

Příloha 9 (Annex 9)

A Case Study of a Project Implemented in Georgia within the Programme Placement of the Czech Teachers to Developing Countries in the Period 2016-2017

By Michaela Ditrych Lenc



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Introduction

This case study is a complementary part of the evaluation of the Programme Placement of the Czech Teachers to Developing Countries (*the Programme*). It analyses a project entitled ***Enhancement of Capacities of Academic and Management Staff at Akaki Tsereteli State University*** (*Project No. 2 or the second Czech project*) implemented by the Czech University of Life Sciences (further only CULS) at Akaki Tsereteli State University (further ATSU) in Kutaisi, Georgia between March 2016 and December 2017. Its budget of CZK 1.47 million was earmarked from the Czech ODA funds.

This Georgian study serves as a complement for a better understanding of how the **Programme works in a particular case**. **One of the main aims of the study is to outline and to demonstrate possible strengths and weaknesses of the system**. Moreover, thanks to the case study, **the side of beneficiaries**, a partner university in one of the programme countries of the Czech development cooperation, **may be also reflected in the Programme evaluation** in more details.

Furthermore, the case study used secondary data collected for the purpose of the master's thesis¹, which aimed to analyse the previous generation of the project. Although the thesis was primarily focused on the period 2014-2015, the actual research (and data collection directly at ATSU) was conducted in 2016 when the follow-up project was being implemented at ATSU. Therefore, it was within the time frame of this evaluation of the Programme. As supposed, reflecting multiple timelines would enable monitoring of the expected impact of the project, and eventually of the Programme. On the contrary, it is necessary to mention such impact assessment was very challenging under the conditions of the case study.² The potential development impact of the project was not possible to triangulate with the use of other available data collection methods in this phase. **The reconstructed baseline was used as a basis primarily for tracing examples of good/bad practices and their potential changes over time.**

In addition to that, if relevant data is available, **the respective situation is described for a Norwegian project** entitled *Sustainable Tourism: Rural Entrepreneurship and Heritage. Educational Cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Norway*, that is being implemented by the University of South-Eastern Norway (further USN) within the Norwegian Eurasia Programme at the same Georgian university and other partner universities not only in Georgia but also in Kyrgyzstan. Thanks to a partial comparison³ of the Czech project to the Norwegian one, that also includes the provision of scholarships for Georgian and Kyrgyz students' study/research stays in Norway (and vice versa), it was possible to identify **examples of good practices related to potential strengthening of the synergies between the evaluated Programme and the Czech Government Scholarship Programme.**

In the following parts, the methods used, potential obstacles and identified weaknesses of the methodology are shortly outlined. In addition, a history of the Czech development cooperation in Georgia, together with a brief summary of the Georgian higher education development is described. Moreover, a context of the analysed projects is explained. Finally, the main findings and recommendations are discussed; this part reflects the structure of the main evaluation questions given by the MFA.

¹ The thesis titled *A Reflection of Capacity Development Concept in the Czech Development Cooperation Programme in Higher Education and Research – a Georgia Case Study*, conducted under the supervision of Ondřej Kopečný, and graded excellent was defended in February 2017 at the Department of Public and Social Policy at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague.

² For more details, see the following chapter *Methodology*.

³ The comparison does not for example include a content point of view as there is a difference between the main topics of the projects. The Czech one is concentrated on Cooperatives and Agricultural Entrepreneurship, whereas the Norwegian one is focused on Sustainable Tourism. For more details, see the chapter *Context of the Projects*.

1. Methodology

This analysis utilizes a **comparative case study research design**. Additionally, the study uses **elements of longitudinal research design**, as it takes advantages of data collected at ATSU/CULS in 2016; these data are used as a reconstructed baseline for partial comparison over the time period. Furthermore, the design is influenced by the main evaluation questions given by the MFA in order to demonstrate effects of the Programme and to complement the main evaluation findings about the Programme itself. It is important to mention, this case study is not conceived as a project evaluation, but rather as **a complement analysis to the overall evaluation that outlines possible positive and negative attributes of the Programme** that arises from the project level.

For the purpose of the case study, processed remotely due to time and financial constraints of the Programme evaluation, the following data collection methods were used:

- **a desk research** of the relevant project documentation of the Czech projects as well as the Norwegian project, strategic and programme documents connected to Czech Development Cooperation and Georgia, Georgian higher education, etc.;
- **in-depth semi-structured interviews** with relevant groups of informants – representatives of ATSU management (1 interview), ATSU teachers/sub-coordinators (2 interviews), ATSU students (2 interviews) who also took part in the previous evaluation of the *Project No. 1* and therefore were able to provide insight in two-time cuts; further with Czech (1 interview) and Norwegian (1 interview) coordinators of the analysed projects.⁴

Qualitative data was analysed by **content analysis**, and afterwards by **comparative analysis**. Furthermore, a **reconstruction of the theory of change** of the relevant project and its subsequent verification by people involved in the projects was used. The principles of triangulation were followed as possible.

In the framework of the Georgian case study, the following **weaknesses and potential obstacles were identified**:

- **A demanding schedule** - particularly in view of the fact that in Georgia, as in the Czech Republic, the evaluation interferes with the exam period and summer vacation, when the cooperation on the part of the university and the relevant stakeholders is limited.
- **A limited number of respondents** - in particular teachers and students, who were selected for the purpose of the original evaluation in 2016 by the Georgian coordinators; it is therefore plausible to deduce that these are the more active project participants, who may provide positively biased information (to some extent); in general, the number of respondents is limited, despite the fact that the evaluator attempted to cover more diverse actors who participated in the project/s, and therefore the observation values of the findings may be also limited.
- **The impossibility to include other methods of data collection and use triangulation more** - due to the time constraints and the difficulty to communicate at a distance with the stakeholders involved it was not possible to deploy a more diverse toolbox for data collection, including particular quantitative methods.
- **Language barriers** - which created obstacles in communicating with the respondents whose level of English proficiency is generally lower and influenced the extent to which the questioned posed are understood; in interpretation and translation, these questions had to be simplified.
- **Technical barriers** - resulting from the fact that, due to time and financial limits, the evaluation is carried out at distance from the Czech Republic; barriers such as interrupted internet connection impact on the constant conduct of interviews.
- **The need to back-construct the reconstructed baseline** - due to the fact that in the original evaluation a longitudinal approach was not included, it was necessary to conduct a reverse identification of starting values relevant for the Programme evaluation, which seems, particularly in some respects, problematic.
- **Difficulties to prove causality in a complex environment** - it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the project discretely and separate it from the contribution of the Czech project from other factors of change at the given university due to the fact that ATSU was collaborating with twenty other universities – mostly from the EU – at the same time.

⁴ For more details, see the attachment – *List of Interviews*.

2. Georgia, Czech Development Cooperation and Higher Education

Firstly, some basic facts⁵ related to Georgia are described. It is a semi-presidential republic located in Eurasia, in the South Caucasus region, with:

- population: 3.723 million (2019), 58.6% urbanization (2018 est.);
- unemployment rate: 12.7% (2018), **youth unemployment rate: 30.5% (2017 est.)**;
- population employed in services: 43.9% (2017), **in the agriculture sector: 43.2% (2017)**, and in industry: 12.9% (2017);
- GDP composition by sectors of origin – services: 67.9% (2017 est.), industry: 23.7% (2017 est.), and **agriculture: 8.2% (2017 est.)**;
- total GDP (at current prices): USD 16.2 billion (2018), GDP per capita: USD 4,346 (2018), GNI: USD 4,148 per capita (2018)⁶;
- population living on less than USD 1.90 a day: 5% (2017), living on less than USD 3.10 a day: 16% (2017), and living on less than USD 5.50 a day: 44% (2017), **population lives below national poverty: 21.9% (2017)**.

Overall, **Georgia is still a net recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA)**, that is in total (at current prices) USD 446 million (2017) and USD 120 per capita (2017) and **creates 11.9% of central government expense. The Czech Republic is the 16th biggest donor to Georgia** (including the EU, and multilateral donors).

