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# European Alliance for Apprenticeships

ARMENIA – National commitment

*Employment,  
Social  
Affairs  
and Inclusion*

COUNTRY	Armenia
Date	2023
Ministry(ies)	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
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# Overview of apprenticeship

## General information on apprenticeships

<b>Overview</b>	<p>The sole type of apprenticeship provided by the Armenian law is the internship of VET students. VET internships are organised in line with state educational standards, and conditions determined by curricula and modular programmes. The following types of internships are common in Armenian VET institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic internship</li> <li>• Production internship</li> <li>• Pre-graduation (pre-diploma) internship</li> </ul> <p>In recent years, the German dual education model was piloted in the framework of the Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training South Caucasus (PSD TVET) Programme funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and in cooperation with the private sector. As of 2023, the dual education system has been experimentally introduced in 20 VET education institutions for the 24 priority professions and qualifications for the economic development of the Republic of Armenia (RA).</p>
<b>Number of apprentices</b>	<p>VET institutions sign approximately 2 to 5 cooperation memorandums with employers for each programme, with more than 1 000 students being involved in dual education programmes overall.</p>
<b>Legal basis</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2021-2026) <a href="https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf">https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf</a></li> <li>2. The 2021-2026 Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Armenia <a href="https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4740.pdf">https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4740.pdf</a></li> <li>3. Law on the Approval of the State Programme for the Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030 and in 2023 the Action Plan of the State Programme for the Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030</li> </ol>

	<p><a href="http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=171800">http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=171800</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=175541">https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=175541</a></p> <p>4. Law on Preliminary (craftsmanship) and Middle Vocational Education and Training (2005) <a href="http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=174048">http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=174048</a></p> <p>Moreover, the package of the new Law on Vocational Education and Training draft including the amendments and additions to related laws<sup>1</sup> has been developed and submitted to the RA Government and will soon be sent to the RA Parliament for its approval.</p> <p>With the New Draft Law on Vocational Education and Training the following main regulations are defined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of concepts and their definitions used in VET law;</li> <li>2. Development and improvement of the WBL/dual system;</li> <li>3. Implementation of a cooperative model for education management and organisation stressing the responsibility of social partners;</li> <li>4. Transition to NQF, SQF and credit system in the VET sector;</li> <li>5. Improved management of VET institutions;</li> <li>6. Revision of general requirements for professional education programmes, including the opportunity to offer additional programmes that certify the learning outcomes obtained and provide the basis for micro-qualifications/micro-credentials;</li> <li>7. Licensing of the right and qualifications to implement the professional education programme;</li> </ol>
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<sup>1</sup> Related laws include the Labor Code of the Republic of Armenia, the Law on State Non-Profit Organizations, the Law on State Taxes, the Law on Licensing, the Law on Foundations, and the Law on Trade and Services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Revision of the VET financing system and promotion of entrepreneurial activity;</li> <li>9. Reform of the mechanisms for recruiting, improving, evaluating, and encouraging the responsibility and career assurance of the administrative and pedagogical staff of VET institutions, providing them with training, certifications, and awarding of categories and titles;</li> <li>10. Regulation of rights and responsibilities of VET students and trainees;</li> <li>11. Ensuring equal opportunities to receive professional education and training by including special conditions for education.</li> </ul>
<b>Target group</b>	<p>The main target groups are the students enrolled in VET institutions, young people, adults, SMEs, NEETs, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, migrants and refugees, among others.</p>

Scheme(s) specific information			
	<i>3rd level: Craftsman without secondary education</i>	<i>4th level: Craftsman with secondary education</i>	<i>5th level: Specialist</i>
<b>EQF level</b>	3	4	5
<b>Duration</b>	6 months to 1 year	1-3 year	2-5 year
<b>Status of the apprentice</b>	Both	Both	Both
<b>Access to HE possible?</b>	NO	YES	YES
<b>Funding</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Apprentice remuneration or compensation</b>	Not considered in current legislation	Not considered in current legislation	Not considered in current legislation



# State of play

## Current system and recent reforms

Since 2017, multiple pilot projects on dual education and apprenticeships contributed to building the capacity of VET institutions and companies thus creating a culture of WBL. In cooperation with GIZ in the framework of the "Private Sector Development and Vocational Education and Training in the South Caucasus" project in 2017, the MoESCS introduced the dual system in VET institutions. The programme has contributed to improving the skills, key competencies and employability of students, expanding partnerships between the VET system and employers, organising training and industrial internships at the workplace, and implementing effective active labour market policies.

