadvantaged groups
• youth organisations	• Teachers and trainers
• VET providers and universities	• Employment and career guidance counsellors
• formal and non-formal training providers	• Business and / or entrepreneurship associations
• Regional and local authorities	• Youth organisations and youth workers.

VET performance in generally underwhelming. Only 2262 people (1342 men and 920 women) enrolled in 2019 across all public VETs in project's four targeted regions (project wasn't able to access similar data for private VETs). A whopping 1912 of those were in Adjara region only, leaving entire 3 regions with only 350 new students in 2019 (* Education Management Information System (EMIS) data).

As in many other countries, one of the root causes hindering the development of the VET sector is that it is not considered an attractive educational pathway for skill acquisition. Both **young people and their parents (often the principal decision-makers in choosing the educational paths) see limited value in VET and prefer higher education as a pathway to increased lifetime earnings and improved career opportunities. It is a widespread perception in Georgia that only struggling students pursue VET.** *The project will counter the stigma via its Lifelong Learning: Traveling University activity, which will deliver a 12-lecture curriculum to 56 villages within year 1. One of the 5 mandatory lectures will include "Turning Education Costs into Investment", which will deliberate on practical economic benefits of technical and lifelong learning.*

The 2017 Business Demand for Skills in Georgia survey has revealed around 19 000 job vacancies in 5 651 reported organisations (MoESD, 2017) and revealed that 92% of firms seeking to fill vacant positions

faced problems in doing so. The main reason for the supply shortage in specific positions, according to the report, was the lack of skills and experience, low number of applicants and low salaries. The report found wide range of problems in filling both the 'white-collar' and 'blue-collar' job vacancies, specifically in fields such as science, manufacturing, services, trade, office work, art, entertainment and sports.

The World Bank compared the structure of jobs by education and occupation with that of the labour force in Georgia. It found a discrepancy between the traditional employment structure in the country – indicative of a limited demand for highly skilled labour – and a large supply of workers with a tertiary education. However, the modern sector of the Georgian economy is too small to absorb all those workers, and many highly educated workers are therefore unemployed or employed in low skilled jobs. At the same time, many workers with higher education diplomas seem to lack important employability skills. Despite high unemployment, employers often cannot find workers with the required skills. Over-education (also known as a 'vertical mismatch') seems to correspond with under-skilling, or a skills gap.

Needs and capacity constraints of project's final beneficiaries (youth and young adults not in training or employment) is the lack of information, access to and benefit from the yet-poorly organized education and skills development opportunities. Capacity constraints of project's stakeholders – training providers, teachers, job counsellors, CSOs, youth centres - are defined by critical lack of information, know-how, tools and human resources to offer quality services that are relevant, market-oriented, participatory and inclusive of the authentic needs of employers.

Regardless of the systemic shortfalls in the VET sector, solid examples of success are offered by some of the EU-funded projects, which will be replicated and re-used by this project. Most important lesson learned from those actions, for the particular purposes of this project, is not to chase immediate results but to **root the process into sustainable partnerships – a process that the proposed action will approach through regular local stakeholder working groups, stakeholder exchange visits and study tours, employment forums, labour trends reporting and other participatory processes that will seek to link local skills training providers, businesses and local authorities together**.

❖ *Stakeholders, attitudes, capacities, consultations held*

European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have contributed significantly to VET, labour and employment policy development in Georgia. Dozens of identified measures and programmes were implemented over the past three years at national, regional or local level, targeting young people to support their transition to work in Georgia, ranging from regular public services to donor-funded projects that support skills development, career guidance, and entry and stay in the labour market.

According to Youth Transition to Work in Georgia 2018 report by the European Training Association, "despite the patchwork of initiatives, there is no coherent approach towards the youth school-to-work transition in Georgia. Due to its cross-cutting nature, youth policy seems to lack the acknowledgement that it deserves. No institution acts as an interinstitutional coordination mechanism, and there are different state and non-state organisations providing similar services for youths, but they remain discrete and do not communicate with each other." - *proposed project will fill the partnership and communication gaps in the four targeted regions.*

Project co-applicants met and consulted with principal stakeholders of the action to investigate the best practices and common challenges – we interviewed EU and USAID projects that support agriculture, value-chains, economic growth, local civil society organisations, youth centres, trainers, practicing career guides and counsellors. Their feedback, insights and observations from the field formed the design of this action.

❖ *Intervention logic, main assumptions and risks, how activities lead to outputs, outcomes and expected impact*

While VETs, universities, civil society organisations and other training providers provide technical competency trainings in varying scopes and quality, most studies and employers report a critical lack of key socio-economic skills and competencies on the labour market. Umbrella action under the proposed project is to establish local hubs for knowledge and skill-share - **LINKS Centres**, on top of the existing youth centres run by UNA Georgia and its partner CSOs (UNA Georgia operates a network of 14 youth centres, covering each of the four targeted regions, and collectively involves more than 5,000 youth in the learning and practice of civic activism). **LINKS Centres** will bring all stakeholders together – local duty bearers and rights holders - in a collaborative exercise of skills and human capital development. The project will seek to complement the efforts of multi-million investments by the European Union, Asian Development Bank, World Bank and other actors by creating and sharing participatory knowledge-base, novel communication channels, collaboration platforms, grassroots participation and local ownership to strengthen ongoing and future skills matching and development efforts.

LINKS Centres will invite key local stakeholders – teachers, trainers, education administrators, youth, women, IDPs, PwDs, CSOs, employers, local authorities - to join a participatory consultative platform - Local Human Capital Development Workgroups (HCDWs). HCDWs will gather on a quarterly basis to discuss ongoing trends, participate in setting upcoming priorities for LINKS Centres, and to seek for the opportunities of local

public-private partnerships. It is through these workgroups that the project will solicit the input of its final beneficiaries, the rights holders, in the design and delivery of project activities to ensure continued interest, enrolment, attendance, and ultimately – the ownership of project results.

Theory of change and the chain of results

The project will contribute to the Call for Proposals' specific objective of **"fostering employability and employment of women and men in the selected regions of Georgia"** by achieving a measurable, verifiable and attributable outcome - "**quality and accessibility of skills anticipation, skills development and skills matching services is quantifiably improved and better aligned with Georgia's socio-economic development strategy"**. The project counts on achieving this outcome by:

a. skills anticipation: sustainable supply of actionable data, labour market insights, tools and platforms for collaboration will enable the local stakeholders to improve the quality and relevance of their skills development, training and re-training, career guidance, internships, apprenticeships, and other employment support services (intermediary outcome **"skills anticipation and matching is improved through platforms, partnerships, insights and access to relevant data"**). The project will do so by producing the following outputs:

- Labour market monitoring, skills and vacancy management online database, trends and gender-gap-tracking and other data gathering, sharing and dissemination work-packages will produce the output - "stakeholders better anticipate labour market trends and employees and employers are connected and informed on the supply and demand of skills"

- Human Capital Development Workgroups, stakeholder exchanges, study tours, job forums and other networking work-packages will lead to – "project gathers and connects local duty bearers and right holders and facilitates exchange of information and trends for better partnerships and cooperation"

Assumption is that the local authorities and businesses will aid data gathering and outreach and are willing to actively participate in the networking opportunities offered by the project, but *the risk* is that elections in 2020 and 21 make it difficult for the stakeholders to meaningfully engage with the action. The project will mitigate the risk by establishing direct links of communication with a diversity of local *stakeholders, rendering the project less susceptible to changes in individual institutional commitments.*

b. skills development: meaningfully improved design, quality, relevance and accessibility of skills development opportunities leads to reduction in skills mismatch and the intermediate outcome of "young women and men improve employability through increased supply and quality of career guidance and skills development services". The project will do so by producing the following outputs:

- Developing handbooks, curricula and teaching manuals in key competencies and rooting them onto the labour market monitoring findings will help produce increasingly "strengthened stakeholder (teachers, career counsellors, VETs, CSOs) capacities to deliver more market-relevant skills development services".

- Delivering more relevant, accessible and engaging skills development opportunities in key competencies, including citizenship education, professional secondments, career counselling, foreign language proficiency and other skills matching and development activities will help achieve the following output "targeted young adults develop market-relevant skills and competencies, digital literacy and citizenship capacities".

Assumption is that local stakeholders, especially VETs, will readily accept offered opportunities, including the project priority to reach NEETS and focus women's participation, but the *risk* is their critical failure to attract relevant enrolment independently. The project mediates the risk by investing in the LINKS Centres, established based on existing youth centres, to deploy core training activities for both VET students and priority beneficiaries (women, NEETs, IDPs, PwDs), to be additionally recruited via the *traveling university*.

e. entrepreneurial & lifelong learning: enabling youth and women entrepreneurs in particular with relevant tools, skills, knowledge and motivation will lead to increased local activism, social troubleshooting and innovation, entrepreneurship, reduction in the NEETs rates and the project's intermediate outcome of "young women and men benefit from entrepreneurial and lifelong learning and actively contribute to local social and economic development". The project will do so by producing the following outputs:

- Comprehensive approach to incubating social innovations and entrepreneurship, which will methodologically integrate key entrepreneurial competencies, transversal skills, citizenship education, and funding mechanisms into a holistic learning exercise, will lead to the following

intended output - "targeted young adults improve capacity in entrepreneurial key competences and generate entrepreneurial solutions to local social and economic issues".

- Merging online e-learning and offline approaches, and directly reaching the most underserved women and men in the rural communities with a full-scale lifelong learning opportunity, including through project's novel *traveling university,* which combines citizenship education with human capital development – will help engage the most vulnerable populations and achieve most tangible output - "representatives of underserved, remote rural areas, and especially NEETs, are motivated and enabled to invest in personal growth, skills development and lifelong learning".

The assumption is that the local businesses and authorities participate in supporting social innovations and entrepreneurship and local rural population is ready to engage in learning opportunities offered by Traveling University and E-learning platform. *The risks* are continued mistrust in CSO initiatives, which project will mitigate by investing in participatory processes building local partnerships and trust and presenting democracy and human rights as Georgia's homegrown experience.

❖ *How action helps target groups and final beneficiaries, local technical and management capacities*

The action offers a cost-effective contribution to addressing the key social and institutional challenges to skills mismatch and unemployment. It envisages a dual engagement with stakeholders and final beneficiaries – a. strengthening human and institutional capacities, networks and partnerships, and b. delivering informed, relevant, skills development and lifelong learning opportunities to project's final beneficiaries.

How the action informs and enables the process:

- Project's online labour market monitoring, reporting and skills matching platform will (i) monitor local employment trends, market gaps and accomplishments, including the monitoring of the implementation of Georgia's new labour safety regulations, and will supply up-to-date insights to the general public, local authorities and policy makers, businesses, other EU actions, teachers, career counsellors, VETs and other stakeholders, (ii) will connect local businesses to a pool/database of skilled LINKS and VET graduates, (iii) enable job seekers to access lifelong learning resources and opportunities, and (iv) serve a multitude of internal purposes for the project too – as a baseline (inaugural monitoring report will be produced within the first 6 months of the project), a sustained tool for continuously informing the project activities, and as an end-line for measuring and evaluating the project impact.