Due to the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in 2008 the **Czech Republic allocated CZK 150 million for an emergency reconstruction of the country**. These resources were spent between 2008 and 2010 on projects aimed at improving living standards and economic growth of Georgia. (MFA, 2016) Since that time **Georgia became a priority country to the Czech Republic** without a cooperation programme, so called a *project country*. Moreover, for the current period 2018-2030 Georgia remains a priority of the Czech development cooperation. On the top of that, **it has officially become a programme country**. As stated in the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme (2017: 4), an integral part of the Czech Republic's engagement in Georgia, the Czech Republic intends to promote **inclusive social development for all groups of the population in a democratic society, as well as sustainable rural development, environment protection and food self-sufficiency**. For more details about ODA flows from the Czech Republic to Georgia between 2016-2018, a period relevant to Programme evaluation, see the following table.

Table No. 1: Information about ODA flows from the Czech Development Cooperation to Georgia between 2016-2018

	2016	2017	2018
ODA funds allocated for bilateral projects	CZK 40 million	CZK 43,5 million	CZK 54 million
ODA funds spent on bilateral projects	CZK 33,25 million	CZK 35,33 million	CZK 43,69 million
No. of bilateral projects	20	20	16
No. of projects within the Programme ⁷	2	2	2 ⁸
ODA funds allocated for projects within the Programme	CZK 1.86 million	CZK 1.92 million	CZK 1.96 million ⁹

Source: Author (2019), based on information from the MFA (2017, 2018, 2019)

According to the MFA, there were implemented projects in the following sectors – **inclusive social development, agriculture and rural development, and good democratic governance** that are among thematic priorities of the Czech development cooperation for years 2018 – 2030. They are the main official objectives of bilateral development cooperation between the countries as well.

The first project within the Programme was implemented in Georgia between 2014 and 2015. **There have been four two-year lasting projects implemented within five years**; two of them by CULS, one project by Charles University, and one by Mendel University in Brno; **totalling CZK 6.6 million**.

⁵ The main source of these facts is CIA Factbook, available here: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>, World Bank's databases, available here: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/georgia>, National Statistics Office of Georgia, available here: <https://www.geostat.ge/en>, or Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, available here: <https://www2.compareyourcountry.org/aid-statistics?cr=302&cr1=oeacd&lg=en&page=1>.

⁶ This fact would newly class Georgia as an *upper middle income economy* Even though the World Bank classes Georgia for the current 2019 fiscal year as a *lower middle income economy* due to its GNI per capita in 2017 (USD 3,770), available here: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>. Furthermore, according to OECD DAC, Georgia remains a *lower middle income country* for the purpose of reporting on 2018, 2019, and 2020 flows, for more details: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2018to2020_flows_En.pdf.

⁷ In each year, there was always one newly funded project and one continued project from the previous year. To put it differently, in the respective period between 2016 and 2018 relevant for the Programme evaluation, there were (partially) implemented three projects within the Programme.

⁸ Originally, there were two projects granted in 2018. Nevertheless, one of the projects (entitled *Supporting Bio-cultural Diversity Conservation Research and Education at Ilia State University*, submitted by CULS) was not registered with the Georgian authorities, therefore it was not possible to carry out any project's activities in 2018. CULS applied for withdrawal from the subsidy that was then entirely returned. For 2019, the CULS no longer applied for a grant.

⁹ In total, there was CZK 1.96 million which was allocated for two projects in 2018, due to the return of one grant of CZK 1.47 million (as mentioned above), the actual drawdown was CZK 0.49 million.

Such international programmes focused on development of higher education are highly relevant for Georgia, as **a strong tertiary education system and science is one of the priorities for the Government of Georgia** (Government of Georgia, 2017: 45). In the last fifteen years, the country has made significant progress in reforming the education and science systems. Starting already in 2004, when various political and economic reforms were launched to strengthen the country's economic system, **educational reforms aimed at transforming the post-Soviet educational system and creating a new system that would be in line with international trends in higher education** (MES, 2017: 3). For example, an important Law of Georgia *on Higher Education*, that created a basis for the following reforms, was adopted in 2004. It regulates educational and scientific research activities of higher education institutions, principles of authorization and accreditation, sets the rules of foundation, performance, etc.

One of the results of this reform was **decreased corruption within the tertiary education system and increased quality of higher education institutions** (Charekishvili, 2015: 61; Chankseliani, 2013: 182). In 2004 there were 198 institutions – 26 public universities and 172 private universities (in the 1990s there were even about 600 institutions), in an academic year 2018/2019 there are 63 institutions¹⁰ – 19 public ones and 44 private ones.¹¹

Moreover, for the purpose of integration into the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**¹² and the **European Research Area (ERA)**¹³, and of internationalization in general, several further steps have been taken:

- the three-stage system of higher education; the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS); and internal and external quality assurance systems have been launched and enacted;
- the National Qualification Framework was created; and
- the mobility of students and academic staff was allowed and further supported. (MES, 2017: 26)

However, **Georgian higher education still faces several challenges** to quality, training services and equal access that need to be addressed in order to provide education of European standards. The following ones were identified:

- unequal autonomy of various organizational-legal types of institutions;
- inadequate financial system for teaching and research;
- absence of a real connection between academic and employment fields; and
- problematic quality assurance mechanism. (IIEPPM, 2013; EACEA, 2017)

Based on shortcomings identified in the higher educational system, the MES (2017: 29) has defined **three main strategic objectives of tertiary education for the period 2017-2020**:

- to further modernize higher education system, to promote internationalization and improvement of quality;
- to create effective opportunities of lifetime learning; and
- to increase access to quality education (in terms of inclusion and financial availability).

¹⁰ The main reduction of number of higher education institutions took place between academic years 2009/2010 and 2011/2012 due to a part of reforms focused on quality assurance system, e.g. introduction of *National Qualification Framework*. (The number of private higher education institutions decreased from 108 to 33; whereas the number of public ones decreased only by two – from 21 to 19.)

¹¹ Moreover, in this academic year, there are currently enrolled 95.9 thousand students in public universities and 51.8 thousand students in private universities; 12.2 thousand of them are the foreign students (the number of foreign students has doubled in the last 4 years).

¹² EHEA is a *unique international collaboration on higher education and the result of the political will of 48 countries with different political, cultural and academic traditions, which, step by step during the last twenty years, built an area implementing a common set of commitments: structural reforms and shared tools*. Georgia joined the so-called Bologna Process in 2005 at the Bergen Summit. For more details, see <http://www.ehea.info>.

¹³ ERA is a unified research area open to the world and based on the internal market that enables free circulation of researchers, scientific knowledge and technology. For more details, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/era/progress-report_en.

3. Context of the Projects

As clarified, the main focus of this analysis is put on the Czech *Project No. 2*; however, it is important to mention some basic facts about the previous Czech project called *Improvement of Education Quality at State University Akaki Tsereteli* ("*Project No. 1*") as it set the basis for the following *Project No. 2* and cooperation between ATSU and CULS. In addition to that, it is necessary to point out, both universities started to cooperate together within EU – ENPARD¹⁴ a project run by People in Need, shortly before the *Project No. 1* was granted in 2014. The basic information about the Norwegian project is also described, as it is relevant to the analysis. For a brief summary about the projects related to this case study, see a table No. 2.

Table No. 2: Information about Czech and Norwegian Projects

Relevant Information	Project No. 1	Project No. 2	Norwegian project
Name	<i>Improvement of Education Quality at State University Akaki Tsereteli</i>	<i>Enhancement of Capacities of Academic and Management Staff at Akaki Tsereteli State University</i>	<i>Sustainable Tourism: Rural Entrepreneurship and Heritage. Educational Cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Norway</i>
Period of Implementation	9/2014 – 12/2015	03/2016 – 12/2017	3/2016 – 12/2019
Main Coordinator	CULS – FTA	CULS – FTA	USN
Partners	ATSU – FA, FBLSS	ATSU – mainly FA, partially FBLSS	ATSU + 5 other universities ¹⁵
Total Budget	EUR 56,154 (CZK 1,433,000)	EUR 57,613 (CZK 1,470,250)	EUR 624,133 (NOK 5,995,300)

Source: Author, 2019

The main purpose of the Czech *Project No. 1* was to contribute to fulfilling of the current gap in the Georgian tertiary education in the sector of development of cooperatives and small and medium agricultural enterprises (CULS, 2014: 7). In other words, the *Project No. 1* stressed mainly teaching of students, and transfer of knowledge via teaching of Czech teachers, revision of syllabi, improvement of seven study courses in respective fields, etc. Whereas, the *Project No. 2* was primarily focused on a **transfer of know-how in terms of capacity building in the area of academic board and university management, especially the capacity building of the Agrarian faculty** (CULS, 2016: 6). The need to modernize pedagogical, didactical and research competencies of academic employees (in terms of use of modern teaching methods and their implementation into courses) was partially reflected also in the *first project*. It appeared to be the most urgent need, therefore it was predominantly stressed within the *second Czech project* that was more concentrated and focused (and officially consisted of 12 activities instead of 21 activities as *the first project*). In contrast to the *first Czech project*, its main target groups were teachers and management of the university, instead of students, as claimed by several informants in 2016.