In 2019, the "Concept paper and road map for the development of the work-based learning (WBL) in Armenia for 2019-2025" included a schedule for concrete actions. The road map has been then revised according to the Law on the Approval of the State Programme for the Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030 and its Action Plan.

The Law on Education (1999) requires VET institutions to provide internships as a basis for obtaining a State license for the provision of educational activities.<sup>2</sup> The 2005 Law on Preliminary (craftmanship) and Middle Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Armenia mentions workplace learning when referring to students' internships, both within academic education and pre-graduation (Articles 7 and 12).

In cooperation with GIZ in 2020-2021, the Ministry worked on the revision and upgrading of the regulatory and by-law framework of the VET system in Armenia, which aims to strengthen the implementation of WBL and dual education, to provide effective mechanisms for WBL implementation, to facilitate WBL methodology and regulation, and to streamline the legal basis for cooperating with the private sector. Work-based learning is considered by the MoESCS as one of the best tools to boost VET quality, as well as to match education supply and labour market demand.

More recently, since November 2022, the Education Strategy 2030 has recognised the systematic introduction of work-based teaching and learning mechanisms as a priority in the VET system. In particular, it foresees the

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<sup>2</sup> Law on Education, 1999, article 41, point 5.



"implementation of flexible approaches in case of VET institutions" highlighting, not only the issues of modernisation of the institutions' infrastructures within the framework of further development of WBL but also the possibility of using employers' infrastructures in the educational process.<sup>3</sup>

In line with this approach, the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia 2021-2026, which was adopted in 2021, foresees:

- The pilot introduction of a system of work-based learning (WBL) and dual education in VET, including the introduction of at least one new speciality each year in two institutions during the 2022-2026 period;<sup>4</sup>
- The creation of a necessary legal basis for the further implementation of WBL and dual education.

The ongoing reform is introducing a new regulatory framework for work-based learning and dual education and it is the most significant recent development. With the support of ETF and GIZ, rules and conditions for the implementation of vocational training in the form of WBL are under development.

In order to match the VET professional paths and skills offered by VET institutions with the labour market demand and the RA's priority economic sectors and regional development programmes, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) develops new state educational standards and relevant modular programmes and curricula for VET professions and reviews existing ones every year.

As of 2023, the dual education system has been experimentally introduced in 20 VET education institutions for the 24 priority professions and qualifications for the economic development of RA such as Agriculture, IT, Precise Engineering, Vine making, Tourism and Hospitality, Technical maintenance and repair of automobile transport, and Culinary. Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year, the newly developed dual education pilot programmes were introduced in three colleges for three professional paths.<sup>5</sup> It is envisaged that the process of

<sup>3</sup> Law on "State Program for Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030". 16.11.2022. HO-441-N.

<sup>4</sup> 2021-2026 Action Plan of the Government of the RA, Annex No 1 to Decision of the Government of the RA No 1902-L of 18 Nov 2021, p. 285. <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4740.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Two of these programmes (*Robotics*, *Logistics manager*) were introduced in the formal education system and one in the non-formal education system (*Organizer in stock*) for professions in the Logistic sector. In 2023, the dual education programmes will be organised in four agricultural VET colleges for the Technology of milk and dairy products, Veterinary, and Farming professions.

implementing this model will be expanded gradually after the adoption of the new Law on VET.

### **Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Agriculture in Armenia (MAVETA) project**

The Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Agriculture in Armenia (MAVETA) project started on December 3, 2021, with a preparatory phase that was successfully completed in August 2022. Consequently, the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of its implementation began and will last until August 2025. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase will commence in 2026 and last until 2030.

The Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Agriculture in Armenia (MAVETA) project seeks to improve the knowledge and skills of professionals and students in agriculture and related fields, thus contributing to sustainable, climate-friendly, inclusive growth, as well as increased incomes and enhanced (self-)employment in rural Armenia. It also supports the development of the legal and institutional framework for dual VET education.

MAVETA works to anchor the dual education approach at the political and institutional level by increasing the coherence of policies, the effectiveness of education institutions, and the cooperation between the public and the private sector. On the ground, the project works with Goris State Agricultural College, the Sisian branch of ANAU (Syunik), Stepanavan State Agricultural College (Lori), Berd Multifunctional State College (Tavush), Echmiadzin Craftsman State School (Armavir), and the Yerevan branch of ANAU.

The selected professions within the MAVETA project include Veterinary Specialist, Milk and Dairy Technologist, Farmer, Agricultural Machinery, Milk Farm Manager, Orchard Workers / Nut and Fruit Farmers.

The MAVETA project is funded by a broad coalition of international and local organisations led by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), including the Austrian Development Agency, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Government of Armenia, the Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) NGO, Izmirlian Foundation, the Strategic Development Agency (SDA) NGO and Vanand Agro CJSC.

The project's implementing partners are the GIZ and HEKS/EPER with the involvement of SDA and the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (HAFL).

### **EU and internationally funded projects**

WBL is also addressed by other EU-funded projects, among which SAY YES in the framework of EU4Youth. The Skills for Jobs project carried out by World Vision Armenia in partnership with the Global Developments Fund developed short-term curricula for four professions ('Cheese making', 'Wine making', 'Agro-machinery maintenance' and 'Veterinary') alongside capacity building training

for the Career Counselling services staff, in addition to establishing four full laboratories in beneficiary colleges for the same four professions<sup>6</sup>.

The EU-funded project "Transition from Education to Employment" implemented by People in need is aimed at piloting apprenticeship schemes in short non-formal courses within the agriculture and textile sectors by enhancing the capacity of four VET institutions in the Shirak region to monitor labour market demand, improving cooperation with the business sector, and facilitating the introduction of WBL.<sup>7</sup>

In the framework of the German "Vocational Education and Training (VET) - cooperation in the South Caucasus" project implemented by the "Business and Education Partnership" foundation VET students from different institutions established companies aimed at carrying out commercial activities, which thus gave them the opportunity to learn practical activities.<sup>8</sup>

The "Miassine" Foundation carried out the "Apprenticeship for better job placement of the vulnerable youth in Armenia" project funded by the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) which supported VET institutions' career services to develop their capacity to deliver apprenticeships in partnership with companies.

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<sup>6</sup> World Vision's work-based learning initiatives in Armenia. <https://www.wvi.org/stories/armenia/world-visions-work-based-learning-initiatives-armenia>

<sup>7</sup> Transition from Education to Employment. <https://armenia.peopleinneed.net/en/our-work/education-skills>

<sup>8</sup> <https://bep.am/news>

# The national commitment

## Planned reforms and initiatives

The Republic of Armenia is committed to developing apprenticeships in Armenia in line with EAfA.

In particular, between 2023 and 2026 it will develop a national regulatory framework for work-based learning (WBL) and dual education, including apprenticeships, fostering WBL and dual education programmes and curricula in professional fields that are currently taught within VET institutions, by raising the share of implemented WBL specialities from 8.4% in 2022 to 22% by 2030.<sup>9</sup>

To identify, design and promote different forms of WBL and dual education at the company level, Armenia will analyse and learn from the experiences and schemes carried out by other EAfA member countries.

Armenia also commits to raising the share of colleges providing WBL and dual education from 7% in 2022 to 30% by 2030, and to improving the quality of training and teaching processes for students involved in such learning paths. To achieve these goals, it will increase cooperation between VET institutions, social partners and private companies. More than 70 cooperation memorandums have been signed between educational institutions and employers and more than 700 students were involved in dual education programmes between 2020 and 2022. As of 2023, the dual educational system has been introduced experimentally in 20 VET educational institutions for the 24 priority professions and qualifications for the economic development of the Republic of Armenia, such as agriculture, IT, Precise Engineering, Vine making, Tourism and Hospitality, Technical maintenance and repair of automobile transport, Culinary. It will also enhance the quality of in-company learning by supporting the capacity of companies to provide WBL and dual VET training programmes, also through mandatory training of in-company trainers.

