Current Status of Public Administration Reform

Mid-term Study Report

2019

Prepared and published by ACT with the assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UK aid from the UK Government. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP and the UK aid from the UK Government.
Content

1. Introduction 6
2. Executive Summary 8
3. Study Methodology 11
3.1. Main Goals and Objectives 11
3.2. Secondary Data Analysis 11
3.3. Overview of Qualitative Study Design 11
3.4. Quantitative Study Design 12
3.5. Gender Analysis 14
4. Stakeholder Analysis 15
5. Mid-term Study Findings 19
5.1 Coordination and Communication of Public Administration Reform 19
5.2. Awareness and Support of Public Administration Reform 21
5.3. Policy Development and Coordination 27
5.3.1. Unified System of Policy Planning, Legal Grounds and Methodological Framework 27
5.3.2. Ensuring a Linkage Between Policy Planning and Law-making 31
5.3.3. Linkage Between Policy Planning and Budgeting 33
5.3.4. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 35
5.3.5. Capacity Building in Policy Planning and Coordination 36
5.4. Civil Service Reform 38
5.4.1. Reforming the Legal Framework on the Civil Service 40
5.4.2. Recruitment and Career Development in the Civil Service 40
5.4.3. Performance Appraisal System for Civil Servants 47
5.4.4 Civil Servant Independence from Political Influence and Feeling of Security and Stability 51
5.4.5. Remuneration and Incentives 55
5.4.6. Professional Development of Civil Servants 57
5.4.7. Alternative Mechanism of Dispute Resolution 63
5.4.8. Job Enjoyment / Prestige Value of the Civil Service 64
5.4.9. Public Trust in Civil Service 67
5.4.10. Assessment of Negative Factors Affecting Work Process 68
5.4.11. Ability of Civil Servants to Affect Decisions, and Management’s support for in the Introduction of Novelties 70
5.4.12. Implementation of Ethical Standards 71
5.4.13. Evaluation of Actions Treated as Misconduct, Procedures Used in Such Cases, and the Fairness of Responses 72
5.5. Public Service Delivery 72
5.5.1. Policy and Practice of Public Service Delivery 75
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency 78
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs 82
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Social Service Agency (SSA) 87
Use and Evaluation of Agriculture-related Services and Local Self-government Services 89
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by Other Agencies 93

Mid-term Study Report on Current Status of Public Administration Reform, ACT, 2019
5.5.2. Policy and Practice of E-service Delivery ............................ 93
5.5.3. Inclusivity of Service and Quality Assurance ...................... 96
5.5.4. Gender Aspects of PAR .................................................. 98
Annex #1 – a list of documents mentioned within the scope of the study .............................................. 101
Annex #2 – a list of sub-legal acts issued / enacted in 2017, 2018 and the first half of 2019 .................... 102