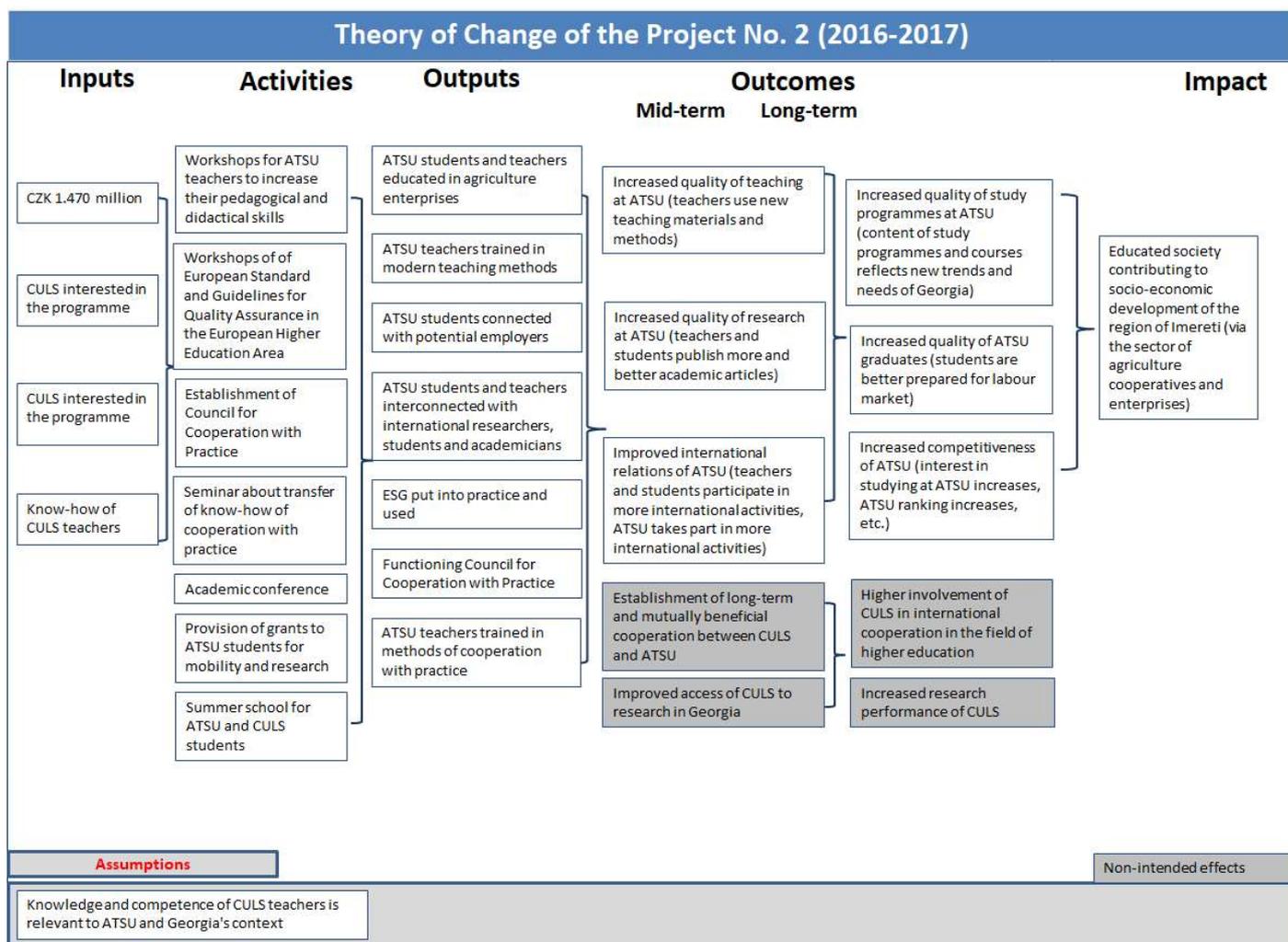
Furthermore, the Norwegian project's overall aim is **to equip students of tourism, as well as staff teaching tourism, with the skills, knowledge and competence necessary to develop sustainable tourism based on local rural entrepreneurship and heritage in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Norway** (USN, 2018: 12). The main goals should be reached via *increased student and staff mobility between all three countries for exchange of knowledge, competence and practical skills*; enhancement of student's and staff's in-depth knowledge; and exchange of teaching methods and teaching materials. The project should contribute to *more practice and research-based education by joint cooperation between academic institutions and private sector*. The **Norwegian project stresses an attribute of equal partnership between the Norwegian university and other partners** in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan in terms of mobility, knowledge exchange, joint teaching, joint development of summer schools, new courses, etc.

Obviously, **the Czech project and the Norwegian one cannot be compared in all aspects, as there is a big difference between them in terms of extent and content**. Firstly, the Norwegian project is much more extensive than the second Czech project (twice longer, with five more involved partners, and ten times bigger budget, etc.); secondly, their primary content focus varies. On the other hand, aspects relevant to the purpose of this case study such as attitude to partner with universities, included activities supported within the programmes, factors contributing to in/efficiency, etc. were partially compared in the following part.

¹⁴ ENPARD (the European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) is a tool of the European Union that provides support to rural development and agriculture, its main aim is to reduce rural poverty in Georgia. For more details, see www.enpard.ge.

¹⁵ Two more Georgian universities: Batumi Maritime Academy, and Shota Rustaveli State University; three Kyrgyz universities: Bishkek Academy of Finance and Economics, Issyk-Kul State University named after Kasym Tynystanov, and Kyrgyz Economic University.

The logic of the projects was adjusted according to the theory of change, based on information collected during interviews and from a project's documentation (such as project's proposals, mid-term reports, and final reports). For more details about the projects' design, see the following reconstructed theory of change.



4. Main Findings and Recommendations

The following part summarizes the main findings of the Georgian case study and further suggests several potential recommendations for the Programme that resulted from the study. **This chapter is structured according to the main evaluation questions** (further only *EQ*) given by the MFA.¹⁶ Several questions and their meanings were slightly modified as it was not possible to directly answer them in the context of the study.¹⁷ Furthermore, the answers are primarily connected at the project level that may be used as a case illustration for the programme level. As stated in the methodology part, this case study is not conceived as a project evaluation, but rather as **a complementary analysis to the overall evaluation that outlines possible positive and negative attributes of the Programme** that arise from the project level.

As mentioned in the introduction, **some information from the year 2016 that may be relevant for the evaluation of the whole Programme** (for *Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact*) is mentioned and then compared/reflected to the current findings. Some of this information (mainly quasi-baseline vs actual situation for *Efficiency*) may be partially perceived as a **demonstration of sustainability or eventually a demonstration of mid-term effects** of the Czech projects (however more detailed results-based evaluation research would be needed to prove effects properly). The identified changes are marked for reason of simplification as follows:

- ▲ : if the situation in 2019 is improved compared to situation in 2016;
- ▼ : if the situation in 2019 is worsened compared to situation in 2016;
- *no change*: if the situation in 2019 remains the same (even in a positive or negative manner) as in 2016.

Where relevant data is available, the respective situation for the Norwegian project is described **in order to outline Norwegian practice within the Eurasian programme** and/or partially compared, if possible/comparable to the Czech project/Programme.

4.1. Relevance

EQ 1.1.: To what extent is the Programme/project relevant as regards to the strategic objectives of Czech development cooperation, and as regards to the individual enrolled actors?

The second Czech project, as well as the first Czech project, is **predominantly relevant to the main involved actors** not only at an individual level, but also at an institutional level and a system level. In contrast to the first project, the second one is, as proved by Georgians and Czech coordinator, more focused and concentrated thanks to the experience from the previous project period in 2014-2015. On the other hand, if the Programme **includes activities such as courses of academic English or mobility**, it is likely that not only its relevance but also its efficiency may increase.