To ensure the quality of apprenticeships, the Ministry will monitor the acquisition of skills and competencies by students involved in WBL and dual VET and develop a framework for skills assessment and recognition mechanisms in the forthcoming national regulations.

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<sup>9</sup> Action plan for the implementation of the Education Strategy 2030.

Finally, Armenia will support the establishment of 12 Centres of Vocational Excellence, which will work as leading VET institutions, and the establishment of sectoral committees by 2030, in the priority sectors identified at the national level.

The Armenian Ministry of Education will also provide support for capacity building and enhancement of the National Centre for VET Development which will provide the methodological support and promotion of WBL and dual education.

### **EAfA six priorities<sup>10</sup>**

According to the new Law on VET, WBL/dual training is coordinated by the authorised body of the state administration of education or by its delegation, on the one hand, and private associations and organisations representing the interests of the private sector on the other hand. The authorised body of the state administration of education defines the order of formation and operation of the body responsible for the coordination of dual education. The new Law envisages the following actions:

- Creating Sectoral Committees and a Sectoral Qualification Framework;
- Implementing the PPP governance model in the VET system;
- Developing the mechanisms for expanding the forms of entrepreneurial activities offered by VET institutions;
- Involving representatives from private companies as lecturers and trainers in VET institutions;
- Creating student structures, associations and student self-government bodies, and stimulating their involvement in student initiatives, programmes, and social volunteering events.

The Law on the Approval of the State Programme for the Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia until 2030 and its Action Plan defined the following strategic directions:

- 1) Creating a universal, inclusive, learner-centred education environment, which will make available to every citizen at all stages of life quality and effective

<sup>10</sup> More information about EAfA's six priorities is available in the EAfA Action Plan accessible here: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23080&langId=en>

education services in line with their development needs and personal characteristics throughout the Republic of Armenia.

2) Increasing the efficiency of education, which will ensure the most optimal and effective allocation of resources (including human resources), increasing the process, cost and management efficiency of the system.

3) The internationalisation and export of educational services and products, anchored on the full integration of the Armenian educational system in the international educational domain, as well as the export of Armenian educational services and products, leading to a transformation of Armenia's role in the global educational system.

In particular, the Republic of Armenia will:

- ensure universal coverage of available and affordable education institutions (preschool, general education and VET) and education programmes;
- ensure the provision of education infrastructures;
- expand the learner-centred mechanisms of education institutions;
- re-structure the education process around the development of competencies and achievement of final results;
- improve educational standards and programmes;
- modernise pedagogical education;
- improve the quality of e-learning resources and educational materials;
- implement a reliable and objective system of education quality certification and evaluation in accordance with national and international standards, including the evaluation of clearly defined end results, of the learning environment, process, and existing quality assurance systems. A compliance quality assurance system will be established;
- carry out a reform of the educational management system;
- develop, implement and expand joint management mechanisms and toolkits for VET institutions with the private sector, while ensuring the responsibility for funding and management by the state in line with the national priorities or of other intermediate institutions as needed;
- strengthen the data-based management system in order to develop the institutional capacity of educational management, including all levels of education in the educational management information system;

- implement an inclusive, participatory, autonomous, transparent and accountable system of management and decision-making;
- introduce a network of education systems.

## Targets and/or indicators

Armenia has set the following key targets and indicators of success:

- Increasing the share of specialties taught within the WBL model:
  - By 2023: 10%
  - By 2024: 11.3%
  - By 2026: 18%
  - Final target by 2030: 22%
- Increasing the rate of employability of WBL and dual VET graduates to 90% in 2030
- Increasing the number of institutions providing WBL or dual education:
  - By 2023: 10.8%
  - By 2024 :12.2%
  - By 2026: 15.1%
  - Final target by 2030: 23.8%
- Create 12 Centres of Excellence by 2030

## Budget of the reform/initiative

Work-based learning and dual VET are financed through the annual state budget. VET institutions, including those providing work-based learning or dual education programmes, rely on a cost-per-student financing scheme, whose conditions are set by the Government. Following the draft of the new Law on VET, new financing mechanisms will be developed. The Comprehensive Education Strategy 2030

and its Action Plan set the costs envisaged to implement the reform of work-based learning and dual education.