Tables
Table 1. Overview of Qualitative Study Design ....................................................... 12
Table 2. Overview of Quantitative Study Design ............................................... 13
Table 3. Key Stakeholders .................................................................................. 15
Table 4. Responsible Agencies ........................................................................ 19
Table 5. Assessment of Statements Related to State Politics and Other Activities of Citizens (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................ 26
Table 6. Structural Units Responsible for Policy Planning and Coordination (secondary data) .......... 37
Table 7. Public Policy Analysis Training Course .............................................. 38
Table 8. Assessment of Various Characteristics / Factors Of Civil Servants and Public Institutions Made by the Population (Population Survey) .............................................................. 46
Table 9. Assessment of Civil Service Independence from Political Influence (Civil Servant Survey) . 52
Table 10. Assessment of Different Factors of the Civil Servants and Institutions (Population Survey) .......... 66
Table 11. Assessment of Various Characteristics of Public Officers and Agencies (Population Survey) .. 68
Table 12. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey) ........................................................................ 81
Table 13. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing Services Provided by the MIA’s Service Agency (Population Survey) .......................................................... 84
Table 14. Positive and Negative Factors of Services Provided by 112 (Population Survey) .................... 87
Table 15. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing SSA Services (Population Survey) ............ 89
Table 16. Services Used by Respondents (Population Survey) ............................................. 90
Table 17. Consideration of the Needs of Various Groups by District / Municipality Government (Population Survey) .................................................................................................... 91
Table 18. Positive and Negative Elements of Services Provided by Local Self-government Bodies (Population Survey) .................................................................................................................. 92
Charts
Chart 1. Civil Servants’ Awareness and Support of Public Administration Reform (PAR) (Civil Servant Survey) .....22
Chart 2. Sources for Receiving Information about Public Administration Reform (PAR) (Civil Servant Survey) .....23
Chart 3. Respondents’ Awareness about the Main Goals of Public Administration Reform (PAR) (Civil Servant Survey)............................................................................................................................................24
Chart 4. Evaluation of the Impact of the New Law on Civil Service (Civil Servant Survey) .................................................................25
Chart 5. Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals and Open Government in Georgia 2018-2019 Action Plan and Participation in the Development of the Plan (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................26
Chart 6. Awareness of Public Administration Reform (PAR) among the Population (Population Survey).........................................27
Chart 7. Linkage between Government-approved Action Plans and the Budget/BDD (Secondary Data) .................................................34
Chart 8. Civil Servant Performance Appraisals (Civil Servant Survey) .................................................................................................44
Chart 9. Assessment of Employees’ Motivation and Professional Development Capacity in the Agency (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................46
Chart 10. Supporting the Introduction of the Civil Servant Performance Appraisal System (Civil Servant Survey) 48
Chart 11. Assessment of the Importance of the Appraisal System in Achieving the Goals of the Institution (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................49
Chart 12. Civil Servant Attitudes towards the Performance Appraisal Process (Civil Servant Survey) .................................................................50
Chart 13. Civil Servant Perceptions of the Role of Managers in Performance Appraisals (Civil Servant Survey) ..............................................51
Chart 14. Assessment Made by Civil Servants about the Freedom of the Civil Service from Political Influence (Civil Servant Survey) ..........................................................................................................................................52
Chart 15. Sense of Stability at Work (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................54
Chart 16. Civil Servant Attitudes towards Challenging Situations (Civil Servant Survey) .........................................................................................55
Chart 17. Perception of Fairness and Motivation at Work (Civil Servant Survey) .................................................................................................56
Chart 18. Assessment of Employee Motivation and Professional Development Capacity in the Agency (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................60
Chart 19. Assessment of Professional Development Opportunities (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................60
Chart 20. Opportunities for the Development of Professional Skills (Civil Servant Survey) .........................................................................................62
Chart 21. Civil Servants’ Perceptions (Civil Servant Survey) .........................................................................................................................63
Chart 22. Assessment of Employee Feelings Related to Pride and Job Enjoyment (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................64
Chart 23. Willingness to Work in a Public/Civil Institution and Reasons for Lacking Such Willingness (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................65
Chart 24. Civil Servants’ Perception of the Civil Service (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................67
Chart 25. Assessment of Negative Factors Affecting Work Process (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................69
Chart 26. Civil Servants’ Perceptions of Their Powers (Civil Servant Survey) ........................................................................................................................................70
Chart 27. Assessment of Responses to Misconduct (Civil Servant Survey) .................................................................................................72
Chart 28. Issues Requiring Improvement in Service Delivery (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................................................76
Chart 29. Desire for Opportunity to Provide Complaints and Remarks Regarding Service and Sending Complaints to Relevant Agencies (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................................................76
Chart 30. Reasons for Not Providing Relevant Public Agencies with Feedback Regarding Service (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................................................77
Chart 31. Awareness of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................................................78
Chart 32. Use of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency Over the Past Year (Population Survey) ................................................................. 79
Chart 33. Place of Receiving Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................... 79
Chart 34. Assessment of Service Quality Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................... 82
Chart 35. Awareness of Services Provided by the MIA’s Service Agency (Population Survey) .......................... 83
Chart 36. Use of Services Provided by MIA Service Agency Over the Last Year (Population Survey) ............. 83
Chart 37. Satisfaction with Services Provided by the MIA Service Agency (Population Survey) .................... 84
Chart 38. Awareness of Services Provided by 112 (Population Survey) ...................................................... 85
Chart 39. Services Used by Respondents Over the Last Year (Population Survey) ........................................ 85
Chart 40. Satisfaction with Obtained Services (Population Survey) ............................................................. 86
Chart 41. Awareness of Services Provided by the Social Service Agency (SSA) (Population Survey) ........... 87
Chart 42. Use of Services Provided by the SSA Over the Last Year (Population Survey) ............................... 88
Chart 43. Satisfaction with Services Provided by the SSA (Population Survey) ............................................ 88
Chart 44. Awareness of Targeted Programs of the SSA (Population Survey) ................................................ 89
Chart 45. Use of Services Provided by Local Self-government Bodies Over the Past Year (Population Survey) 90
Chart 46. Self-governing Bodies Solving Problems of Respondents and/or their Family Members (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................................................... 90
Chart 47. Satisfaction with Self-government Services (Population Survey) .................................................... 91
Chart 48. Use of Services Provided by Other Agencies Over the Last Year (Population Survey) .................. 93
Chart 49. Possessing an ID Card (Population Survey) .................................................................................. 95
Chart 50. Use of Webpages of Public Institutions as a Source of Information (Population Survey) ............ 96
Chart 51. Evaluation of the Suitability of the Conditions for Disabled Persons to Obtain Services in Public Institutions (Population Survey) ........................................................................................................... 97
Chart 52. Evaluation of Services Tailored to Disabled Persons (Population Survey) ..................................... 97
Chart 53. Share of Female Employees in the Civil Service (Secondary Data) ................................................ 99
1. Introduction