The main ATSU teachers' needs that were behind the motivation to join the second project are the following ones: **to improve teaching style** and **to get familiar with new teaching methods**, as well as **to improve research skills** and **to increase academic publications**. Other ATSU non-academic staff joined the second project because they wanted to **improve management skills**. All ATSU target groups (students included) expressed their interest in **getting new contacts from European countries** for their further cooperation and **obtaining knowledge in agriculture cooperatives**. Their general need **to improve English** and **to improve academic writing in English** is perceived as highly relevant not only by Georgians, but also by the Czech and Norwegian partners. A **certain level of English is crucial for the further cooperation and sustainability** of such cooperation. Additionally, all Georgian informants mentioned **mutual exchange (mainly in terms of mobility) would increase the project's relevance** and would replace predominantly *one-way directed transfer* of know-how., it would further support equal partnership between universities and increase overall confidence of the partners.

At an institutional level, the second project was considered relevant thanks to its activities that **contributed to increased cooperation with practice** (e.g. establishment of Board for cooperation with practice or career days) and activities that **introduced a quality assurance system** (mainly due to introduction of European quality standards) to ATSU. Overall, **to get a new partner from European Union** helps the university to reach one of its main goals – **to increase**

¹⁶ It is necessary to mention, not all evaluation questions were answered as not all of them were relevant for the purpose of the case study.

¹⁷ In that case, the meaning is explained in the footnotes.

internationalization. All of these aspects contributed to a new accreditation and authorization that ATSU just recently obtained.

The content of the second project, as well as the first Czech project, was **in line with national strategies of Georgia.** The project contributed to the fulfilment of one out of three national priorities of Georgia (according to **Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia – Georgia 2020**). Specifically, the *development of human resources* that includes *facilitating the development of tertiary education sector*, mainly in the region of Imereti. It also contributed to several goals from the **Strategy for Education and Science 2017-2021** and the **Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020**. For example, *to improve university education and research within the food and agricultural sector*. Furthermore, it also fulfilled objectives of the **Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic and Georgia** and the **Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic** (mainly *Agricultural and Rural Development*).

The second project was also acknowledged as relevant to the CULS, more precisely to Faculty of Tropical AgroSciences. It benefits from having a **new research partner and contacts in subtropical area.** It facilitates **conducting joint research, exchanging knowledge**, etc. In addition to that, thanks to participation of Czech students in summer schools in Georgia it contributes to **better preparation of CULS students for their future engagement in the development sector.**

For more details about the Norwegian practice and relevance of the Norwegian project, see the box No. 1.

Box No. 1: Norwegian Project and Its Relevance

Even though, the Norwegian project is less focused on research than the Czech project, its **relevance for ATSU is likely to be higher in several aspects discussed above that are promoted by the Eurasian Programme.**

Firstly, the project's **mobility component increases relevance of the project** not only for ATSU but also for USN. ATSU students and teachers get more international experience thanks to their short and long term stays in Norway or Kyrgyzstan. Georgian academic staff may teach at USN and other partner universities, as well as take part in conferences and summer schools taking place in the partner countries. Georgian students are allowed to study at the foreign universities and may use this opportunity for collection of data for their theses. It also increases their motivation to take part in other project activities.

Besides that, it has particular benefits for the Norwegian university that increases the overall relevance. **Due to the project containing mobility, the USN has more international students in its international programmes** – not only participants of the project, afterwards it attracts other students from Georgia and Kyrgyzstan (recently about 100 students from these partner countries) thanks to increased awareness about possibility to study in Norway. Moreover, it also **motivates Norwegian students to study, conduct research or do internships** (that are also a part of the project) **in the partner countries.**

Secondly, **Eurasian Programme also grants activities connected to teaching of English.** After the Norwegian project started, it was recognized the level of English at ATSU was at very low level. Therefore, USN applied for **extra funding from donor (DIKU) for courses of academic English** (including referencing, academic writing, etc.) that proved to be highly relevant for students and teachers at ATSU and contributed to increased efficiency of other project activities. It is necessary also to point out to flexibility of **Norwegian donor that allows to apply for extra funding for activities that were not included into the project at the beginning but turned out to be highly relevant after the implementation started.**

Source: Author, 2019

EQ 1.2.: To what extent is the Programme/project relevant as regards supplementing the Czech Government Scholarship Programme?¹⁸

During the first Czech project, the interconnection between the project and Czech Government Scholarship Programme for students from developing countries was considered as poor.¹⁹ The interconnection of the second Czech project with Czech Government Scholarship Programme was again weak. Moreover, no project activity directly promoting Czech Government Scholarship Programme was included into the second project that time. On the contrary, it is necessary to point out, such **interlink between these two programmes was not communicated or anyhow supported by the donor in 2015/2016** when CULS applied for the project funding (ORG_14).

¹⁸ The question was understood in the context of the case study as follows: *How was the project interconnected with the Czech Government Scholarship Programme, or mobility component in the case of the Norwegian project?*

¹⁹ In practice, a workshop for ATSU students about possibilities for studying in the Czech Republic took part during the *Project No. 1* under the supervision of CULS representative. Moreover, several individual consultations (e. g. about entry formalities, application forms, recognition of higher education, scholarships and grants availability) for ATSU students were organized in order to help them to apply for exchange study stay abroad. On the contrary, no results (students granted a scholarship) of these activities have been recorded in 2016.

As mentioned by teachers, **students have information about the possibility to get a scholarship** for studying in the Czech Republic, the information is usually put online on the web site of the university. As Georgian teachers further claimed, they were not aware of **any student who applied for it in the last three years**. According to them, students are likely to be discouraged because of studying in the Czech language. (*They were not familiar with a possibility to take a prior language course or to apply for English study programme.*) One of the interviewed students did not know about the possibility at all, the second one got this information from the Czech teachers involved in the project.

CULS **did not include any activity interconnecting the project and the Czech Scholarship Programme as it was not promoted by the donor**. Moreover, even when the university included the interlinking activity (focused on admission procedure of potential scholarship holders) to a different project (a Ukrainian one), it was rejected by a donor because of its *irrelevance*. Even though the **interlink may increase efficiency not only of the project itself** (due to increased motivation of the students to be more active in project activities – as acknowledged by Georgian students), but **also of the Czech Government Scholarship Programme** – a university could choose their future students according to their preferences that may increase quality of potential students and decrease drop-out. Moreover, it would decrease obligations of the Czech Embassy that is usually in charge of an application process.

For information about the Norwegian project's interconnection with mobility component, see the following box No. 2.

Box No. 2: Norwegian Project and Its Interconnection with Mobility Component

As stated not only by Norwegian coordinator but also by the Georgians, **mobility is one of the most important components** of the Norwegian project. The Norwegian project is **supplemented by another project within Erasmus+** that is also focused on a mobility part. Additionally, **ATSU and USN have just recently applied for Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility** (known also as KA107)²⁰, the results are not known yet.

Furthermore, the Norwegian project includes **various types of mobilities** – for students, as well as for university staff (predominantly for teachers) **not only from Norway, but also from Georgia and Kyrgyzstan**. Students and academic staff from ATSU can study/teach/collect data etc. not only at USN, but also at other partner universities in Kyrgyzstan. And vice versa – students and teachers from USN can apply for studying/teaching/doing internships (as there is a possibility for Norwegian students to undertake an internship) in Georgia or Kyrgyzstan. It increases project's relevance for all target groups.

In addition to that, the length of different types of mobilities also varies. There is **long term mobility** (3 months or more; usually for one semester) that are primarily for master's and Ph.D. students and **short-term mobility** (up to 3 months; usually for few days up to few weeks) for bachelor's and master's students and teachers (from 4 days up to 10 days). As claimed, students usually use this opportunity for field research for their final theses. There existed also **possibility to include whole programme degree mobility** (e.g. for studying the whole master's degree in Norway) in to a project funded within the Eurasian Programme. It is important to mention, the **Norwegian donor (DIKU) does not prioritize provision of scholarship for the whole degree because of higher brain drain due to this type of student mobility**, and therefore it was not part of this project.