How the action enables institutional stakeholders:

- The action offers local skills training and matching providers an integrated capacity building approach: it invests in deploying market-relevant skills matching and development activities (key competencies, language proficiency and digital literacy), while rooting their services into a functional and sustainable dialogue with other stakeholders, in particular the local businesses. Human Capital Development Working groups, employment forums, employment subsidies, and regional stakeholder exchange visits will create and facilitate the public-private partnerships that will reveal the untapped resources and space for collaboration. Nesting the LINKS Centres onto the existing youth centres and at local CSOs will make a lasting investment in the capacities of project's civil society partners.

How the action enables final beneficiaries:

- The project offers a holistic response to improving the employability of project's final beneficiaries by providing accessible, evidence-based, relevant and high-quality skills development opportunities in key competencies, language proficiency, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial competencies. The action also integrates online and offline mediums to achieve inclusive and maximum impact. Short animated videos – condensed versions of skills development classes – will deliver key messages and will incite further interest among the viewers. An innovative *traveling university* – "People's University" - which takes roots in Georgia's First Republic (1918-1921) as a highly successful, crowdfunded project, offers a novel reversal of traditional urban-centric methods of reaching the students, and goes to 56 villages within the first year, at least twice a year, and over the period of 3 years, reaching an estimated 1680 beneficiaries via the traveling university alone, with a three-point task: a. deliver open lectures on citizenship, education, economy, history, democracy, EU, global affairs and other topics of relevance, b. promote VET as a viable choice for educational path, and c. recruit NEETS participants for LINKS centres and VETs.

❖ *Detailed activities, justification, logic, relevance, roles*

LINKS CENTRES – Local hubs for Skills development **Activity 1.1.0**	**A 1.1.0 - LINKS Centres (sub-grants to local CSOs)** – skills development hubs, which will be operated by local CSO implementing partners (4 partners in 4 target regions). Sub-grants will selected competitively and awarded to local CSO actors to ensure local capacity building, development of local networks and infrastructure for skills anticipation and skills development activities, including labour market research, career guidance, job counselling, training and other interventions that are important for project's sustainability to be locally owned. Local sub-grants, under which the LINKS Centres will operate, will provide funding for relevant staff, space and coordination for local human capital development workgroups, job counselling services, labour market monitoring and other local activities.

Logic and relevance: overall logic and objective of sub-grants is to amplify local voices and ownership and to build sustainable local networks of partnerships, resources, capacities and know-how for skills anticipation and development.

Stakeholder participation: mobilizing optimal stakeholder participation will be among the core requirements for selection and award of the sub-grants;

Expected results: sustainably develop local capacities for labour market monitoring, career counselling, coordination with local businesses and other stakeholders, constituency building (especially with regards to NEETS), and other activities that will build local networks, partnerships and capacities for improved skills anticipation and matching.

LABOUR MARKET MONITORING **Activity 1.1.1**	**A 1.1.1 - Labour Market Study and Monitoring (12):** borrowing Eurofound's jobs-based approach and methodology, the project will collect quantitative and qualitative data to analyse structural trends and shifts in the labour market. LMM will inform a. local policymakers and stakeholders, b. will inform the design and delivery of training deliverables and other activities of the project, as well as serve as a baseline data for the project outcomes and outputs. Gender dimensions will be fully integrated into the methodology, which will attempt to track gender factors in hiring, retention, and pay.

Logic and relevance: to address the lack of statistical and practical data, that can be easily used and digested by the stakeholders, the project will invest in labour market study and monitoring to aid the duty bearers and workforce to comprehend and meet labour market requirements;

Stakeholder participation: the LLM will involve representatives from all sectors in designing the methodology of the study, as well as monitoring and reviewing of the results;

Expected results: the LLM results will inform local duty-bearers (local authorities, businesses, educational institutions), jobseekers and employment support initiatives, including the LINKS project, providing baseline data, and improving the design and delivery of project activities.

Responsible parties: UNAG will take the lead role in coordinating the market research and monitoring; local partner CSOs in all four target regions, will provide support to the monitoring and reporting activities to insure inclusive and participatory process.

LINKS ONLINE PLATFORM **Activity 1.1.2**	**A 1.1.2 – LINKS Online Platform,** a website that combines market analysis, vacancy management, and skills registry as well as provides project beneficiaries and other stakeholders with online lifelong learning platform (see activity: L3-5), will deliver: • Trends-tracking and data will disseminate, analyse and illustrate the findings of the LINKS market monitoring; • LINKS reporter will report success stories and highlights on local VETs and VET graduates, local start-ups and enterprises; • Trainee registry, an online profiles of jobseekers created with the help and advice of career counselling; • Vacancy management and matching: online database and tools will connect employers and employees via a curated vacancy management registry.

Logic and relevance: online resources available only on national level are insufficient in informing and guiding local stakeholders. The platform will enable easy navigation of information and resources on latest trends and opportunities;

Stakeholder participation: the project will facilitate focus group meetings with all stakeholders to gather insights and recommendations on material and relevance, as well as usability and efficiency of online content;

Expected results: through online tool, the project will raise awareness on labour market trends, opportunities, success stories and will connect jobseekers and employers for an improved skills match.

Responsible parties: UNAG will take the lead role in designing, deploying, operating and coordinating the content on the LINKS website; Local implementing partner CSOs in all four target regions will support the website by providing the local context, information and resources.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUPS Activity 1.2.1	**A 1.2.1 - Human Capital Development Working Groups (48) -** local workgroups, engaging rights holders and duty bearers in a participatory format of discussion, will gather local CSOs, VET providers, universities, training providers, businesses, associations, youth workers, youth centres, charities, local and regional authorities on quarterly basis to discuss local challenges and opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and synergy. The workshops will also enable civil society and other stakeholders to advocate for improving the conditions for equal access to rights and opportunities with the local authorities and businesses.

Logic and relevance: lack of information and experience exchange among different sectors leads to mistrust. The workgroups will help recognize and address needs and opportunities that exist for both, duty-bearers and right-holders;

Stakeholder participation: the activity's main intention is to engage and connect all local stakeholders and showcase the advantages of inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to addressing the complex issues;

Expected results: improved relations, contacts and information exchange among the main stakeholders contributes to advancing cooperation to support active labour market measures and access to equal opportunities.

Responsible parties: Local CSOs will lead mobilizing and coordinating the workgroups, allowing for local networking and capacity building (versus Tbilisi-to-region approach);UNAG and OSGF will provide communication support to local CSOs, to ensure local stakeholder interest and commitment to the process.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FAIRS / FORUMS Activity 1.2.2	**A 1.2.2. - Employment Fairs/Forums (4):** will blend discussion, networking and exchange formats, gathering local stakeholders - CSOs, VET providers, universities, training providers, businesses, associations, youth workers, youth centres, charities, local and regional authorities. Organized in year 3 of the project implementation as a culminating event for major project activities, the Employment Forums will also feature the presentations of the proposed and other EU activities that promote the employment, economic growth and welfare in Georgia.

Logic and relevance: the project creates networking opportunities for all stakeholders and informs about the results and success stories of the project;

Stakeholder participation: the project partners will consult all interested parties to plan and organize the forums in the most inclusive way possible;

Expected results: the forums foster networking opportunities among civil society and different sectors and raise awareness about skills development services, their graduates and achievements of the LINKS project.

Responsible parties: LINKS/CSO will take the lead in coordinating the employment forums in all target regions; UNA Georgia and OSGF will provide communication and outreach support.

CURRICULA, TEACHING MANUALS, HANDBOOKS **Activity 2.1.1**	**A 2.1.1 -** Development, testing and publishing of new training curricula and teacher handbooks for soft skills and key competences will cover: • Effective Communication (1 e-pub): public relations and negotiations; communication and presentation techniques and strategies; briefings and press conferences; popular platforms, and social media campaigns; • Project management (1 e-pub): management cycles; situation, stakeholder and beneficiary analysis; objectives problem and results analysis and frameworks; managing risks; M&E; project planning & communication; fundraising techniques; • Digital collaboration and productivity (1 e-pub): participation in digital society and digital economy; development of digital skills for remote online work; basic digital skills course for low-level users; introductory courses in software programming for young people; specialized short courses for ICT-related jobs; • **Handbook on Job Readiness:** the project will develop an additional handbook on Job Readiness for the representatives of VET institutions and youth.

Logic and relevance: resources of the project are limited, hence the tentative prioritization to a feasible and practical selection of priority disciplines. This selection, in project's theory of change, can best accommodate the transversal skills – a key in skills mismatch – and make optimal contribution to employability;

Stakeholder participation: the manuals will be adapted and refined with full engagement of teachers, school leaders and experts. The interactive student-engaged approach to learning will be applied to the relevant curriculum;

Expected results: teaching manuals can be either based on the desk research and translation – a standard approach - or be novel, unique and creative. The action will prioritize the latter and will strive to incorporate core transversal skills gaps, and key citizenship education in the curricula and manuals.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead role in developing, testing, publishing and distributing the manuals. Local stakeholders' involvement will be locally coordinated by local CSO partner/LINKS host.

TRAINING SUPPORT & KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FOR VETs **Activity 2.1.2**	**A 2.1.2 – Training Support & Knowledge Transfer for VETs** • **Training (8):** train the trainer cycles for a total of 120 VET instructors in teaching methodologies, communication, presentation skills, including the use of digital collaboration tools and productivity solutions both in-class and at work. • **Workshops (12):** participatory format of presentations, seminar-lectures and discussions on education, economic growth, employment trends and labour market demands - the workshops will also deliver the Labour Market Monitoring findings directly to VET's staff and will facilitate VET's more informed and improved response to the labour market needs. • **ToT in Job Readiness (1):** representatives from VET institutions will participate in a comprehensive five-day training course. This course will equip them with the essential skills and knowledge needed to develop similar job readiness courses within their respective institutions for their students. Through this training, the representatives will gain the expertise to effectively prepare and empower students for the job market, enhancing their employability and ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills for success.

Logic and relevance: the action will respond to core gaps in the relevance and quality of VET delivery and will incorporate modern productivity solutions into the classrooms;

Stakeholder participation: the trainings will be tailored to the needs and interests of VET instructors, as well as based on the best international practices;

Expected results: capacity building trainings intend to a. increase overall quality of instruction, and b. decrease the dropout rates, achieving a long-term impact on the quality and thrust of VET delivery.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead role in coordinating VET capacity building process; local IPs - LINKS-host CSOs - will provide logistics, coordination and communication support; UNAG will maintain general oversight, collect project data, and ensure that the activity stays true to its mission.