The Government of Georgia (GoG) has made Public Administration Reform (PAR) one of its highest priorities since 2014. As of 2014, Georgia had already achieved significant progress in certain areas of Public Administration Reform\(^1\), however major shortcomings were identified in terms of civil service delivery, strategic planning, evidence-based policy making, and uneven development of public services so essential changes were considered to be necessary.

In addition, in 2013-2014, while the priorities were being identified, one of the decisive factors for the GoG was the process of approximation to the European Union (EU). The EU-Georgia Association Agreement signed by the GoG in June 2014 stipulates that the GoG is committed to carry out core reforms in a number of key areas to facilitate the process of European integration. The agreement places emphasis on the importance of Public Administration Reform and civil service delivery in line with European principles.

Drawing on these premises, the GoG developed the “Civil Service Reform Concept,” which resulted in the adoption of a new Law on Civil Service\(^2\). In 2014-2015, a broader strategy, namely, the “Public Administration Reform Roadmap – 2020” and its corresponding action plan, were developed. The roadmap is based on the OECD/SIGMA PAR principles, which aims to improve and bring the public administration of Georgia closer to the standards of the European administrative space. The roadmap has outlined six areas of Public Administration Reform (PAR): 1) Policy Planning; 2) Civil Service and Human Resource Management; 3) Accountability; 4) Public Service Delivery; 5) Public Finance Management; and 6) Increasing the Capacity of Local Self-Government.

The roadmap has been used as the key strategic document for the implementation of Public Administration Reform (PAR) since 2015.

The Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG) was tasked to ensure the overall coordination of Public Administration Reform (PAR). In 2016, by the Order of the Prime Minister of Georgia, the **Inter-Agency Coordination Council for Public Administration Reform** was established, which was tasked to coordinate and monitor the implementation of PAR. The Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the AoG acts as the PAR Council Secretariat.