For illustration, between **2016 and 2017 there were 50 students** (36 for short term mobility and 14 for long term mobility) and **45 teachers/university staff** (only for short term mobility) **involved in mobility**. From those 50 students:

- 7 students from Georgia went to Kyrgyzstan and 3 students from Kyrgyzstan went to Georgia (for field research for his/her bachelor/diploma theses and for participation in Kyrgyz summer school);
- 19 students from Georgia and 16 students from Kyrgyzstan went to Norway (for field work for their Ph.D. project and for participation in Norwegian summer school);
- 5 students from Norway went to Kyrgyzstan (either for internship or for Kyrgyz summer school).

The main purposes of the teachers/university staff mobility were the following ones: **to teach jointly at summer schools** in all involved countries, **to take part in workshops, conferences, or inception/annual meetings**, or **to conduct joint lectures** at partner universities.

On the contrary, it is necessary to mention, **students with a low level of English from the partner universities is considered challenging** for such activity. It is necessary to choose students who have a certain level of English, that is examined during tests and interviews that are to be undertaken before going abroad. Overall, the **mobility component is considered very successful and efficient** by all stakeholders.

Source: Author, 2019

²⁰ International Credit Mobility supports the mobility of individual participants enrolled or employed at a higher education institution between a *Programme Country* and a *Partner Country* – student mobility (from 3 months up to 1 year) and staff mobility for teaching and for training (from 5 days up to 2 months).

4.2. Efficiency

*EQ 2.1.: How can, based on available information, the efficiency of the programme's/project's expenses be assessed, in particular as regards the overall „value for money“?*²¹

Year 2016		
Category	Description	Change compared to the situation in 2019
Summer schools – considered as the most useful activity	Summer school (together with a student grant competition) was rated as the most useful and popular activity that was highly recommended and could be used as an example of good practice to other implementers and their partners.	no change
Career days – considered as a very beneficial activity, likely to be organized even without donor participation; on the other hand, decreasing participation of students and potential employers	The career day was considered as an efficient tool for better preparation of students into the labour market, as demonstrated by students, teachers and potential employers as well. In addition to that, it was declared career days would definitely continue in the future even without financial support of the Czech donor. Local coordinators who were fully in charge of this activity admitted they thought it could be organized for the whole university in the following years. Despite a declared increase in interest of students and employers, participation in career day in 2016 was lower (15 regional enterprises, and 60 students) compared to the year 2015 (18 representatives of local employers from private sector, non-governmental sector and public sector, and 150 students).	▲
No institutionalized cooperation between university and practice	A plan to set up a Board for Cooperation with Practice should have been realized at the end of the year 2016. Local coordinators appreciated an effort to set up a Council (Board) for Cooperation with Practice as it was very crucial for the university and for its accreditation. Communication with stakeholders, such as potential employers in a region was one of the important points that would be evaluated within the process of accreditation, as claimed by local coordinators. This change in university's institutional arrangement would be considered as one of the most important capacity development response of the project.	▲
None of the seven modules taught by Czech teachers put into practice by 2016	The courses led by the Czech teachers have not been taught afterwards, even though the materials and syllabi of these courses were given to ATSU. The main difficulty in teaching in accordance with the Czech teachers' guidelines originated in language barriers. The level of English for the majority of ATSU students and teachers is not at a high level. It was necessary to teach in cooperation with a local translator who was able to translate everything into Georgian. That made it more difficult for all participants – for students (and Georgian teachers) to pay attention during lectures, for Czech teachers to adjust content, as well as for translator to get familiar with all relevant issues and topics.	no change

There were several project activities that were considered very beneficial and were likely to increase the *value* of the project. **Summer school was again rated as the most important and interesting activity** not only by students, but also by Georgian teachers and both coordinators – the Georgian one as well as the Czech one. Activities that helped Agrarian faculty get authorization and accreditation of study programmes were also positively evaluated. In addition to that, a **workshop about new teaching methods was considered as a useful activity** by Georgian teachers. On the other hand, **direct teaching of the Czech teachers was rather challenging**.

Firstly, **summer school called *Agri-Cooperatives and Institutions for Rural Development* seemed to be the most beneficial and popular activity of the project**. Thanks to the participation, students and teachers got the possibility to intensively study new theories connected to agriculture cooperatives and then apply them directly into practice during their field work. After conducting research, participants of the summer school presented the results to their colleagues and during an international conference that was held within the project. Students claimed they **improved their presentation skills and management skills** – mainly thanks to a need to manage a grant they got in order to collect data within the summer school. Additionally, they also acknowledged they **practiced their English due to participation of Czech students** in this activity. The data that was collected were not only used for the purpose of writing final theses (of Czech as well as Georgian students), but also as a feedback for farmers who were interviewed. As stated, some of them just recently started a business and thanks to the information they received, they adjusted/slightly changed the direction of their entrepreneurship. For example, they included rural tourism. The university still stays in touch with these farmers, that were from cooperatives predominantly funded through ENPARD initiative led by Czech NGO People in Need, and partially funded also by the Czech Development Agency. They for example took part in career days of the FA.

²¹ The question was understood in the context of the case study as follows: *What activities are considered as the most/least beneficial or in/efficient; what activities create “the biggest value” of the project, potentially the Programme?*

Unfortunately, the **summer school no longer takes place after the termination of the project mainly due to the lack of financial resources**. One of the Georgian supervisors of the summer school (ORG_36) admitted she had **applied for a small grant from the Czech Embassy in Georgia for financing the next summer school**, it would also popularize the Czech Republic in the Imereti region, and had not succeeded even though her project was positively ranked.

Secondly, **several activities (mainly career days and establishment of Board for Cooperation with Practice) that contributed to authorization of FA and accreditation of its programmes, had positive reviews**. The last career days taking place within the project were organized at the end of 2017; participation of potential employers was twice as big as the previous year (together 28 representatives), though participation of students and academic staff remained the same (60 people). This activity also promoted the project via a TV spot. Without a Czech partner, the career days are organized in a slightly different format – as a *scientific picnic*. Furthermore, the establishment of the Board for Cooperation with Practice also helped FA to connect more with potential employers. This is likely **to increase students' job prospects and marketability in the future** as the members of the Board discuss current requirements of labour market and adjustment of the study programme; so far two meetings have been organized. In addition to that, **ATSU is considering establishing boards at each of its faculties**. A workshop about the quality assurance system and further assistance with the process of the **introduction of the European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education was highly esteemed** mainly by faculty management. As claimed, this activity also contributed in obtaining the authorization.

Thirdly, the **Georgian teachers appreciated several workshops about teaching methods** that are likely to contribute to a partial change in teaching style of some participants. As proved by Georgian students and the Czech coordinator, the teaching style at ATSU is still quite backward and forward, therefore these workshops and trainings were highly needed. The teachers who were interviewed claimed they applied some new teaching methods in their lectures that made them more interesting for their students. In contrast to that, according to students, mainly older teachers are not open to any change of their teaching style, for example to start using new technology.

On the contrary, **implementation of a few activities was not as successful as expected, mainly the direct teaching of Czech teachers** at ATSU. In the previous project there were seven intensive courses led by Czech teachers, none of them are being delivered at ATSU even in 2019. There are several possible reasons for that – the process of introduction of a new course is very complicated in Georgia due to the fact that a university is obligated to apply for a change in curriculum at the Ministry of Education. As stated previously, even in 2016, the language barrier may also be one of the reasons why the courses were not further introduced. On the other hand, some of the information from them was incorporated into existing courses. Additionally, **planned joint degree/double degree was not possible to implement either**. Both universities were highly interested in a mutual programme, but ATSU did not find enough English-speaking teachers who could be involved in the programme (ORG_14).

For information about the Norwegian most/least beneficial project's activities, see the box No. 3.

Box No. 3: Norwegian Projects and Its Activities

As already mentioned above, the main difference between the Norwegian and the Czech project (excluded the content that also differs) is the **mobility component that was ranked as the most beneficial activity by Georgians**. In addition, the Norwegian coordinator claimed, the teachers and students from partner universities *deepen their knowledge and grow from the mobility*.

On top of that, a **summer school organized by USN was similarly ranked as another very beneficial activity** of the Norwegian project. In contrast to the Czech project, **three summer schools took place in each of the involved countries** – not only in Georgia, but also in Kyrgyzstan, and in Norway. An intensive week of summer school (as admitted by the coordinator, two-week summer school would more suitable) helped students gain a lot of knowledge including social aspects and networking.