REGIONAL VET EXCHANGE Activity 2.1.3	**A 2.1.3 – Regional VET exchange (4):** peer visits are a powerful social learning strategy that create an environment of learning and collaboration through reflecting on individual and shared experiences. Bringing key VET and CSO partners together, to all four target regions, will add to the capacity building and networking functions of the action.

Logic and relevance: project's coordinated approach to VET's capacity building will help standardize teaching methodologies across target regions and will allow more space for collaboration; peer visits will be added benefit and will support the experience exchange between VETs and VET instructors;

Stakeholder participation: the project will consult local VET institutions, instructors and local CSOs;

Expected results: VET instructors are connected and share experience on successful working methods, resulting in improved in-class productivity.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead in coordinating the exchange, while local CSOs will provide logistic and communication support.
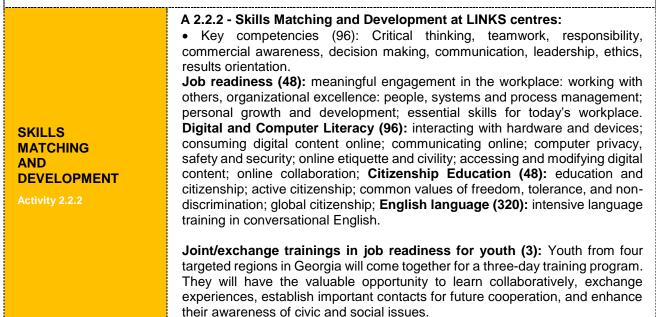
ADD-ON CLASSES FOR VET STUDENTS: Activity 2.2.1	**A 2.2.1 - Add-on Classes for VET Students** • Key competencies (60 days): will cover critical thinking, teamwork, responsibility, commercial awareness, decision making, communication, leadership, trustworthiness & ethics, results orientation; • Job readiness (20 days): will cover engagement in the workplace, people, systems and process management; growth and development and other essential workplace skills; • Digital Literacy (20 days): will cover interacting with hardware and devices; consuming digital content and communicating online; computer privacy, safety and security; online etiquette and civility; accessing and modifying digital content; online collaboration. • Citizenship Education (20 days): will cover education and citizenship; active and global citizenship; common values of freedom, tolerance, and non-discrimination.

Logic and relevance: The add-on classes are intended to offer in-class trainings in the skills and competences crucial for employment, but rarely affordable, to the VET students;

Stakeholder participation: the add-on classes will be developed with the full involvement of VET instructors, following participation in the train the trainer cycles;

Expected results: VET students will be equipped with market-relevant skills and competencies; digital literacy training will enable them to use ICT to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, while citizenship education training will help connect education, employment and active citizenship.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead role coordinating the delivery of add-on classes at VET's; UNAG will maintain general oversight and collect project data.

SKILLS MATCHING AND DEVELOPMENT Activity 2.2.2	**A 2.2.2 - Skills Matching and Development at LINKS centres:** • Key competencies (96): Critical thinking, teamwork, responsibility, commercial awareness, decision making, communication, leadership, ethics, results orientation. **Job readiness (48):** meaningful engagement in the workplace: working with others, organizational excellence: people, systems and process management; personal growth and development; essential skills for today's workplace. **Digital and Computer Literacy (96):** interacting with hardware and devices; consuming digital content online; communicating online; computer privacy, safety and security; online etiquette and civility; accessing and modifying digital content; online collaboration; **Citizenship Education (48):** education and citizenship; active citizenship; common values of freedom, tolerance, and non-discrimination; global citizenship; **English language (320):** intensive language training in conversational English. **Joint/exchange trainings in job readiness for youth (3):** Youth from four targeted regions in Georgia will come together for a three-day training program. They will have the valuable opportunity to learn collaboratively, exchange experiences, establish important contacts for future cooperation, and enhance their awareness of civic and social issues.

Exchange youth event on key competencies (interpersonal, digital literacy, citizenship) and job readiness (1): Youth from targeted regions will convene for a week-long event that includes comprehensive training sessions, seminars, study tours, and other educational activities focused on enhancing job readiness, digital literacy, citizenship, and civic activism.

Training Course on Gender Equality and Equity (1): The event aims to foster awareness among youth from diverse regions of Georgia about the various obstacles hindering gender equality in the country. These barriers include gender-based violence, early marriage, skills mismatch, unemployment, and the economic empowerment of women. The training course will provide participants with a platform to acquire knowledge and understanding of gender equality issues. They will also be equipped with tools and skills to serve as multipliers, effectively sharing and disseminating this knowledge within their respective local communities across Georgia.

Campaign - Youth for Women's Rights (30 meetings): Following the training, the participants will serve as multipliers and, working in pairs, actively disseminate their knowledge within their local communities. They will organise a minimum of 30 informative meetings, engaging over 400 residents encompassing youth, NEETs, school students, parents, teachers, and community leaders.

Concluding event for the Campaign - Youth for Women's Rights (1): The project will organise a two-day event exclusively for the campaign participants from the targeted regions of Georgia. This event will provide a platform for participants to exchange valuable experiences, engage in in-depth discussions about challenges and achievements encountered during the campaign, and foster insightful dialogues with renowned experts in the fields of gender equality and women's rights. The event aims to celebrate the collective efforts of the participants, inspire continued commitment to the cause, and further empower the youth to drive positive change in their communities.

Logic and relevance: the logic behind delivering trainings in both VETs and LINKS centres is that action cannot feasibly or reasonably expect for VETs to attract project's priority demographics – women, IDPs, PwDs, NEETs. Through the channels of local youth centres, CSOs, project's innovative Travelling University and other outreach channels– the LINKS centres will;

Stakeholder participation: the project, through its local partners will prioritize involving motivated youth in planning and implementation of the project activities to guarantee the sense of ownership of the project initiatives;

Expected results: the market-relevant skills and competencies, digital literacy and citizenship capacities will translate into job readiness and active citizenship, while conversational English will give young people the language skills that are essential for entering and staying in the trade, tourism or other priority industries.

Responsible parties: Local CSOs will lead the management of classrooms for all LINKS-based training components; UNAG and OSGF will provide technical support - trainers, speakers, manuals and literature.

CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES

Activity 2.2.3

A 2.2.3 – Career Guidance Sessions (168 hours): building on the results and findings of the project Labour Market Monitoring, bi-annual HCDW discussions and other participatory processes, the project will deliver hour-long guidance sessions at:
- Guidance sessions at VETs (48 hours), incl. sessions for women jobseekers, based on gender-related findings of labour market research;
- Guidance sessions at LINKS centres (48 hours), incl. sessions for women jobseekers, based on gender-related findings of labour market research;
- Guidance hours at schools (48 hours);
- Career lectures via Travelling University (24 hours).

Logic and relevance: different demographic groups will require a differentiated logic and delivery to achieve optimum results;

Stakeholder participation: the methodology and content for the sessions will be developed based on the findings and information gathered through the labour market monitoring, HCDW meetings and other participatory processes;

Expected results: through the career guidance at VETs, the project contributes to increasing retention rates; guidance sessions at LINKS, public schools and travelling university (56 villages), will increase the VET enrolment.

Responsible parties: LINKS/CSO partner will lead the delivery of career guidance sessions at all local venues; UNAG will coordinate career guidance segment in Travelling University curriculum.

PROFESSIONAL SECONDMENTS Activity 2.2.4	**A 2.2.4 – Investing in Success:** 60 graduates of LINKS's educational cycles (competencies, citizenship, etc.) will be provided the opportunity of professional secondment at HCDW member organisations throughout the project lifetime, emphasizing anticipated and preferred career choices. Comprehensive selection criteria will be detailed and finalized in partnership with all project partners and stakeholders to ensure fair, relevant, effective and efficient selection of beneficiaries. Preference will be given to women, IDPs, NEETs, and other disadvantaged groups, as identified by labour market studies. Secondments will be linked with partner CSOs, LINKs centres, VETs, project-funded social and socially-responsible start-ups. Secondments will be implemented by local implementing partners and will be made part of their sub-grant budgets (host organizations of LINKS centres, who are currently operating UNAG's youth centres in all target locations).

Logic and relevance: young people often struggle to start a career without experience, job and salary record. The project will invest in youth by creating work experience, as well as on-job learning and development opportunity;

Stakeholder participation: the project will take a participatory approach to selection and placement of the young people by transparent and competitive selection process of potential employees and employers;

Expected results: the secondments will provide the youth with the unique opportunity to put the skills and knowledge acquired through the project intervention in practice and gain professional experience leading to increased prospects for employment.

Responsible parties: Local partner CSO will take the lead role in selecting and managing the secondments; UNAG and OSGF will provide guidelines, procedures and oversight.

LINKS INCUBATORS Activity 3.1.1	**A 3.1.1 LINKS Incubators -** LINKS centres will serve the function of an incubator for all successful graduates of entrepreneurial learning, by providing direct coaching, management support and office space (preference given to women entrepreneurs, which will constitute at least 60% of participants): • **Coaching:** assist young leaders to set goals and focus their learning and skills development on maximising their performance; • **Co-creation:** creating a space and encouraging young leaders to share and improve ideas to effect change; • **Workspace:** a free office space for young adults; • **Acceleration:** assisting young entrepreneurs in their idea development by providing business advice, resources, contacts and capital.

Logic and relevance: local youth doesn't have opportunities and support to develop and perfect their ideas and transform them into action; the LINKS incubators will create the space and assistance for such youth to succeed;

Stakeholder participation: the LINKS incubators will run as a joint space for innovation and development and all stakeholders will be able and responsible for its improvement and growth;

Expected results: the LINKS incubators are expected to support the innovation, change and sustainability, contributing to regional social and economic development.

Responsible parties: Local CSO partners / LINKS hosts will take the lead role in coordinating the incubation of local social and socially-responsible entrepreneurs; UNAG and OSGF will oversee, provide human resource and technical support - trainers, speakers, manuals and literature - to the local partners.

KEY ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND RESOURCES Activity 3.1.2	**A 3.1.2 - Key Entrepreneurial Skills and Resources:** • **Entrepreneurship Handbook:** purpose and mission; idea generation, research, business plans; defining goals, balancing social and economic goals; marketing and, communication strategies; branding; budgeting, financial planning and reporting; legislation, taxation, etc. • **Key Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** 120 training days for VET and LINKS participants in key entrepreneurial competencies - planning, innovation, risk management, problem-solving, quality and compliance, information management and other competencies.

Logic and relevance: entrepreneurship studies are not for entrepreneurs only, but will benefit every VET, instructor, student or graduate. An interactive, informative and practical handbook will incorporate digital technologies, social responsibility, transversal skills and will serve as guide to the entrepreneurial training courses;

Stakeholder participation: curriculum will be developed, and topics finalized in partnership with the local VETs, CSOs, beneficiaries and other HCDW stakeholders, as well as the results of LMM.