---

\(^1\) This is about reforming public services - the simplicity and innovation of services, as well as substantially reducing corruption and other related areas. Georgia’s achievements in these areas, for 2013-2014, have been acknowledged by various credible organizations (ranking systems), including The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index/The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index/United Nations Public Service UNPSA/Voice and Accountability - a World Bank indicator measuring the extent to which citizens participate in public governance. Information on Georgia’s achievements under the aforementioned organizations rating/ranking systems is provided in the baseline study: Baseline Study Report - Supporting Public Administration Reform Fund / Public Service Delivery / p.78 / Prepared by ACT for UNDP / January 2017

\(^2\) The concept was approved in November 2014; the law on Civil Service was adopted in October 2015 and became effective January 1, 2017

In addition, a number of public institutions coordinate various areas of PAR, in particular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform Area</th>
<th>Responsible Leading Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Planning</td>
<td>Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service and Human Resource Management</td>
<td>Civil Service Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service Delivery</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Finance Management</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Self-Government</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mid-term study report focuses on three areas of PAR (policy development, civil service and human resources, public service delivery) and aims to assess the current status of reform. The baseline study was carried out in 2016⁵.

⁴ Responsibility for the service component was assigned to the Public Service Development Agency and Data Exchange Agency
⁵ Baseline Study Report - Supporting Public Administration Reform through the Governance Reform Fund / Prepared by ACT for UNDP / January 2017
2. Executive Summary

The mid-term study report targeted only three out of six key areas of Public Administration Reform (PAR) – Policy development and Coordination, Civil Service Reform, Human Resource Management and Public Service Delivery. More specifically, the goal of the study was to collect and analyze information on the achievements and challenges existing in these three areas of reform.

The findings of the mid-term study confirm that over the past two years, significant progress has been achieved in all three areas of PAR. Some examples of this progress include the creation of a new legal basis for civil service reform and the development of a methodological framework for policy planning. Despite these achievements, it is obvious that there have been delays in the implementation of some tasks outlined in Public Administration Reform Action Plans, which have led some stakeholders to believe that Government interest and support for the reform has declined.

One of the greatest achievements in the area of policy planning and coordination is the development of a methodological framework, namely, the elaboration of the rule and guidelines for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, a draft concept of the Unified Electronic System for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has also been prepared. It is notable that the documents were developed after considerable delay. More specifically, the development and approval of the documents were expected to be completed in 2018, however as of October 2019, the documents had not been officially approved.

In order to enhance the capacity building of public institutions, a nine module-training program was developed in the area of policy planning and coordination. In 2018, 225 employees from 16 central public institutions were selected to participate in the trainings, and 173 of them successfully completed the course. In addition, according to the Administration of the Government of Georgia, in 2018, the Ministries significantly improved the quality of the strategies and action plans. Some stakeholders, however, believe that “improvement” mainly refers to the quality of the texts, but not to the process of strategy development. They believe that very often, ministries give the impression that they do not consider strategies to be important working documents, but rather as documents of external use that do not completely reflect the reality.

In 2017-2018, the development of the basic part of the new legal framework on civil service was completed and is currently being implemented. This implies both the enactment of the new law on civil service and the law on Remuneration in Public Institutions as well as the development and introduction of an entire package of by-laws.

The level of awareness of Civil Service Reform among civil servants is quite high – the overwhelming majority of respondents are aware of the key issues of Civil Service Reform, such as the new Law on Civil Service (96%). A large number of civil servants support the key components of the reform – the majority believes that the changes brought about by the new law are clearly (more or less) positive (76%); The norms set out in the concept and legislative amendments create the foundation for such support, however civil servants reveal critical attitudes towards their practical implementation.