Similarly to the Czech project, the **direct teaching method seems to be one of the most challenging activities** of the Norwegian project as well and did not work as planned. Unlike the Czech project, the courses (and its content) are being developed by all partners. This makes them on one hand more relevant to all involved universities, on the other hand, it is more difficult to finalize it as there are seven partners with different curricula.

Source: Author, 2019

EQ 2.2.: Which main factors contribute to the (in-)efficiency of the Programme/project process- and content-wise?

Year 2016

Category	Description	Change compared to the situation in 2019
Requirement to write proposals (as well as mid-term and final reports) in Czech language considered as an external factor contributing to inefficiency	Requirement to write proposals (as well as mid-term and final reports) in Czech language weakened the possibility of ATSU (or generally of a local partner) to fully engage in drafting a project and in its further monitoring. As pointed out, both parties (the implementer and the local partner) agreed with a statement that if there was a possibility to write the proposal in English, it would make their communication easier; it would also lower costs (e. g. there would be no need to let documents/parts of them translated into second language). Additionally, the local partners would have a chance to fully influence a project's content (or even draft the project by themselves) which would increase their ownership.	▲
Requirement not to include English language courses into projects' activities considered as an external factor that might contribute to inefficiency	This requirement set by the donor might possibly lower projects' efficiency as well as one of main obstacles in achieving outcomes of the projects was language barriers of some target groups.	<i>no change</i>
No mutual exchange activity implemented	Georgian teachers and students missed an activity that would support equal partnership between universities and increase overall confidence of a partner university, such as mutual exchange in terms of allowing Georgian teachers to come to the Czech Republic to teach at a Czech university, or for Georgian students to take part in summer schools that would be organized in the Czech Republic.	<i>no change</i>
Synergy between the Czech projects and the PIN's ENPARD project identified	The synergy between the projects and the PIN's ENPARD project was identified. For example, a program of the summer schools was highly connected to the ENPARD project – the participants (both students and teachers) made several field trips to 11 cooperatives that were founded due to the ENPARD initiative. Various research projects (and then diploma theses) were conducted by either Georgian or Czech students (it could be stated that CULS students were another target group that benefited from the projects, that might generally influence attractiveness for a Czech university) who took part in the summer schools. Furthermore, information collected by the participants of the summer schools that was further analysed were found to be useful by the Georgian office of PIN that leads the ENPARD project.	<i>no change</i>

There were several aspects identified that contributed to in/efficiency of the project, possibly to in/efficiency of the Programme.

From the procedural point of view, it was **positively evaluated that a call was published in October and there was relatively enough time until January to complete a proposal**. It is also important for a Czech university to know the results as soon as possible, ideally before the summer semester starts (usually in February) in order to plan all project activities with a partner in advance. Otherwise, if the final decision takes too long (for example by March/April) it makes cooperation with a partner more complicated and undermines credibility of the Czech donor. Furthermore, **it is positively rated that the CzDA allowed applicants/implementers to write proposals and midterm/final reports also in English** that generally facilitates communication with a partner and promotes level of partner's involvement and partner's ownership.

In addition to the procedural factors that may influence infectivity, it was mentioned (ORG_14) that the **proposal rating criteria are unclearly specified**; or that they are communicated by various employees of the CzDA. It would be also useful for if proposals are assessed in more details for future projects – for example not only by number for each criterion, but also *in words*.

From a content point of view, the **interconnection of the project with another project financed by the Czech donor was likely to increase the efficiency** of both of them. As mentioned in the section above, interlink with the ENPARD project was positively ranked by all groups of participants in 2016, as well as in 2019.

On the contrary, **the inability to include the mobility component is still likely to have an opposite effect to efficiency** of the project, as mentioned by all actors interviewed in 2016, as well as in 2019. According to their answers, it would make them *feel equally competent* and would certainly *increase their motivation* to take part in the project activities and make the *programme and project environment better*. This support of equal partnership between the universities would alleviate a patriarchal aspect of the programme and would align it to the approach of western donors, as claimed.

Furthermore, under some circumstances, it may **be inefficient to include direct teaching the of Czech teachers**, as it was in the case of the first Czech project – due to the reason that the level of English is insufficient to support such activities.

Generally, the attribute (*sending Czech teachers to developing countries to teach*) of the Programme should not be over emphasized as it promotes *one-way directed* development and supports *unequal partnership*. (For example, the name of the Programme itself is misleading as there are many more activities that support international inter-university cooperation.) Additionally, long-term stay for Czech teachers (who usually have their own responsibilities and duties at their home university) may be difficult as it is not in line with Czech higher education situation.

In addition to that, as already mentioned above, if **courses of academic English** are allowed to be included into the project activities, it may increase efficiency of the following activities as well.

The factors that are likely to increase efficiency of the Norwegian project are mentioned in the following box No. 4.

Box No. 4: Norwegian Project and Factors Contributing to the (In-)efficiency

Firstly, as already stated in the previous sections, the **Eurasian Programme allows implementers to include mobility into project activities**. As claimed by Georgians, the mobility component makes the biggest difference (except contents of the projects that differ) between the Czech and Norwegian project. It is important to mention that **mobility of teachers are primarily short-term ones**, as it is more attractive for professors who usually have a lot of responsibilities at their home universities.

Secondly, **English language courses were also allowed to be included into the project**. Moreover, the problem with low level of English applied also for another project of USN and Guatemala; therefore, it was incorporated into the second project as well. To put it differently, students and faculty members from partner universities in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Guatemala were enrolled in an online course in English Academic Writing (including also topics such as grammar and usage, academic argumentation and rhetoric, citing sources, etc.). This was supplemented by a two-day English seminar that was additionally funded (31,090 EUR) by DIKU in-between the implication of the Norwegian project. It is likely these **extra English courses not only contributed to an increased efficiency of the Norwegian project but also of another project implemented by USN in Guatemala, as an example of a synergy effect**.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the context of the projects, the **Norwegian project is coordinated within a consortium of seven universities** (USN, three partner universities from Kyrgyzstan and three universities from Georgia), **that is likely to decrease unit costs per university**. Namely, it is less costly to support one bigger project with more involved universities than to fund several small bilateral projects. Such cooperation may create more synergies as it promotes not only cooperation between a Norwegian university and a partner university but also between partner universities themselves in the *developing region*.

Finally, **there exist two schemes for project funding** – DIKU supports **short-term projects (or short-term collaborative activities)**, as well as **long-term projects within the Eurasian Programme**. Within a short-term project, it is possible to initiate a cooperation with a partner university/ies and to jointly prepare proposals for a long-term project that would be suitable for all the universities involved. This factor is **likely to increase efficiency and is probably also likely to promote an interest to start cooperation with new partner university/ies**.

Source: Author, 2019

4.3. Effectiveness

EQ 3.1.: To what extent does the Programme/project contribute to further involvement of Czech and partner universities into the international inter-university cooperation?

Year 2016		
Category	Description	Change compared to the situation in 2019
Trend in increasing funding from international projects identified	ATSU received GEL 390,585 from international projects, in 2015 it was already by 7 % more - GEL 420,650.	▲
Trend in increasing number of foreign students studying at ATSU identified	In 2014, there were 188 foreign students studying at ATSU, whereas in 2015 it was 195.	▲
Cooperation with 21 international partners in 2016	ATSU cooperated with 21 international partners mainly via 5 ERASMUS MUNDUS programme and 7 Tempus projects in 2015.	▲

As rated by all involved groups of actors the **project definitely contributed to further involvement of ATSU (and CULS as well) to international inter-university cooperation**. Georgian students and university staff admitted that it had contributed to their further personal involvement in international activities as well.

At the university level, **trends in increasing funding from international projects** (560,000 GEL in 2018), as well as **in an increasing number of foreign students studying at ATSU** (more than 400 in 2018) **is still noticeable**. Furthermore, these days ATSU **cooperates with more than 50 international partners, plus it now has 15 Erasmus+ Programmes**. There are also many different possibilities for students to participate in the international programmes. Formally, involvement of the university in the project increased its internationalization and was considered as a *good point* for ATSU when commission for authorization and accreditation fulfilled this criterion (ORG_34, ORG_35). On the other hand, it is important to mention that an **exact assessment how the Czech project has concretely contributed to such positive change in terms of the university internationalization is very challenging**.²²

At the individual level (university staff and students) there is the possibility to track several examples of *success stories* that may be directly connected to the involvement in the Czech project. As the Georgian coordinator admits (ORG_34), when she became a part of an Erasmus+ project dealing with academic writing and academic honesty and plagiarism, it was **much easier for her to manage it thanks to her previous involvement in the Czech project**. Furthermore, the same example is valid for the Georgian coordinator (ORG_35) of the Norwegian project that follows the Czech one – **it created a good basis of knowledge to be used in the Norwegian project**.