Expected results: the trainings will equip young leaders with entrepreneurship competencies that will enable them to explore and develop ideas to achieve the change, while entrepreneurship handbook will serve as a guide in entrepreneurship to a larger part of the society.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead role in coordinating the entrepreneurship training cycles at the LINKS centres, in partnership with local CSOs, who will provide logistics, coordination and local communication support.

SOCIAL AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE START-UPS Activity 3.1.3	**A 3.1.3 - Social and Socially Responsible Business Start-ups:** LINKS incubator, through intensive training and support via LINKS education components will eventually fund the 8 innovative ideas by Year 3, in partnership with local businesses and other stakeholders, with preference given to women-owned ideas and start-ups (at least 5 out of 8). Awards will be made subject to certain terms and conditionalities, such as direct and measurable evidence of sustainability and social impact, and will be required to include public and private synergies. Co-financing will not be required but encouraged. All funding decisions will be made by an independent selection commission. In addition, the project will engage an expert consultant to assist young entrepreneurs in all aspects of establishing successful and sustainable businesses.

Logic and relevance: to promote the idea of businesses contributing to a positive social change the project will invest in innovative, social and socially responsible start-ups with initial, seed-funding;

Stakeholder participation: all project stakeholders will be invited to contribute to selection process to insure transparency and participatory process;

Expected results: at least 8 innovative ideas incubate, accelerate and penetrate the market in partnership with local businesses.

Responsible parties: OSGF will take the lead role in coordinating the creation and funding star-ups in partnership with local CSOs, who will provide logistics, coordination and local communication support.

LIFELONG LEARNING-TRAVELLING UNIVERSITY **Activity 3.2.1**	**A 3.2.1 – Education Delivery Service - Travelling University**: lecture-format discussions brought to most marginalized in remote villages, including minorities, IDPs, and other vulnerable populations, reversing communication channel from conventional models to a more inclusive one and delivering education in citizenship, educational opportunities, human rights, gender equality (including Women Champions of Georgia's First Republic, their election to legislatures, universal suffrage and other progressive historic experiences of Georgia), and international politics: EU, UN, SDGs, etc; and 7 additional elective classes, tailored based on participant and stakeholder input. • Stakeholder Consultations: with local stakeholders to finalize the action plan, priority villages and sites, and identify public and private synergies. • Inaugural lectures: in all 56 pre-selected and finalized project sites, delivering first mandatory classes; • Surveys and focus group discussions with local beneficiaries; • Delivery of the full curriculum to all 56 villages; • Delivery of tailored classes based on local demands.

Logic and relevance: While the priority is to reach the most underserved, the project must stay within the confines of efficiency and reasonability. Distance, population size, seasonal access and other factors were considered during the tentative selection of 56 locations (list provided);

Stakeholder participation – 12-lecture curriculum only includes 5 mandatory credits. The remaining 7 will be determined by labour market research, focus group discussions in 56 project sites, and other participatory processes;

Expected results: mass-promotes VET as a viable education path; recruits beneficiaries for LINKS and VETs; reaches the most underserved; is targeted and tailored to every locality; promotes available opportunities, such as those offered by "Produce in Georgia", economic growth and SME support programs of EU and other donors.

Responsible parties: UNAG will take the lead role in developing, testing and deploying the curriculum, local CSO partners will provide logistics and communication support.

LIFELONG LEARNING - ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM **Activity 3.2.2**	**A 3.2.2 – LINKS Online Learning Platform:** e-learning will gather, categorize and convert project materials, guidelines and manuals into an interactive online learning resource. Additionally, animated video-lectures will support and enhance the learning and aid learners, trainers and other interested individuals with information, tools and resources. The e-learning platform will form a part of the larger online resource for active labour market measures-LINKS website.

Logic and relevance: due to the limited resources, intervention can only reach limited target group, while e-learning platform is easily accessible to a wider and more diverse groups of beneficiaries;

Stakeholder participation: online content and interactive tools will be tested and approved by stakeholders through focus group meetings and testing sessions;

Expected results: it is expected that the e-learning platform, will provide the sizable part of local population with information, tools and resources for lifelong learning.

Responsible parties: UNAG will lead the design, development and operation of online learning resources on its LINKs platform; local CSOs will participate and support the dissemination efforts.

Project Closing Events (5): The project closing events will be organised in each targeted region of Georgia and a joint Concluded event in the capital, bringing together all stakeholders. Organising the closing events for the LINKS project offers numerous advantages, including stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, evaluation and assessment, visibility, networking, and collaboration. These will contribute to the project's overall success and sustainability while inspiring future initiatives and promoting lasting change.

❖ *Third parties and meaningful distribution of project resources*

Significant added value of the proposed action is the quality and amount of resources it will be distributing locally. The action foresees operational grants worth an annual average of under EUR 20,000 per organisation (detailed in the budget notes and includes the operation of LINKS centres, professional secondments and other local activities) to four local implementing partner CSOs. The annual sub-grants will be awarded, managed and monitored by OSGF in full compliance with OSGF, UNAG and EU regulations. Additionally, the action will be distributing funding for 8 successfully incubated social enterprises in an estimated total amount of EUR 32,400 (local beneficiary-driven startups), creating new jobs and development opportunities. The action will also be investing an estimated total of EUR 117,000 in professional secondments that will help at least 60 final beneficiaries to meaningfully and sustainably enter and stay in the labour market (part of the sub-grants to local implementing partner CSOs in four target regions).

Third-party support:

1. **LINKS Centres, Activity 1.1.0** (4 recipients, local CSOs, estimated maximum amount of EUR 19,710 per centre/year and EUR 59,130 total) – skills development hubs, which will be operated by local CSO implementing partners, who will be awarded annual sub-grants to provide local coordination and outreach support, physical space and infrastructure for all local project activities, including human capital development workgroups (activity 1.2.1), market research (activity 1.1.1), career guidance and counselling (activity 2.2.3), trainings (activities 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) and other interventions. Sub-grantees will be provided detailed list of activities and deliverables, and implementation will be closely monitored by OSGF. Sub-grants will differ region to region, and will be finalised individually, based on actual costs (to be negotiated individually based on local salary ranges, rent, etc.). Current annual estimate of EUR 19,710 (increased from originally budgeted EUR 9960 to accommodate professional secondments, due to a COVID-19-related shift in project strategy) will include:

   - Objectives and the outputs to be achieved with the financial support

   o Proposed project will partner with four local CSO partners (sub-grantees) in the target regions of Georgia to complement the partnership consortium. Overall objective of the approach is *"to amplify local voices and ownership and to build sustainable local networks of partnerships, resources, capacities and know-how for skills anticipation and development"*. Specifically, the local sub-grant recipients (sub-grantees) will:

     ▪ Operate the LINKS Centres, including but not limited to the provision of relevant staff and physical space for meetings, job counselling services and sessions, trainings, seminars and other local activities;

     ▪ Provide career counselling services to project beneficiaries, both at LINKS centres and other locations (schools, universities, or other places of youth gathering);

     ▪ Contribute to labour market monitoring efforts and provide local data streams;

     ▪ Engage with local stakeholders and coordinate local Human Capital Development Workgroups (HCDW);

     ▪ Liaise with local businesses, CSOs, government offices and implement professional secondments for project beneficiaries;

   o **Types of activities eligible for financial support:** fixed list of required and eligible activities will be provided as part of the grants competition (illustrative list is provided above);

   o **Types/categories of persons which may receive financial support:** only the local non-profit organizations (CSOs) that can demonstrate history of success in youth work, local advocacy, constituency building, project management and financial controls will be eligible to receive financial support.

   o **Criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support:** OSGF board will make the final selections based on OSGF's thorough criteria for all grants-awards, including but not limited to demonstrated capacities in project management, financial soundness, transparency, advocacy potential, demonstrated ability to mobilize local sources for co-financing, institutional strength and financial sustainability of the organization.

   All four recipients of the third-party support will be selected competitively through a grants competition, announced and coordinated by OSGF. OSGF will issue sub-grants and will ensure close monitoring of project implementation in full compliance with OSGF's grants management procedures and guidelines, as well as with project's tasks and objectives.

- o **Criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity and the maximum amount:** exact amount will be determined based on local costs (average salaries, rent, etc.), which will be different for each target location. <u>Maximum amount of third-party award (per subgrant recipient) will be EUR 60,000 for the duration of the project (3 years).</u> Current allocation is based on the following estimates:
    - **Operational costs** - EUR 9960 estimate covers gross salaries for centre's administrative staff, labour market research and career guidance coordinator, local travel, space, supplies, utilities, communication, and monthly activity and logistics costs (detailed estimates and justifications are provided in budget justifications). The estimate is based on average running costs of similar initiatives (UNAG's ongoing Youth Centres in the target regions).
    - **Professional secondments, Activity 2.2.4 –** annual estimate of EUR 9750 per region was integrated into the third-party support (local sub-grants) in COVID-19 context, to increase local work and reduce staff travel. Scopes, modalities and conditionalities are detailed below.

2. **Professional secondments, Activity 2.2.4 (estimated maximum amount of EUR 1950 per beneficiary / 60 beneficiaries total; integrated into sub-grants for added efficiency and in COVID-19 context, to limit project travel)** – will be awarded to 60 project beneficiaries, to achieve project's labor market entry and stay objectives. Comprehensive selection criteria will be detailed and finalized in partnership with all project partners and stakeholders to ensure fair, relevant, effective and efficient selection of beneficiaries. Preference will be given to women, IDPs, NEETs, and other disadvantaged groups, as identified by labour market studies. Secondments will be linked with partner CSOs / LINKs centres, VETs, project-funded social and socially-responsible start-ups. Secondments will be implemented by local implementing partners and will be made part of their sub-grant budgets.

   - o *Objectives and the outputs to be achieved with the financial support:*

     Objective of the third-party support is to enable project beneficiaries' to enter and stay in the labour market. Secondments will provide 60 project participants (youth and young adults, with a focus on women, minorities, NEETs, etc.) with a practical, hands-on opportunity to put the skills and knowledge that they will acquire through the project's learning activities into practice and to gain professional experience that will lead to increased prospects for employment.

   - o *Types of activities eligible for financial support:*

     Third-party will cover (or co-finance) the salaries of seconded professionals (60 project participants / graduates of LINKS's educational cycles), for the maximum duration of 12 months per beneficiary (co-financing will be encouraged, but not required). Beneficiaries will be seconded at HCDW member organisations (local CSOs, VETs, public and private stakeholders), emphasizing anticipated (based on labour market research, activity 1.1.1.) and preferred career choices (based on career guidance results, activity 2.2.3).