In 2018, one of the major and large-scale changes in the area of Civil Service Reform was the introduction of the Rule for Qualified Civil Servant Performance Appraisal (evaluation). The majority

---

6 13 bylaws
(60%) of civil servants support the introduction of a performance appraisal system, while 57% share the opinion that an appraisal system promotes the achievement of the organization's goals. This positive attitude toward the introduction of a performance appraisal system is accompanied by certain risks related to impartiality. Even though the majority of civil servants (76%) believe that the process of evaluation was carried out in line with the law, only 56% consider it fair.

The introduction of a new remuneration and reward system is considered to be a significant achievement; however, the attitude of civil servants towards the system is uneven. Some civil servants point out that they are no longer entitled to monetary bonuses, and that it has eliminated the incentive mechanism for qualified employees. However, others consider that the elimination of the old system of bonuses and supplements is a positive change. These respondents believe that salary supplements and bonuses were not related to the quality of work performed by employees.

It is noteworthy that the Government has changed its initial approach towards the professional development system of civil servants. In particular, instead of the creation of a centralized system, a decentralized system is being introduced, which enables different private and civil institutions to deliver accredited professional development programs. According to the law, the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement operating under the Ministry of Education and Sciences, will grant accreditation to the civil servants' professional development programs. However, the current reporting period still lacks an accreditation process.

Despite the enactment of a new legal framework, the vast number of civil servants consider that such challenges as the incompetence and unfair selection of staff still require considerable attention. Only four out of ten respondents believe that the civil service recruits competent staff (41%); and a similar number of civil servants think that recruitment in the civil service is fair (40%).

The development of a policy document on the design, delivery, quality assurance and price estimation of public services is one of the significant achievements in the public service sphere. It should also be emphasized that the approval of this document was planned for 2018, but this approval is outstanding as of October 2019.7 Nevertheless, LEPL - Public Service Development Agency has attempted to facilitate the promotion and introduction of the principles outlined in the document both in its system and in other institutions. However, the Agency could not coordinate functions in the area of public service development across civil service. Most stakeholders believe that this shortfall is conditioned by the lack of sufficient political support and on the fact that Ministries do not acknowledge the Agency as the coordinating body due to its hierarchical position.

In terms of the quality of public services, compared to 2016-2017, no significant changes have been observed. Citizens' satisfaction with public services has remained virtually unchanged since 2016. This is quite logical against the backdrop of objectives outlined by Public Administration Reform, since the new policy and methodology for the development and delivery of public services was elaborated in 2017-2018. Though this document aimed to promote the equal development of public services, it has not yet been put into practice.

Another trend observed in different components of Public Administration Reform shows that there are some tasks that have been discussed for several years that have not produced tangible results. In some cases, no final conceptual decision has been made, and government plans in this regard are still unclear.

---

7 The documents were approved by the Government of Georgia in December 2019
The fact that the process is still in progress confirms that key directions of the reform still enjoy government support, however a considerable delay in the process leaves the impression of simulation. Notably, the adoption of new legislation on Legal Entities under Public Law and the introduction of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) Both of these issues have been discussed for years, but despite some pilot projects, final decisions were still pending at the time of writing this report.
3. Study Methodology

3.1. Main Goals and Objectives

The main goal of the mid-term study is to collect, analyse and provide information on the current status, achievements and challenges in three areas of Public Administration Reform - policy development and cooperation, civil service, and human resource management and service delivery.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the following goals of the study were defined:

- Mapping stakeholders, procedures and resources involved in the Public Administration Reform implementation process;
- Identifying civil servants’ attitudes toward the civil service and their awareness of Public Administration Reform; and
- Assessing public opinion on Georgian civil and public services.

In order to achieve the abovementioned results, an approach was developed that implies the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from different sources. In addition, the findings of the mid-term study, in certain components, enables their comparison with baseline study findings.

3.2. Secondary Data Analysis

The main goal of secondary data analysis was to collect additional information on policy development and cooperation, civil service and human resource management and service delivery under the Public Administration Reform process. These documents included legal acts, the public administration roadmap, its action plans, implementation reports, as well as reports and evaluations developed by local and international organizations.