## Key stakeholders involved

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of the national commitment are:

- MoESCS
- VET providers/institutions
- Social Partners, including employers (sole proprietors, small, medium and large enterprises), sectoral and cross-sectoral employers organisations and trade unions)
- GIZ, the Swiss Council and SDA – who provide technical assistance to develop regulative mechanisms, organise capacity building trainings, develop curricula, donor assistance, etc.
- ETF - which provides technical assistance and expertise
- Sectoral associations
- Other stakeholders and interested partners

Preparing specialists for the implementation of WBL in line with market demands requires different stakeholders to cooperate and coordinate effectively, including policy-makers in the field of education and labour (RA MoESCS, RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA)) and other state-governing bodies, VET institutions, social partners, and civil society organisations representing students, apprentices and parents, among others.

Companies and employers' organisations play a key role in the process of transferring practical skills through their tight cooperation with VET institutions. As an outcome of VET system reforms, the following cooperation mechanisms between stakeholders have been implemented at different levels of the VET system:

- The National Council for Vocational Education and Training Development has been established to facilitate consultations with the RA MoESCS in the field of state policy, strategy and development of VET in Armenia. The Council has 21 members including representatives of the Armenian Ministries of Economy, Finance, Labour and Employment, Territorial



Administration and Infrastructure, Republican Union of Employers of Armenia, Chamber of Commerce and Trade of the Republic of Armenia, etc.

- Employers' involvement in the Governing Boards of VET institutions, which constitute up to 35% of the total number of members.<sup>11</sup>
- Involvement of social partners in the elaboration process of state educational standards for VET.
- Establishment of 14 sectorial committees, which are responsible for carrying out the expertise of standards and providing recommendations.
- The elaboration and distribution of educational and support manuals, methodical recommendations to institutions, and training of teachers and Governing board members of VET institutions, with the support of social partners.
- The participation of Armenian representatives in international "World Skills" competitions.

### **Further measures planned that are aligned with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships**

Further measures planned by the draft Law on VET,<sup>12</sup> under discussion at the Parliament foresee that:

- Companies involved in an apprenticeship or dual education programme are contractually obliged to remunerate learners according to the volume of work undertaken or time spent learning at the workplace.

<sup>11</sup> The Governing Boards include up to 20 members, among which are social partners in the sphere of VET.

<sup>12</sup> Version of 09 October 2022 published on e-draft.am public discussion. <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/4842/about>

- The main component of such programmes is carried out at the workplace, where learning outcomes are assessed.
- A mandatory training for in-company trainers is foreseen in the case of apprenticeships.<sup>13</sup>
- Proper mechanisms are developed to ensure VET institutions are to deliver services and organise the production and sale of goods in the framework of WBL forms within the fields of taught specialities.
- VET institutions are legally responsible for the working student's health and liability insurance.
- An organisation is created for coordinating WBL programmes and involving social partners.
- Companies are partially or fully compensated for the salary paid to learners in the professional fields that the State considers as a priority.
- Companies support the preparation of VET institutions' self-assessment reports for State accreditation.

Students who complete an apprenticeship or dual education programme are awarded a certificate issued by a dedicated sectorial commission in recognition of the skills acquired.

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<sup>13</sup> The definition of its duration and modalities is still ongoing.

# Final overview of national commitment

Below are the objectives covered by the national commitment in a nutshell: *(please tick all relevant options)*

<b>Increase supply</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Foster quality</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Promote image</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support mobility</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support national apprenticeship coalitions</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support SMEs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mobilise local and regional authorities</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strengthen social dialogue</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Engage sectoral social dialogue committees</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support the representation of apprentices</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Address the twin transition</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Foster gender balance</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support social inclusion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Internationalisation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>