   - o *Types/categories of persons which may receive financial support:*

     Youth and young adults in the four target regions are the primary target of the third-party support. Preference will be given to women, IDPs, NEETs, and other disadvantaged groups, as identified by labour market studies. Secondments will be linked with partner CSOs, LINKs centres, VETs, project-funded social and socially-responsible start-ups.

   - o *Criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support:*

     Beneficiaries will be selected jointly by a selection committee, which will be composed of the representatives of local partners, local stakeholders (CSOs, businesses, etc.), UNAG and OSGF, and will be based on pre-determined criteria – such as no or limited experience of paid work, successful and engaged participation in project's learning activities (key competencies, language skills, digital literacy, etc.), record of, or demonstrated commitment to civic activism and volunteerism, and successful passing of the job readiness assessment tool (to be developed by the project), which will establish a minimum threshold for essential skills and will measure the personal readiness for successful labour market entry and stay objectives by the beneficiary.

   - o *Criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and the maximum amount:*

     Exact amount will be determined based on local costs (average local salaries), which will be slightly different for each target region and municipality. Maximum amount of third-party award per

beneficiary will be EUR 1950 (estimate justified in the budget), while the duration of the secondment may vary from 6 to 12 months (maximum duration).

3. **Social and socially-responsible startups, Activity 3.1.3 (maximum amount of EUR 4050, 8 recipients to be selected from project beneficiaries)** – the project will fund 8 beneficiary-driven innovative ideas by Year 3, in partnership with local businesses and other stakeholders, with preference given to women-owned ideas and start-ups (at least 5 out of 8). EUR 4050 per winning social enterprise covers technical funding and support for launching the social enterprise and entering the local market. To be implemented by OSGF, based on the best practices developed through previous similar actions. (including the funding of social enterprises, subject to certain terms and conditionalities, such as direct and measurable evidence of sustainability and social impact. Startups will be required to include public and private synergies; co-financing will not be required, but encouraged; funding decisions will be made by the selection commission. Before awards are made, the agreements will be signed, and the awardees will be trained in financial management, and financial and narrative reporting by OSGF. The funded start-ups will be closely monitored and coached throughout the implementation of the project; the disbursements will be made in two stages, second transfer subject to the successful implementation and reporting. Implementation of all awards will be completed within the lifetime of the project).

o *Objectives and the outputs to be achieved with the financial support:*

Objective of the third-party support is to enable local activists and entrepreneurs to achieve a positive local change through socially responsible entrepreneurship (local job-creation,). At least 8 innovative, financially sustainable ideas will incubate, accelerate and penetrate the market in partnership with local businesses, within the timeframe of the project.

o *Types of activities eligible for financial support:*

LINKS incubator, through intensive training and support via LINKS education components will eventually fund the 8 innovative ideas by Year 3, in partnership with local businesses and other stakeholders, with preference given to women-owned ideas and start-ups (at least 5 out of 8). Awards will be made subject to certain terms and conditionalities, such as direct and measurable evidence of sustainability and social impact, and will be required to include public and private synergies. Co-financing will not be required but encouraged. All funding decisions will be made by an independent selection commission.

o *Types/categories of persons which may receive financial support:*

Third-party support will be awarded to the registered, project beneficiary-led (youth, women, IDPs, NEETs, etc., who undergo project's learning and coaching activities) entrepreneurial or non-entrepreneurial entities.

o *Criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support:*

Awards will be made subject to certain terms and conditionalities, such as direct and measurable evidence of sustainability and social impact, and will be required to include public and private synergies. Co-financing will not be required but encouraged. All funding decisions will be made by an independent selection commission.

o *Criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and the maximum amount:*

Maximum amount per startup/third-party support is EUR 4050 and will be awarded as a lumpsum to all recipients. Third-party support will be awarded in at least two or more installments, and project implementation and the use of funds will be subject to monitoring and evaluation, coordinated by OSGF. Implementation will be completed, evaluated and reported by the end of Year 3.

All third-party support (1. LINKS sub-grants, 2. Personnel secondments, and 3. Social and socially-responsible start-ups) will be fully completed, evaluated and reported within the timeframe of the project.

❖ *Main studies conducted and used for defining the scope of the action*

Project design is in large part based on consultations, expert interviews, and a thorough desk review of latest reports by the World Bank, UN, ADB and other development investors, as well as the review of government programs and strategies. The project also took a close look at the (i) DigComp: The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, and (ii) EntreComp: The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. *Specifically, the action relied on (i) Georgia at Work: Assessing the Jobs Landscape, World Bank 2018, (ii) Georgia Rapid Development and Welfare Strategy, the Government of Georgia, 2018-2020, (iii) Skills*

Mismatch Measurement in Georgia, European Training Association 2019, (iv) Selected Issues paper on Georgia, International Monetary Fund and World Bank 2018, (v) Youth Transition to Work in Georgia, European Training Association 2018, (vi) The Global Competitiveness Report, by World Economic Forum, 2017-2018, (viii) Georgia Skills Mismatch and Unemployment Labour Market Challenges, by World Bank, 2013; (ix) Labour Market Observatories, by European Training Association, 2016; (x) Report on the activities of Labour Market Observatory 2015-2018 term of office, by European Economic and Social Committee, 2018; (xi) Work programme of the Labour Market Observatory (LMO) in the 2018-2020 half-term of office European Economic and Social Committee Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC);

❖ *Eventual changes from the concept note*

Co-applicants made immaterial changes to the technical structure of the action, improving its consistency, clarity and relevance. None of the tasks, activities or objectives have been reduced in the full proposal. Significant additions and upgrades were made, however. Specifically:

- **Vastly increased direct reach – additional 1680 final beneficiaries** to be reached directly with a three year-long education program: the full proposal added an innovative concept of the *traveling university*, expanding the concept note's original 'citizenship education', which also remains independently and intact.

- **Vastly increased online reach** – the project expanded its plans for the development of online resources and integrated a lifelong learning online portal, which will collect and share useful literature, manuals, handbooks, and will develop original video content (short animated videos on entrepreneurship, citizenship, digital literacy and other key competencies), supporting increased reach, impact and visibility of the action.

- **Vastly increased project visibility** – the co-applicants decided to pool internal media resources to amplify the work of the proposed action. By using the platform of Civil Georgia (www.civil.ge, UNA Georgia's daily news report that reaches an average of 300,000 unique readers every year) in covering the labour market monitoring results, employment forums, *traveling university* and other project activities, will significantly scale up the visibility of EU without any added cost.

2.1.2. Methodology (max 5 pages)

UNA Georgia and OSGF are proud to be closely collaborating with a network of forward-looking, competent, reliable professionals and organizations across Georgia – among them the four implementing partners, one in every target region, who will be joining this action. The strong linkages that UNA Georgia, OSGF and our local CSO partners have built with local communities, grassroots organisations, young people and their families - a key ingredient in our confidence in success - will help us bring all stakeholders together, reconcile the varying interests of all rights holders and duty bearers, and help us produce sustainable results under the LINKS action.

A key concept in LINKS's methodology is leverage. We are mindful that LINKS is a temporary collaboration with limited resources. It will only gain effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging the capacities and participation of key project stakeholders and partners. In practice this means that a. the project communicates via local partners, where it aligns with their own interests, and b. project activities contribute to the strengthening of project partners and stakeholders, both within and beyond the project's immediate scopes.

Specifically, LINKS will minimise the activities that could be ´ticking boxes´ or simple project level efforts with no long-term effects for our local partners and final beneficiaries. In the same spirit, the project will leverage existing human networks and institutional resources – including the existing youth centres, instead of creating new systems on its own. This allows reaching a larger audience more quickly and effectively, while focusing the limited resources on content development. Quality, not quantity – will be the guiding principle of the action.

Strategic approach of the project builds onto three main pillars:

- *Learning by doing:* multiplying experiences of productive collaboration between local stakeholders will promote better attitudes, practices and commitment to partnerships and teamwork, contributing to a durable change in how public and private actors understand and respond to the skills mismatch locally.

- *Collaborative approach:* encouraging the establishment of structured, formalized, mutually beneficial networks that work, will generate lasting connections and trust between the CSOs, VETs, universities, teachers, career counsellors, businesses, local authorities and other stakeholders.

- *Investing with sustainability in mind:* expanding the public interest, outlets and incidence of accessing personal development and lifelong learning opportunities will build sustainable ownership and participation across regions, institutions and generations, and producing tangible quantitative and qualitative results:

Stakeholders and beneficiaries	Quantitative Impact	Qualitative Impact
Local CSOs, universities, VETs, teachers, trainers, career counsellors and other skills development providers in target regions	At least 12 VET providers, 120 teachers and trainers, 4 new market-relevant educational manuals created and deployed, working links created between businesses, CSOs, local authorities and other stakeholders.	Skills development providers are enabled to provide more market relevant training, leading to increased enrolment, graduation and employment rates among local youth and young adults.
Youth, NEETs, IDPs (including in IDP settlements), PwDs, ethnic and religious minorities	At least 800 involved in in-class training and a minimum of 1680 reached in rural areas through the *traveling university*. E-learning and online labour market resources reach an estimated 15,000 people.	Disadvantaged populations are improving employability through accessing relevant, quality skills development and lifelong learning opportunities at LINKS, VET and other education providers
Women, in particular women in rural areas (50% of all direct beneficiaries will be women)	At least 480 women are involved in all skills development, networking and employment support services and opportunities, created by the project.	Local women are empowered and enabled to invest in personal growth and skills development leading to better employment and self-realization opportunities.

❖ *Main implementation methods and rationale for their choice*

Over the 25 years of organisation history of working with civil society organisations, youth, vulnerable groups, education providers, local and national authorities and other stakeholders, UNA Georgia and OSGF have developed in-house systems of best practices, techniques, procedures and rules for project planning, implementation, its monitoring and evaluation.

Key institutional highlights that best feed into the relevance of the methodology approach are that a. both UNA Georgia and OSGF are providing substantial funding opportunities for local CSOs, especially in the regions, b. UNA Georgia operates a network of 14 youth centres across Georgia, c. UNA Georgia runs one of the most popular news platforms in Georgia – www.civil.ge, d. both implementing partners have substantial experience of working with education providers, including schools, VETs and universities, and e. UNA Georgia and OSGF are both investing in youth, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning across different projects and portfolios. In our practice,

- Quality, consistency and structure in the project's chain of results ensure project's relevance
- Properly defined scopes of the action ensure its feasibility
- Stakeholder communication that works for everyone ensures project's sustainability
- Minimized risk and maximized predictability ensures repeatability

Project's implementation methodology will be based on our experiences of success, but will take stock of best practices offered by professional literature, including the Project Management Methodology – Guide 3.0, developed by the European Commission Centre of Excellence in Program Management (CoePM[2]). Project's methodology will be fully adapted to the local context and the rapidly changing operational environment, especially in the context of pivotal 2020 and 2021 elections, shrinking space for civil society, and other operational challenges, which will require us to maintain increased agility to succeed.