The list of documents reviewed and analysed within the framework of the background research is set forth in Annex #1.

3.3. Overview of Qualitative Study Design

The main goal of the qualitative study was to gain in-depth knowledge of PAR issues. While secondary data analysis focused on aggregating existing information, the qualitative study with its different techniques helped the research team build new knowledge by collecting information from different target segments.

Within the framework of the qualitative study activities, different study techniques were applied. Namely, the study utilized in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions and stakeholder consultation techniques with the representatives of the following segments:
Table 1. Overview of Qualitative Study Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Key informants</th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>12 interviews</td>
<td>8 interviews</td>
<td>10 interviews</td>
<td>8 mini focus groups</td>
<td>4 focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus-group discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder consultations</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More specifically, the target groups for the qualitative study component were:

- top ranking civil servants employed in various public institutions;
- employees of different public institutions in Tbilisi and other administrative regions;
- representatives of local and international NGOs;
- persons not directly involved in activities related to the implementation of Public Administration Reform, but well informed about the research topic;
- civil servants working at the Administration of the President and the Administration of the Prime Minister;
- civil servants working at the Administration of the State Minister and other Ministries;
- employees of LEPLs;
- Regional and Municipal Government employees; and
- populations with some experience using different services.

Within the framework of the qualitative study, purposive and “snowball sampling” strategies were used to select respondents. Different study instruments were developed for each target group to be covered within the qualitative study. All meetings and interviews were audio or video recorded with the consent of the respondents. For cases in which respondents refused to be recorded, detailed meeting minutes were prepared. Based on the audio and video recordings, detailed transcripts were made and they served as a primary source for analysis along with the meeting minutes.

3.4. Quantitative Study Design

The main goal of the quantitative study was to gain statistically valid and reliable data on the following issues:

- Attitudes of civil servants toward civil service and their awareness of Public Administration Reform;
- Public opinion on public and civil services.

Different research techniques were used to study two target groups. The public opinion survey utilised the face-to-face interview technique with the computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) procedure, while the civil servant study utilised the self-administered interview technique. The quantitative research techniques used with each target segment, as well as the selection of survey samples are set forth in the table below:
Table 2. Overview of Quantitative Study Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-administered interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the scope of the study of civil servants’ attitudes and awareness, a total of 571 employees throughout Georgia were interviewed. The study utilized the self-administrated online interview technique using structured questionnaires.

In order to study the attitudes and awareness of civil servants, respondents were selected in three strata:

(1) Civil Servants working at the Administration of the President and the Administration of the Prime Minister;

(2) employees of Ministries (relevant LEPLs) and civil servants working at the Administration of the State Minister; and

(3) Civil servants working in the regional and municipal government.

The study instrument was developed in close cooperation with the UNDP and PAR Council Secretariat. The duration of the interview was 25-30 minutes. The electronic version of the self-administered questionnaire was sent to the employees of the agencies selected by the PAR Council Secretariat in advance. After the questionnaire was sent for the first time, the link to the questionnaire was re-sent as a reminder three more times. In the end, the number of fully completed questionnaires reached 571.

It should be noted that the confidentiality of the respondents participating in the survey is ensured and the data is accessible only on the ACT database by field and quality assurance managers.

In the framework of the Public Opinion Survey, 2400 people were interviewed nationwide. The target population included all permanent residents of Georgia aged 18 and above. As part of this study, Georgian citizens living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were not included in the target population.

A survey sample (2400 respondents) ensures a confidence level of 95% with a +/-2% margin of error. The Public Opinion Survey utilized the face-to-face interview technique with Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) technology.

As part of the sampling design, the 2014 Census results were used as the Primary Selection Unit (PSU). Settlements were selected using the PPS (probability proportional to size) method. The size of the settlement was determined by the number of households living in it.