According to the students, their participation in the Czech project also *impacted* their further involvement in other international activities. Generally, the Czech project was a *start-up for the most of the (mainly bachelor's) students that showed them they needed a certain level of English, good grades and to be active to be included into other international projects, for example in the Norwegian one* (ORG_34). Moreover, **it encouraged students to take part in other international activities**. For example, one student who was interviewed (ORG_39) claimed, after the Czech project finished, that he was motivated to take part in a summer school organized by a German university about climate modelling at Batumi and in other ISEC activities. In addition, one of the students who took part in both of the Czech summer schools **applied directly after her participation in these Czech activities for a grant to study/research in the USA and now she is currently based overseas**. On the other hand, as mentioned above, more extensive research would be needed to prove the extent of such changes on individuals' levels and/or to quantify such changes.

From the point of view of the Czech university it also **showed direct correlation in increased involvement of CULS in international cooperation**. The project initiated and facilitated the cooperation between the universities. Thanks to the project teachers and students from CULS who were involved in the project activities they were able to *gain personal contacts and ties that could be used in their professional lives* (for example for joint research project/paper) (ORG_14).

For details about the Norwegian project and its contribution to further involvement of ATSU in international cooperation, see the box No. 5.

Box No. 5: Norwegian Project and Its Contribution to Internationalization of ATSU/USN

As well as the Czech project, the Norwegian one contributed to higher internationalization of ATSU. Thanks to the cooperation in a consortium, ATSU has more international partners not only in Europe, but also in Central Asia due to involvement of other Kyrgyz universities in the project. Moreover, the **mobility component is likely to increase the intensity of personal contact** (for an illustration – when Georgian students have short term internships in Norway, a Norwegian part supports them in organizing the site visits and mentors them, etc.). Therefore, the probability that they stay in touch even after the project termination is likely to be higher. **Mutual contact between the participants is also supported by a Facebook group** where everybody can share his/her personal experience during the project activities. This platform also facilitates communication between relevant actors involved in the project.

In addition to that, **the project also helped to raise internationalization and authorization of the Norwegian university**, as it used to be a *university college* and these days it has the status of a *university*.

Source: Author, 2019

EQ 3.2.: Are long-term results of the projects sufficiently specified/documentated?

During the project cycle the **results of the project are reported and documented as required by the donor** – via midterm and final reports. After the project termination the results are *generally*, yet **not systematically monitored mainly due**

²² More comprehensive (ideally quantitative) research would be needed for collection of extensive data set that would bring an evidence about the project's contribution/impact. Such research was unrealistic under the conditions of the case study, for more details see the methodology part.

to the lack of personnel and financial capacities for such activity. If the donor requires and allocates extra funding for monitoring of a projects' results after a project's termination, there may be potential for mapping of such results.

The same applies to the Norwegian project – as claimed, annual reports about activities, funding, etc. are being regularly delivered to DIKU, and **no extra monitoring of the results is performed.**

4.4. Impact

EQ 4.1.: What are the key development effects of the Programme/project?

Year 2016		
Category	Description	Change compared to the situation in 2019
No academic article written as a result of the Czech project by 2016	Even though, ATSU had 9 academic articles in 2014, 7 academic articles in 2015, and 11 academic articles in 2016 included into database of Web of Science; none of them were written as a result of the projects.	▲
ATSU ranked as 14 th university in Georgia in 2016	In addition to that, ATSU was ranked as the 13,494 th university in the world.	▲

Firstly, it is necessary to mention, it is **a monumental task to track the development impact of the project** at this stage (this applies primarily to long-term outcomes, as it is only 1.5 years after the project's termination) mainly due to the use of data collection methods that were available for this case study. The information below is an **outline of the possible outcomes of the project** that were discussed with the informants. Generally, all identified changes apply mainly to the involved faculties of ATSU (FA, FBLSS), not for the whole university as the project was primarily concentrated on teachers and students from these two faculties.

According to the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, there were **three main general mid-term outcomes identified** that the project should have contributed to:

- **Increased quality of teaching at ATSU** – *teachers use new teaching materials and methods.* As claimed, some of teachers who took part in *workshops to increase the pedagogical-didactic competences* use new teaching methods during their lectures/seminars. In addition to that, materials from the course taught by the Czech teachers (within the first Czech project) were partially used within a course about entrepreneurship in rural areas (ORG_35). On the contrary, one of the students interviewed (ORG_38) does not identify any significant change of teaching style at his faculty. To assess the extent of changes, more data would be needed.
- **Increased quality and quantity of research at ATSU** – *teachers and students publish more and better academic articles.* ATSU academic performance documented in the Web of Science database remains the same as in the previous period (11 articles in 2017, 5 articles in 2018 and so far 4 articles in 2019). There were no academic articles listed in WoS as a result of the project. On the other hand, there are several examples of *success stories* of joint academic performance due to the project.²³ And as claimed, another research cooperation between CULS and ATSU professors is planned, mainly at an individual basis, not at an institutional one yet (ORG_14, 36).
- **Improved international relations of ATSU** – *teachers and students participate in more international activities, ATSU takes part in more international projects;* already discussed in the previous session – *Effectiveness.*

In addition to that, **three possible long-term outcomes** were described:

- **Increased quality of study programmes at ATSU** – *the content of the study programmes and courses reflects new trends and needs of Georgia.* As mentioned above, it is difficult to change curricula of the programmes at a Georgian university as it requires a long-lasting process of approval of the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, it is likely that the above-mentioned mid-term outcomes may contribute to the increased quality of the study programmes.
- **Increased quality of ATSU graduates** – *students are better prepared for the labour market.* Most of the students involved in the project activities were enrolled in their bachelor's degree, therefore they have not graduated yet. Therefore, the assessment of the project contribution to such outcome is not possible yet. It is likely there will be identified some changes in the long term. Some of the project activities were focused on interconnection between theory and practice. This was done in order to increase the relevance of the study programmes and to expand students' future employment opportunities in the labour market. (These activities were highly appreciated by Georgians.)

²³ For example a manuscript (sent to International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability) entitled "The transition of small-scale farmers from Soviet kolkhozes to modern agricultural cooperatives: improving market access in Western Georgia" written by M Gargulakova, J. Hejkrlik (both CULS) and T. Arnania Kepuladze (ATSU).

- **Increased competitiveness of ATSU** – *interest in studying at ATSU increases, ATSU ranking increases, etc.* It is possible to record a change in interest in studying at ATSU (more applicants from Georgia and abroad), as well as change in rating of ATSU. In 2019 ATSU is ranked as 10th best university (compared to 14th best one in 2016) in Georgia (out of 69 universities) and 11,239th in the World²⁴. On the other hand, it is speculative how the Czech project has contributed to such progress; as claimed, the Czech project is likely to be *a small mosaic piece*.

Box No. 6: Norwegian Project and Its Impact

The Norwegian four-year project is still being implemented, it will terminate at the end of this year. Therefore, it is **not possible to track and compare the development impact** of the Norwegian project to the Czech one yet. On top of that, the budget of the Norwegian project is more than ten times the size (as it is two times longer and there are five more universities involved) of the budget of the Czech project. Accordingly, it would not be possible to compare them either, even if the Norwegian project was implemented in the same period.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning even in this stage of project implementation, **the Norwegian project is coordinated within a consortium of universities in Norway, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, the envisioned project impact is likely to be more extensive as it strengthens the cooperation between all respective institutions (as well as between the three countries).**

This is mainly due to a strong emphasis put on student and staff mobility between all partner countries.

Source: Author, 2019

4.5. Sustainability

EQ 5.1.: Which factors of the Programme/project are key for its sustainability?²⁵

Cooperation within the project granted by the CzDA finished at the end of the year 2017. Even though a possibility to continue and apply for another funding was considered, it was decided not to do so. The decision was made especially because of potential repetition of the most activities. Furthermore, it would be impossible to include mobility component into the project, as demanded by Georgian coordinators and teachers.