UNA Georgia and OSGF will ensure to streamline adaptive planning, evolutionary development, early incremental delivery and continuous improvement across all phases and levels of project implementation. Project partners will ensure rapid and flexible responses to change and will use short feedback loops to allow for rapid responses to ongoing changes and for continuous improvements to project processes. Project organization, staffing, planning and phasing arrangements are based on the best practices outlined in the PM[2] Guide 3.0 manual.

❖ *coordination, synergies with other initiatives, especially those by the European Union*

The project will be principally interested to collaborate, among others, with EU's ENPARD (2018-2022, with €77.5 million for development of rural areas in Georgia), Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), EU4Digital and other relevant EU programs, whose local representatives, partners or affiliates will be invited to join the Human Capital Development Workgroups of the project.

The project identified several specific opportunities for synergies as well, which it will explore at lengths as part of the baseline and task mapping activity with the first three months of project implementation. Tentative list of potential synergies include (i) career guidance services, which are currently offered at SSA/ESS offices, in pilot secondary schools, VETs and universities; (ii) training and retraining of jobseekers; (iii) internships, (iv) wage subsidy programmes for PwDs; (v) job intermediation and job fairs, implemented by EU's ENPAR, USAID's Zrda Activity, or other major skills matching, skills development and economic growth initiatives.

❖ *the organisational structure and the team proposed for the implementation of the action*

All key personnel that are necessary to implement the proposed project, as well as the administrative support staff that are crucial for a rapid, smooth and effective launch of the project, are already available at UNAG, OSGF and the proposed implementing partners. By recruiting the proposed team, LINKS project minimizes the time necessary for orientation and for building necessary partnership and linkages with key stakeholders and counterparts.

Project baseline study, which will be completed within the first 3 months of the project, will be commissioned immediately upon signing the agreement. Project launching ceremony will be organized within the first 3 months from the project's start, after the baseline report is completed and the sub-grants are finalized and signed with key partners.

LINKS partners and staff offer intimate knowledge of the crucial education and unemployment context – problems, issues, institutions and personalities. Proposed partners and management team also possess the methodological knowledge, gravitas and influence required to create and manage this task.

Following the principles laid out by the PM[2], the project organizes itself in several layers – a. steering layer, b. directing layer, and c. managing layer.

Project Steering Layer – Steering Committee
– key decision-making unit of the project, composed of EU representatives, project partners and key project stakeholders

Project Directing Layer - Project Management Council		
– a participatory partner platform, that champions the project, mobilises necessary resources and monitors the project's performance in order to realise the project's objectives;		

Project Management Layer – Project Teams		
- focuses on day-to-day project management. It organizes, monitors and controls work to produce the intended deliverables and implement them.		
Lead applicant	*Co-applicant*	*LINKS Centre (local CSO)*
Team Leader	Project Manager	Project Coordinator
Project Officers (2)	Project Coordinator	Project Officer, Career Guidance
	Project Assistant	Project Officer, Labour Market
Administrative support staff	*Administrative support staff*	*Administrative support staff*

While the project foresees a horizontal arrangement of partner roles in decision making, the lead applicant will carry the responsibility of ensuring conduct, compliance and relevance of all partner actions. UNA Georgia has made over 50 sub-grant awards to local CSOs in Georgia during the last five years, with a combined worth of over GEL 3,630,000. Our sub-grant policies and procedures are centred on creating an enabling environment for our partners by: a) orienting subgrantees to donor regulations and UNAG requirements, b) monitoring project implementation (compliance and progress) and providing technical assistance to strengthen and support the subgrantees' work; c) ensuring appropriate financial mechanisms are in place; d) ensuring projects are revised and closed out in a timely and accurate manner in compliance with regulatory requirements, and e) ensuring program funds are accounted and used as approved.

- *Professional conduct of all employees*

All project partners and staff will be is expected to perform to the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency in all financial and programmatic matters. UNA Georgia's code of ethics and business conduct is incorporated into the Personnel and Administration Manual (PAM), which are adopted by its implementing partners as well.

- *Financial compliance by all project partners*

UNAG has tested procedures in place to ensure accountability for the use of EU funds. UNAG administration provides strict oversight of all financial matters, including financial reporting, and management of funds. UNAG uses advanced accounting software for tracking all financial operations by projects and funding sources. UNAG Policies and Procedures ensure that all expenditures are reasonable, allowable, allocable and properly approved prior to commitment. UNAG financial, administrative and grants management manuals and staff provide support to project personnel to ensure compliance with donor requirements, Georgian tax legislation and international accounting standards.

- *Financial viability and transparency of project partners*

UNAG implements an ongoing EUR 5 million program, working with youth, civil society, local and national authorities throughout Georgia. Independent, internationally accredited audit company performs the annual audit of UNAG financial statements, procedures and policies. UNAG sends its audit reports to all donors. Proposed regional implementing partners are have been receiving funding from UNAG since 2006. OSGF is among the key champions of Georgia's civil society, having contributed wealth of technical and financial resources to civil society development, human rights, good governance, youth and welfare.

❖ *the role and participation of actors and stakeholders and why these roles were assigned to them*

While all project partners have a thorough knowledge of the needs, context and human and institutional factors at play, we are mindful of the risks of overconfidence. As a requirement, all project activities will mandate a substantial degree of stakeholder consultations and participation at all stages of project implementation.

Detailed activity description outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of UNA Georgia and OSGF, under every activity and task. Proposed project will partner with four local CSO partners in the target regions of

Georgia to complement the partnership consortium, amplify local ownership, and make full use of existing resources, capacities and know-how.

While the lead applicant carries the responsibility of overall oversight and compliance monitoring, it also assumes the leadership functions in the delivery of several of the global components of the proposed project – such as labour market monitoring and reporting, lifelong learning, design and deployment of training curricula - together with the project's co-applicant, OSGF. Local partners will be fully included in all project activities, local and global, to ensure ownership, participation and sustainability of the action.

❖ *planned monitoring arrangements, subsequent follow-up, and external evaluations*

LINKS project features a sophisticated monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the baseline, perfect the indicators and regularly measure change against the pre-set benchmarks. The frame and flow of the program must also be adaptable to social changes and political situation. Close dialogue with the donor – through reporting and accountability - but also to partners and beneficiaries, will thus be central to the project.

In line with OECD/DAC principles, LINKS will dedicate 1% of its budget to monitoring and evaluation. This budget will serve to produce three evaluation reports: baseline, midterm, and final evaluation, to be completed by the end of the project. Evaluation efforts will seek to answer the following questions, relevant to the three intermediary outcomes of the project (mirroring those of the Call for Proposals):

1. Has the project contributed to the reduced skills mismatch on the labour market?
2. What was the added value of the LINKS-induced partnerships and networks?
3. Has LINKS contributed verifiably to the increased employment rates in the target regions?

Using internationally recognized evaluation standards, project evaluation efforts will answer each question using both quantitative and qualitative indicators at objective level, triangulating different data sources. The evaluation reports will measure progress in an incremental manner, thus documenting the trends in changes attributable to the LINKS project. In complement, the project will produce progress monitoring reports on a quarterly basis, which will track result-level indicators. This monitoring practice will both inform the evaluation efforts and will increase the level of transparency and accountability of the project implementation.

As much as possible, the project will involve select stakeholders into evaluation designs and data collection, including through the outcomes harvesting workshops for the end-line evaluation activity, aiming for participative monitoring and evaluation. This will limit the costs of data collection, increase the relevance of evaluation sub-questions, and build the monitoring, evaluation and research capacity of a few key stakeholders, hence strengthening the research outcomes of the project.

To ensure that answers to questions are methodologically sound, the monitoring and evaluation plan must foresee multiple and continuous data collection methods, so different types of data (primary/secondary, quantitative/qualitative, process/result) can be cross-referenced and analysed. All quantitative data will be disaggregated according to gender, ethnicity, geographic origin, and representation of marginalized groups.

❖ *Activities to ensure the visibility of the action and the contribution of the EU to its funding.*

All project partners will be made fully aware that EU visibility is a political priority and a contractual obligation for everyone involved. The project allocates relevant budget for communication activities and assigns dedicated staff to ensure high-quality communication and visibility. Assigned staff member will also act as the contact point on all communication and visibility aspects of the project, both with the donor and all project stakeholders. Responsible staff will also ensure that EU Delegation is properly informed and consulted appropriately on all communication and visibility activities.

- **Communication and visibility plan**

The project will have a detailed communication and visibility plan in place, to be developed within the first three months of project implementation, before the main operational activities are launched. Central purpose of the visibility plan will be to clearly highlight the EU support and its impact to all stakeholders and the general public. Specifically, the plan will (i) include clear communication objectives, target groups, messages and tools to communicate the purpose and results of the action, (ii) will follow the whole project cycle from the beginning until the end, and (iii) will be consulted, agreed upon, and implemented under the guidance of the contracting authority.

- **Guiding principles for visibility actions**

Communication and visibility activities will follow the EC rules for the visibility of external actions, laid down in the Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions[1]. The action will display the EU

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[1] The Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European

flag and will acknowledge the support received under the relevant EU programmes in all communication and promotional materials. This includes information given to the press and to the final beneficiaries, as well as all related publicity material, official notices, reports and publications, or supplies purchased. Communication and visibility activities carried out during the implementation shall be accounted for in the relevant interim and final reports on the action.

- **Specific visibility efforts and activities with high visibility value**

Project will hire a dedicated staff to cover project's visibility and dissemination tasks, effectively managing the allocated monthly visibility budget (which will include social media promotions and sponsored content), project website and quarterly newsletter (distributed to all stakeholders). Animated visual communication and e-learning resources, targeted for youth-specific social media platforms and at women in particular (Instagram, TikTok, etc.), are expected to produce high impact and visibility value.

Traveling university - *People's University* - will carry project's offline outreach visibility. While delivering a full-scale lifelong education to an estimated 1680 young women and men, NEETs, IDPs, PwDs and other vulnerable groups, the *university* is expected to produce high media and PR value, including in the national TV and online media.

❖ *Explanatory note on the traveling university – People's University*

Traveling University – People's University

* Note: The team for the traveling university is already assembled and the project was successfully piloted, meeting vast interest, engagement and excitement in the field. For the purposes of rationality and feasibility, the project only anticipates 30 attendees per village (56 villages * 30 people, 1680 total), while in the pilot phase, some of the lectures attracted more than 150 attendees.