The Secondary Selection Unit (SSU) is a household that was randomly selected. For each cluster, sampling began at a randomly selected starting point. Interviewers selected households in line with

---

8 Within the frame of the study, civil servants are those employed in the public sector, not just those who are considered to be “civil servants” by the law. However, the study instruments were designed in a way to avoid asking irrelevant questions to LEPL representatives
pre-prepared instructions that specified the route, the size of the step and the household selection procedure.

The final sampling unit (FSU) included household members at least 18 years of age. The “last birthday” principle was used as a respondent selection tool.

In order to generalize the survey data, the collected data were weighted based on the stratification criteria.

Both components of the study (qualitative and quantitative) were analyzed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Data Comparison

One of the goals of the mid-term study is to identify changes in target groups in relation to the main research issues compared to the baseline study period (2016).

The sampling strategy used within the frame of the quantitative component of the population survey enables a comparison of baseline and mid-term studies. As for the survey of civil servants, the difference⁹ between survey techniques used for baseline and mid-term evaluation fails to enable a direct comparison of data, however it shows some trends regarding the study topic.

3.5. Gender Analysis

This component of the study analyzed the differences between gender roles, the participation of men and women in the decision-making process, the formal and informal division of resources, access to services, and the general representation of women in the civil service.

---

⁹ A self-administered questionnaire was used with target groups of civil servants pre-organized by public institutions; however, in the interim survey, the online survey technique for civil servants was utilized.
4. Stakeholder Analysis

The following key stakeholders played a central role in the implementation of Public Administration Reform (PAR):

**Table 3. Key Stakeholders**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Government of Georgia (GoG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PAR Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Line Ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Civil Service Bureau (CSB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public Service Development Agency (PSDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Data Exchange Agency (DEA);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Local NGOs/Academia/ Consulting Companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>International Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the launch of Public Administration Reform (PAR), some progress has been observed in the various components of three areas of the present study\(^\text{10}\). This progress is mainly related to the creation of a new legal framework for the Public Administration Reform and the development of a methodological framework for policy planning and public service delivery. At present, it is more important to ensure the practical implementation of changes and their further sustainability, for which a legal and methodological framework has been developed.

Despite the positive changes, the last two years have witnessed a certain slowdown in reform implementation. Of particular concern is the delay of a range of activities outlined in the Reform Action Plan. Some of the stakeholders participating in the survey also place emphasis on this trend, indicating postponed decisions and the delayed implementation of a number of components.

Some respondents surveyed during the preparation of the report observed that government leaves the impression that PAR is no longer a priority, which as they underline, may be caused by the political atmosphere that has existed in the country since 2018.

Most of the stakeholders think that after the initial stage of reform, the stakeholders’ practical engagement and perception of their role in the process has changed. In addition, a specific trend that was observed during the focus group discussions with civil servants also requires special attention. Most respondents revealed a positive attitude towards reform, however, they maintained that the reality was quite different from the plans and concepts, and not everything was the way as the law outlined. Therefore, some stakeholders believe that their management and generally, public institutions should ensure proper practical implementation of the changes.

**The Government of Georgia plays a leading role in the implementation of** PAR. It has sufficient authority to influence the pace and quality of the process. Considering the leading role of the Government of Georgia, it should primarily be engaged in strategic decision-making, and at the same

---
\(^{10}\) Policy Planning and coordination; 2. Civil service reform; three. Public service delivery
time encourage Ministries to fulfill the tasks envisaged by the PAR action plan in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Despite the progress that has been achieved, it seems that the implementation of a wide range of objectives are clearly behind schedule. Various reports prepared to date, as well as the interviews carried out within the scope of this report highlight this fact. This may indicate that Public Administration Reform is no longer the highest priority for the Government of Georgia.