Czech and Georgian teachers/students still cooperate on an individual basis – for example Czech Ph.D. students conducted a research project in Kutaisi; Georgian teachers are opponents of Czech students' final theses (mainly bachelor's and master's ones), and vice-versa. **No cooperation at an institutional level has been implemented yet**, as there was no opportunity so far. Both partners are interested in such cooperation, if there is an appropriate chance (e.g. for a European project), they will try to apply for it.

As mentioned by most of the informants, **the main attribute of sustainability of cooperation between Czech and a partner university is to build personal contacts among project's participants** that are likely to continue even after a project is finished. This type of contact is not only useful in carrying out the long-term effects of a projects but it also contributes greatly to the success of the project itself. As claimed, **if mobility is a part of the project activities, the personal contact may be further consolidated** because of more intensive face-to-face communication and cooperation. Moreover, the longer a project is, the stronger the personal ties between the involved actors are. In other words, **if projects are supported that last more than two years, it is more likely the cooperation between a Czech and a partner university will be more firmly developed and will continue.**

In addition to that, **if there is joint research interest that is ideally promoted within a project, it will sustain the cooperation between universities** as well. Both parts (Czech and Georgian ones) are remunerated based on their research result. A possible support of a joint research project is likely to increase the motivation of Czech and partner teachers to take part in project activities (or even apply for a project) and to continue in such research even after a project's termination.

In regards to sustainability of the project results there are two main ideas. Firstly, it is necessary **to incorporate planned changes in an existing institutional structure**. Secondly, **a partner must be involved into all steps of a project cycle**, so they can identify themselves with a project.

4.6. Others

²⁴ According to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, for more details see: <http://www.webometrics.info/en/Europe/Georgia%20>.

²⁵ The question was understood in the context of the case study as follows: *What are the key factors that contribute to sustainability of cooperation between the universities?*

EQ 6.1.: How is the Programme/project presented/perceived?

The Czech project was perceived very positively by involved actors from the partner university, as it was the first international project the most of them took part in. As estimated by informants, relevant people (from Foreign Affairs and Strategic Development Office and involved facilities) from ATSU were aware of the project and of the existence of the Programme. (Information about the project was mainly disseminated through personal contacts – from teachers to students, among teachers, etc.; furthermore, relevant information was put online on the university website.) **It is likely the project/Programme was known even within the Imereti region** – mainly thanks to summer schools that took part outside Kutaisi and spots in television (about the summer school and career days). It is difficult to assess to what extent the Programme is known in the whole country.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the project budget was very limited and there was only 5 % available for visibility (as usual). **If greater visibility is required by the donor, more funds should be allocated for such activity.**

EQ 6.2.: How were the cross-cutting issues of the Czech development cooperation followed in the Programme/project?

As claimed, the **cross-cutting issues were formally followed within the project implementation** and reported via final reports. The stress was put on gender – equal representation of women and men not only in project activities but also in coordination team. **For a comprehensive and systematic monitoring more capacities and resources would be needed.**

EQ 6.3.: What are the recommendations, both in terms of process and the system, that follow from the evaluation?

To include mutual mobility component into project activities	The most frequently mentioned requirement was a possibility to include mutual mobility component into a project, not only in <i>exceptional and justified cases</i> (as mentioned in the text of the call), but as a regular activity. This attribute seems to make the biggest difference between the Czech and Norwegian project, excluding the different content of the projects. As claimed by the Georgians, mobility would support equal partnership and knowledge-transfer between universities, increase motivation of a partner to take part in a project and support overall confidence of a partner university. Even a short-term mobility (from few days up to few weeks) for students/university staff would change an environment of project's implementation.
To allow some project activities to be organized in the Czech Republic	Additionally, if summer schools/conferences/workshops (or any other project activity) were organized not only in a partner country, but also in the Czech Republic, it would increase attractiveness of a project not only for partners but also for a Czech university.
To promote project activities interconnecting the Programme with Czech Government Scholarship Programme	Furthermore, if there was a project activity connecting the Programme with Government Scholarship Programme (e.g. selection procedure of potential candidates for studying in the Czech Republic), it would increase effectiveness of both programmes and decrease administrative duties of an embassy. These types of activities should be highly promoted.
To include English courses into project activities	A possibility to include English courses as a project activity (for example in a form of online courses for more projects) is likely to increase efficiency of a project. This is due to the fact that a low level of English is considered as one of the main barriers that threaten not only implementation of a project but also further cooperation between universities after a project's termination.
To put less stress on "sending Czech teachers to developing countries" attribute	<i>Sending Czech teachers to developing countries</i> should not be the main theme (or even name) of the Programme, as it strengthens <i>one-way directed</i> transfer of know-how and may decrease equality of partners. Additionally, it may decrease attractiveness of the Programme for Czech universities as it evokes a teaching part should be one of the most important components of a project. Instead of that, the emphasis should be put on general educational and research cooperation between academic institutions in the Czech Republic and a partner country.
To allow implementers to apply for an extra funding if necessary	If there was more flexibility to apply for extra funds, it could increase efficiency of projects. For example, in the case when it turns out to be beneficial to include some additional activities that were not firstly included in a project proposal.
To offer more funding schemes (e.g. short-term projects and long-term projects)	Generally, as suggested, more types of project funding scheme should be offered by the Czech donor. For example, a scheme for one-year lasting project (with small budget / seed funds) for initial cooperation and preparation of a proposal for a long-term project. Longer projects should be established with the aim for follow-up and more comprehensive cooperation. This is likely not only to decrease administrative duties of implementers but also increase potential impact of a project and support stronger personal contacts between involved actors.
To allow Czech universities to apply for a project within a consortium	If there was a chance for a Czech university to cooperate with more universities within one project, it could be not only effective to support such cooperation, but it might also increase potential impact of a project and overall effectiveness.
To increase funds for impact assessment, monitoring of cross-cutting issues and/or visibility	From a process point of view, if the donor requires to have data about projects' impact in order to evaluate the development impact of the whole Programme, more resources (and exact information about required data) for data collection should be granted to implementers. The same requirement is valid for monitoring of

	relevant cross-cutting issues. In addition, if the visibility (mainly in a partner country) of the Programme should be higher, more funds for project's promotion should be earmarked.
To systematically involve an embassy into the Programme	Regarding the involvement of a local embassy, <i>ex ante</i> as well as <i>ex post</i> cooperation with implementers/partners could be beneficial. Before/at the beginning of a project's implementation, it could interconnect a Czech university with Czech/foreign implementers of other relevant development projects in order to create synergy of such cooperation. After a project's termination, further cooperation with a partner university in terms of provision of financial resources (for example through <i>small grants</i>) for follow-up activities would be valuable.

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Source: Author, 2019

List of Interviews

No.	Position	Organization	Correspondence	Date of Interview
	Georgian Coordinator			

1	Coordinator of Foreign Affairs and Strategic Development Office	ATSU	Distant – Skype Interview	4 th June 2019
Georgian Teachers				
2	Vice-dean	FBLSS ATSU	Distant – Skype Interview	4 th June 2019
3	Professor	FA ATSU	Distant – Skype Interview	5 th June 2019, 23 rd June 2019
Georgian Students				
4	Student	FA ATSU	Distant – Skype Interview	3 rd June 2019
5	Student	FA ATSU	Distant – Skype Interview	5 th June 2019
Czech Coordinator				
6	Assistant Professor	FTA CULS	Distant – Phone Interview	1 st July 2019, 3 rd July 2019
Norwegian Coordinator				
7	Assistant Professor	USN	Distant – Skype Interview	28 th June 2019

Source: Author, 2019

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ATSU	Akaki Tsereteli State University
CULS	Czech University of Life Sciences
CzDA	Czech Development Agency
CZK	Czech Crown
DIKU	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	The European Higher Education Area
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FA	Faculty of Agriculture / Agrarian Faculty
FBLSS	Faculty of Business, Law, and Social Sciences
FTA	Faculty of Tropical AgroSciences
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEL	Georgian Lari
IIEPPM	International Institute for Education, Policy, Planning and Management
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NOK	Norwegian Krone
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PIN	People in Need
USD	United States Dollar
USN	University of Southeast Norway

Source: Author, 2019

List of Tables and Boxes

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Box No. 3	Norwegian Projects and Its Activities
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Box No. 5	Norwegian Project and Its Contribution to Internationalization of ATSU/USN
Box No. 6	Norwegian Project and Its Impact

Source: Author, 2019