The basis for People's University is to yield sustainable intellectual and practical outcomes by delivering a full-scale education program (12 modules), consisting of lecture format discussions to marginalized groups (112 lectures in 56 villages per year), reversing communication channel from conventionally urban-centric methods to a more inclusive one, and sharing relevant content and education. People's University was firstly created during Russian imperialism in Georgia (1905), but its revival took place during the times of the First Republic (1918-1921). In 20th century, People's University had the main goal to transmit knowledge to disadvantaged groups and ensure the access to information despite of one's social background. Lectures were taught by politicians, writers, activists; Curriculum involved topics on health, industry, philosophy, European history, self-governance, women's rights and labour unions. The special event - "Days of People's University" - was organized, in order to fundraise necessary resources for stability and proper-functioning of university in all parts of Georgia. Nowadays, the above-mentioned practise is widely implemented all over the world, especially in Europe, organized by ATD (All together in Dignity). People's Universities have become the spaces where disadvantaged groups raise voices and discuss ideas. The bottom line of this project is reinforcement and recognition of people's experiences who are living in poverty or in remote areas. Under the similar name with same idea, Tallinn's Folk University was created to reboot the technology skills of people over sixty.

The People's University is a reverse of communication channel to provide unbiased, challenging and relevant information and education to citizens living in regions through safe and engaging space that will not only inform, but will raise voices, encourage open-mindedness and enable greater degree and quality of participation.

UNA Georgia piloted the approach under the Republic100 webpage, run under Civil.ge. Initially dedicated to centennial of the First Georgian Republic (1918-1921), the project evolved to serve a historical purpose: reviving the untold history of Georgia's vibrant republic and civil society, which has been so far obscured by Soviet propaganda and is still present only sketchily in Georgian schoolbooks. By the same token though, it serves wider purpose: it seeks to demonstrate the degree of progress was achieved in those three years for building the foundations of the Georgian institutions – doubling of the number of secondary school pupils, opening of the first University, creation of the viable, universal suffrage of women and their election to the legislature, active cooperation with political opposition. In doing so, the project dismantles some of the myths built by the Soviet historiography, of the First Republic being as an inept and comical entity; and to show the degree of a regress that Georgia suffered under Soviet occupation. In this way, the

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People's University intends to build the narrative of democratic success and resilience – counteracting some of the key premises of the Russian propaganda, that liberal democracy is something alien to Georgia.

2.1.3. Indicative action plan for implementing the action (max 4 pages)

Year 1	Half-year 1						Half-year 2						
ACTIVITIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Implementing body
Programme Preparation Phase													
Staffing and other contractual arrangements	▓	▓											UNAG, OSGF
Inception, strategy, stakeholder planning workshops (2x events, involving all project partners and stakeholders)	▓	▓											UNAG
Project launching ceremony (4 launching events in 4 target locations)	▓	▓											UNAG, OSGF
Project communication and visibility plan (1 document)	▓	▓	▓										UNAG, OSGF
Project dissemination plan (1 document)	▓	▓											UNAG, OSGF
Project sustainability plan (1 document)	▓	▓											UNAG, OSGF
Activity 1.1.1 Labour Market Monitoring	▓	▓											UNAG
Development of methodology for labour market monitoring and the project baseline	▓	▓											UNAG
Field work for labour market monitoring and the baseline – surveys, desk review, FGDs, KIIs, other data collection;		▓	▓	▓	▓				▓			▓	UNAG
Publishing of finding reports of labour market monitoring			▓			▓			▓			▓	UNAG
Activity 1.1.2 LINKS Online Resources									▓				UNAG
Designing and testing of skills/vacancy management portal				▓	▓	▓							UNAG
Launching and dissemination of the online resources						▓	▓	▓	▓	▓			UNAG
Regular update of webpage/portal data and content						▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	UNAG
Activity 1.2.1 Human Capital Development Workgroups				▓	▓	▓							UNAG, OSGF
Identification of local stakeholders and signing of memorandums of partnership, where applicable	▓	▓	▓	▓									UNAG, OSGF
Workgroups meetings (16 meetings, 4 per region)			▓			▓			▓			▓	UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.1.1 Key competencies curricula and manuals							▓	▓					OSGF
Development of methodology – FGDs, KIIs, desk review		▓	▓	▓									OSGF

Activity	Implementing body
Testing and pilot classes (2 online trainings)	OSGF
Publishing and dissemination of final curricula and teachers manuals in key competencies (all disciplines)	OSGF
Activity 2.1.2 Training, support & knowledge transfer	UNAG, OSGF
Partnership agreements with training providers, VETs	UNAG, OSGF
TOT for VET, CSO, teachers, trainers and counsellors (1)	UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.2.2 Skills matching and development	UNAG, OSGF
Key competencies, citizenship, digital literacy trainings	UNAG, OSGF
Conversational English language classes (60 class days)	UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.2.3 Career Guidance Services	UNAG
Training of trainers for career counsellors – LINKS mobile group (1 training, LINKS Centres' staff)	UNAG
Monthly career guidance sessions at LINKS Centres (two-hour sessions for youth and adults)	UNAG
Personnel secondments (12), ongoing coaching, and monitoring of on-the-job skills development learning objectives	UNAG, OSGF
Activity 3.1.2 Key entrepreneurial competencies	OSGF
Update of social entrepreneurship handbook, produced by OSGF with EU funding in 2015 (FGDs, KIIs, Desk Review)	OSGF
Activity 3.2.1 Lifelong learning - *travelling university*	UNAG, OSGF
Stakeholder consultations to finalise travelling university map, curriculum and the action plan	UNAG, OSGF
Lectures in 56 selected project sites (112 lectures in Y1)	UNAG, OSGF

Year 2 & 3	Half-year 3	Half-year 4	Half-year 5	Half-year 6	Implementing body
Activity 1.1.1 Labour Market Monitoring					UNAG
Reporting on Structural Trends/Shifts on the Labour Market					UNAG

Activity 1.1.2 LINKS Online Resources					UNAG
Regular Update of Webpage Data/Content					UNAG
Activity 1.2.1 Human Capital Development Workgroups					UNAG, OSGF
Quarterly workgroup meetings					UNAG, OSGF
Activity 1.2.2 Local employment fairs / forums					UNAG, OSGF
Stakeholder Identification and event coordination (4)					UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.1.2 Training, support & knowledge transfer					UNAG, OSGF
TOT for VET, CSO, teachers, trainers and counsellors (1)					UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.1.3 Regional stakeholder exchange					OSGF
Week-long stakeholder (CSO, VET teachers, education administrators, career counsellors, local authorities) (4 exchange / study tours)					OSGF
Activity 2.2.1 Add-on classes for VETs					UNAG, OSGF
Development, delivery of add-on Classes at VETs (120 days)					UNAG, OSGF
Activity 2.2.2 Skills matching and development					UNAG, OSGF
Key competencies, citizenship, digital literacy trainings ()					UNAG, OSGF
Conversational English language classes (300 class days)					UNAG
Activity 2.2.3 Career guidance sessions					UNAG
Monthly career guidance sessions at LINKS Centres (two-hour sessions for youth and adults; 96 sessions per year)					UNAG
Activity 2.2.4 Professional secondments					UNAG, OSGF
Competitive selection of beneficiaries based on tests and interviews, and identification of matching secondment opportunities					UNAG
Personnel secondments (60), ongoing coaching, and monitoring of on-the-job skills development learning objectives					UNAG
Activity 3.1.1 LINKS incubator					UNAG, OSGF

Activity					Implementing body
Social innovations – translating ideas into actions. Incubation through assisting learning, planning, testing, collaboration, co-work space and other support measures.					UNAG, OSGF
Activity 3.1.2 Key entrepreneurial skills training					OSGF
Trainings (120 training days)					OSGF
Activity 3.1.3 Social and socially responsible start-ups					OSGF
Coordinating the creation and funding of start-ups					OSGF
Activity 3.2.1 Lifelong learning **-** *travelling university*					UNAG
Delivery of 12-lecture curriculum in 56 pre-selected project sites (224 lectures in Year 2 and 3),					UNAG
Participant surveys, focus groups, outcomes harvesting implemented in parallel to lectures;					
Activity 3.2.2 Lifelong learning - online learning platform					UNAG
E-learning platform is deployed (as part of LINKS website), literature and content collected, and animated video shorts published (8)					UNAG

Action plan for extending the implementing period of the project

Year 3			May-October, 2023				
ACTIVITIES	34	35	36	37	38	39	Implementing body
Activity 1.1.1 Labour Market Monitoring							
Data collection for labour market monitoring							UNAG
Presentation of labour market monitoring results							UNAG
Activity 1.2.1 Human Capital Development Workgroups							
Workgroups meetings							UNAG

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responsible
Activity 2.1.1 Key competencies curricula and manuals								
Online Publication of Job Readiness Handbook			�					UNAG
Activity 2.2.2 Skills matching and development								
Joint exchange youth event/training on job readiness, citizenship, and digital competences		▓						UNAG
Concluding event for the Campaign - Youth for Women's Rights		▓						UNAG
Activity 2.2.4 Professional secondments								
Personnel secondments, ongoing coaching, and monitoring of on-the-job skills development learning objectives	▓	▓	▓	▓				OSGF
Activity 3.1.1 LINKS incubator								
Translating ideas into actions through expert-assisted learning and planning.	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓			OSGF
Activity 3.1.3 Social and socially responsible start-ups								OSGF
Coordinating the creation and funding of start-ups		▓	▓	▓				OSGF
Activity 3.2.1 Lifelong learning - *travelling university*								
Lectures in 56 selected project sites	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		UNAG
Finalising the Online learning platform		▓	▓					UNAG
Testing the Online Learning Platform				▓				UNAG
Launching the Online Learning Platform					▓			UNAG
Project Closing Events								
Closing events in the targeted regions (4)			▓	▓				UNAG, OSGF
Joint Project Closing Event (1)					▓			UNAG, OSGF

2.1.4. Sustainability of the action (max 3 pages)

Our strategy for long-term sustainability of project results rests on enhancing the project's exploitation and replication potential, including by both applicants and partners involved. By rooting all project-supported networks, partnerships and skills development resources into local ownership, the project aims to ensure that all project results are freely accessible (part of project's dissemination plan), adaptable, re-usable, replicable and scalable by all state and non-state third parties at local, regional and national levels.

We have devised our strategy and action plan, to be further detailed in project's Sustainability Plan (deliverable 1.4, Q1), based on EU's definition of a project's sustainability plan: "a project is sustainable when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other constituencies for an extended period after the Commission's financial assistance has been terminated".

❖ *Qualitatively and quantitively measured impact on target groups and beneficiaries*

Key challenge the development actors face in Georgia is that our work is often fragmented. Project-centric funding, which contains immediate project results with a limited project timeframe, makes it difficult for local CSOs to evolve an individual action into a long-term process. The lead applicant - UNA Georgia – is among the few local CSO actors with demonstrable success in that area. Civil Georgia, for example, UNA Georgia's news service that reaches an average of 300,000 unique users annually, has worked without interruptions since 2001, regardless of the scopes, tasks, timeframes of various donors or projects that have supported it, or the frequent gaps between them. Similarly, UNA Georgia's youth centres, located in 13 largest municipalities across Georgia, have been open for thousands of young people since 2006. Both UNAG's youth centers, as a technical foundation, and Civil Georgia, as an information outlet, will be empowering and amplifying the proposed action.

Project's dual approach of targeting stakeholders and final beneficiaries both separately and together is part of an integrated approach, which aims to achieve a demonstrable, attributable, and inclusive improvement in skills matching and employment in all target regions of the project. The project intends to achieve that by engaging institutional stakeholders and final beneficiaries alike, and making targeted, participatory, cost-effective investments in durable solutions to the principal gaps in the labour market. Specifically,

- **We focus on inclusivity:** LINKS Centres ensures that the design, scopes and reach of all activities are inclusive of the needs and constraints of women, NEETs, IDPs and PwDs, especially those in the rural areas.

- **We prioritize social innovation:** LINKS Centres intend to find and incubate young entrepreneurs and social innovators, which will further support local fundraising efforts and will help identify public and private co-funding opportunities for inclusive economic growth.

- **We diversify content and coverage:** cross-cutting topics, such as activism, gender equality, domestic violence, gender-based violence, anti-discrimination, inclusivity, including the LGBT, PWD and IDP communities, will be at the centre of the project's agenda.

❖ *Risks analysis and contingency plan.*

Each major risk will be tracked by the LINKS Partners Council and the Steering Committee, to ensure that the risk will not turn into an issue. Important actions of a response planning are to have mitigation strategies and contingency plans. Mitigation is designed to reduce the probability that a risk will materialise. We will only do this for High and Medium exposure. Contingency is designed to reduce the impact if a risk does materialize. We only develop contingencies for High and Medium Risk elements. For each risk that will be mitigated, the Team Leader will identify ways to prevent the risk from occurring or reduce its impact or probability of occurring. This may include prototyping, adding tasks to the project schedule, adding resources, etc. For each major risk that is to be mitigated or that is accepted, a course of action will be outlined for the event that the risk does materialise in order to minimise its impact.

The level of risk on a project will be tracked, monitored and reported throughout the project lifecycle. Any project change request will be analysed for their possible impact to the project risks. Also, we will consider important changes to risk status, in order to act on responding and/or mitigating the new status.

Political Risk: **elections in 2020 and 2021 may make it difficult for the project partners to meaningfully engage the local authorities.**		Probability	Impact	Exposure
		Medium	Medium	Low
Consequence:	***Mitigation:***	***Contingency:***		
Sustainability of the results is hindered by lack of support and engagement of the local authorities	The project will mediate this risk by establishing direct links of communication with a diverse pool of local stakeholders.	The project adapts the content and focus of those project activities that require active engagement from local authorities.		

Economic Risk: significant economic shifts and setbacks in the labour market, including the continued unpredictability and instability in Georgia's national currency, will make it challenging for the project to fund viable entrepreneurial activities		Probability	Impact	Exposure
		Low	Medium	Medium

Consequence:	*Mitigation:*	*Contingency:*
Decrease in motivation of target group to engage in entrepreneurial activities and contribute to social cause.	The project will use human capital development workgroups and other platforms to raise awareness about skills development services and their graduates.	The project will amplify non-financial support to social innovations and entrepreneurs, including by leveraging project's networking, professional secondments and other activities.

Social Risk: **Low women's participation in project activities**	Probability	Impact	Exposure
	Low	Medium	High

Consequence:	*Mitigation:*	*Contingency:*
Local activities are not inclusive of women	Communication activities and campaigns will be targeted specifically at women, including social media ads and postings. Selection of topics locally relevant (selected by local partnerships) and also more suitable to attract women.	Recruit local female experts, opinion leaders and prominent women speakers that could bring the attention of local women. Review and redesign the communication strategy to address this problem.

Social Risk: **Low NEETs participation in project activities**	Probability	Impact	Exposure
	Medium	Medium	High

Consequence:	*Mitigation:*	*Contingency:*
Local activities cannot attract enough NEETs participation	Specific communication campaigns, including actions targeted to NEETs, especially those in rural areas. Selection of topics locally relevant (selected by local partnerships) and more suitable to attract NEETs.	Recruit local successful, self-made entrepreneurs, that could facilitate increased attention of local NEETs populations. Review and redesign the communication strategy to address this problem.

Technical Risk: **The objectives of the project at the end of the project timeframe are not achieved;**	Probability	Impact	Exposure
	Low	High	High

Consequence:	*Mitigation:*	*Contingency:*
Lack of orientation in project implementation that could lead to an unsuccessful project.	Regular meetings, corrective actions, results checking and internal distribution. All partners have a good record of delivering activities in quality and on time.	Re-scheduling the results in agreement with EU Project Manager and agree possibilities of datelines extensions in case it's seen necessary.

Technical Risk: **Epid-situation or other crisis affects project coordination and implementation;**	Probability	Impact	Exposure
	High	Medium	High

Consequence:	*Mitigation:*	*Contingency:*
Limitations in staff travel and implementation of project activities (in-class education, meetings, workshops, etc.) results in low burn-rate and achievement of results.	Workload is shifted with the majority of non-field activities implemented in Y1 and others pushed in Y2 and Y3. Activities partially moved to online.	Conduct all activities online, where increased numbers of participants compensate for the relatively compromised effect of in-class activities (e.g. trainings).

Technical Risk: **Project partners cannot secure post-project sustainability of action's results**	Probability	Impact	Exposure
	Low	Low	High

Consequence:	Mitigation:	Contingency:
Larger project outputs that require continued budgetary maintenance cannot be sustained after the project ends.	Project partners will engage in pro-active design of sustainability measures, which includes long-term public and private partnerships, and diversified funding for key project resources and processes, including by private universities and businesses (online platform, traveling university, secondments, etc.)	UNAG links the project's online resources with existing online media products, to ensure limited (analytical, information, etc.) but feasible sustainability of online products.

Proposed risks matrix will be evolved into a Risk Management Plan (RMP), to be developed based on the PM2 guidelines, assessing the existing risks together with local stakeholders, and identifying what tools and techniques can be used, determine the evaluation scales and tolerances, designate people and organisations the roles and responsibilities, plan the frequency of risks analysis. The RMP will seek to bring visibility to risks and accountability as to how they are handled by the project partners, and ensures that project risks are proactively dealt with and regularly monitored and controlled.

❖ *Explain how the action will be made sustainable after completion.*

Sustainability of the LINKS project, cannot depend on individual training and capacity building activities, but will be linked to developing solid partnerships and relationships between the key stakeholders, who are organically interested in maintaining or expanding the outputs of the project after EU's funding ends.

a. *Financial sustainability:* The action emphasizes local ownership with the aim of achieving greater prospects for financial sustainability. LINKS centres will invite local business leaders, authorities, parents, academia, other stakeholders to Human Capital Development Workgroups, which will jointly review and analyse local youth and unemployment-related issues and opportunities. Local implementing partners will be encouraged to work towards sustainability from day one of project implementation. Partner CSOs will be expected to expand their ties of cooperation with local governments, academia, and local businesses to diversify their funding for increased sustainability of the LINKS Centres. Post-project sustainability of action's key results and services will additionally benefit from UNAG's vision to sustainably integrate skills development and matching services into all project partners' organizational mandates and priorities (including the local partners, UNAG, and OSGF as well, who is among Georgia's largest local grant-making organisations). History of the local Youth Centres – which UNAG started in 2010 together with its local implementing partners and sustained the network for a decade and more - will be used as a template of successful sustainability.

b. *Institutional sustainability:* The project will further empower its partner CSOs to upgrade their institutional functions, better define their priorities and accumulate know-how. The lead applicant will facilitate the establishment of formal long-term partnership between the key local stakeholders and partner CSOs under Human Capital Development Workgroups, thereby increasing capacity to monitor the developments and foster the dialogue. Partner CSOs will be encouraged and supported in seeking meaningful partnerships with businesses, including consultancy services in delivering of skills development services, which might contribute to diversification of funding.

c. *Policy level sustainability:* LINKS will be built from the ground up to ensure expansion and sustainability on the policy level as well. Local human and institutional networks and partnerships will be created, strengthened and sustained throughout the project life, formalizing and cementing the local links for public and private synergy and collaboration.

d. *Environmental sustainability:* It is a given for co-applicants to ensure that no harmful environmental practices are a part of any of the project activities, and that our partners and institutional beneficiaries mirror the same environmentally sustainable practices. It is with that purpose that the project avoids airfare, budgets more environment-friendly options for in-country transit (e.g. railway for project staff and participants), and minimizes the use of paper across all of its content development and publishing activities.

❖ *Describe a dissemination plan and the possibilities for replication, extension of the action outcomes.*

The project will produce the project's Dissemination Plan within the first three months of project implementation, to be developed in parallel to the Communication and Visibility Plan, in close consultations with the contracting authority. The Dissemination Plan will provide the project staff and partners with the guidelines on the objectives, strategy and planned activities for communicating and disseminating the project results. Specifically,

Dissemination Plan will map and detail (i) dissemination target groups, (ii) dissemination actions, (iii) dissemination channels, and (iv) dissemination tools that will be deployed to reach these groups.

The overall aim of all dissemination activities of the project will be to ensure that all knowledge, resources and opportunities generated by the project will become available, quickly and without interruption, to key stakeholders, final beneficiaries and the general public, further promoting the project and its results. Project's Dissemination Plan (deliverable 1.3, Q1), only conceptually sketched at this stage, will be a live document that will be updated annually. Specifically, it will analyse and detail the following at lengths:

- Schedule of communication activities to be performed among the partners (external network events).
- Internal procedures (dissemination workflow) that will set the rules for communication among project partners regarding publishable results, and the dissemination bulletin - informal activity report, informing all project partners about recent dissemination activities.
- Dissemination matrix, that integrates project milestones in the dissemination and communication plan.
- Dissemination calendar, specifying the roles and timeframes for spreading information on project results via appropriate dissemination tools and channels.
- Dissemination tools and channels, including project's labour market monitor's website and larger media partnerships, such as the planned collaboration with Civil.ge (www.civil.ge) - the broadest communication channel to the professional and policy communities in Georgia.

Key messages and content, to be disseminated by the project will be (i) current developments, (ii) milestones, (iii) published deliverables and other publications, (iv) attended events and own events.

These content will be delivered via the following channels (i) press releases, (ii) project stories in in national press, (iii) project website, (iv) workshops, forums and other public events, (v) project leaflets and newsletters (to be carried by the traveling university in all 56 project sites), (vi) social media, including LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, (vii) final project event.

2.1.5. Logical Framework
- Annex C attached.
2.1.6. Budget, amount requested from the contracting authority and other expected sources of funding
- Annex B attached.
2.2. Lead applicant's Experience
- See below.

Qualified electronic signature by:
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