During the interviews conducted with stakeholders about the PAR council and secretariat, respondents underlined that compared to the baseline study period, engagement seemed to be passive. If the Council previously convened systematically and critically discussed the components of reform, today’s periodic meetings have a more formal character. Council members present their accomplishments at their discretion, but critical discussions are rare. Some respondents expressed similar views regarding the PAR Secretariat; namely, the Administration of Government looks as if it has achieved key reform objectives, and consequently, its engagement has declined. The Reform Council and thematic working groups, however, do not properly coordinate in order to have a real and sufficient impact on the integrity of reform or on its systematic and timely implementation. Considering the Government’s lack of attention/interest, Reform Council and thematic working groups cannot cope with the challenges posed by the fact. It is noteworthy that, according to the respondents, this situation to some extent creates the need for bilateral communication between donors and individual agencies.

The Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government of Georgia has been able to maintain its position and perform a leading role in the improvement of policy planning and coordination. It has also contributed to the development of a policy planning framework and retraining employees, which in light of the lack of tradition in policy development through a formal process is particularly valuable. However, despite the development of methodological guidelines, there are still some delays in their formal approval. One positive fact to be mentioned is that according to the comparative analysis, over the last several years the structure of policy documents has been refined. Some respondents, however, believe that only an improvement in the textual quality of policy documents is not sufficient, and that practical implementation is more important. Some respondents reckon that unlike the baseline study period, against the background of the slowdown of PAR implementation, there is an impression that the policy-planning department considers its role largely accomplished and mainly focuses on consultations with the Ministries. Thus, the department is less proactive in providing assistance. It is worth mentioning that this may be partly due to the fact that the department does not have sufficient human resources in order to assist the relevant divisions of the Ministry.

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) maintains its leading role in the Civil Service Reform component and facilitates the development of this direction. This role of the Bureau is truly valuable, especially when leading politicians appear to be reluctant in their support of reform. However, the Bureau cannot address all of the challenges posed.

Although separate ministries have quite well-developed administrative/analytical departments and their own training centers, the Bureau still plays a decisive role in the introduction of changes. Its support includes consultations on legislative changes, initiation of trainings, preparation of information materials, and coordination of human resource management units. It is worth noting that nowadays the Bureau is able to perform this role with the support of international partners and donors, and not solely
through its own human or budgetary resources. If support from donor organizations declines, the Bureau might find it hard to maintain such a central role.

The role of the Bureau has also been strengthened in the field of anti-corruption. In addition to acting as a coordinating body for civil service reform, it also exercises important executive functions. The Bureau has enhanced its work towards monitoring asset-declarations of high-ranking officials, and therefore started penalizing officials and publicly publishing monitoring results.

Although the Bureau is mostly a coordinating and supporting institution rather than an executive body, the interviews held in the frame of the study show that for some of the PAR-related drawbacks for which the Ministries are held responsible, part of stakeholders consider the Bureau to be a “responsible” institution. In other words, some stakeholders expect the Bureau to solve tasks for which the Bureau has no mandate or capacity. Moreover, some stakeholders believe that in the event of proper political support, the Bureau can further enhance its coordinating functions under the existing mandate.

The Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) is responsible for the coordination of Public Service Delivery Reform, which, considering its place in the government structure, seems to be an extremely ambitious task.

Within the frame of PAR, the Public Service Development Agency coordinated the development of the “Public Service Design and Delivery Document”. However, despite the fact that the document was developed in 2018, it has not been approved as of October 2019. The Public Service Development Agency may face various challenges in terms of the effective fulfilment of its leading role in this component, as apart from the coordination of the development of public services, it also has other key functions (unified population registry, civil registry, provision of identification services, etc.).

Considering this, despite the commitment of middle management, the allocation of time and resources to assist other institutions can be too difficult. In addition, as the respondents indicate, the PSDA’s role as the reform-coordinating agency might be somewhat problematic as it acts under the management of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia. In addition to that, Georgia is to hold Parliamentary elections in 2020, and the Agency has an important role in the formation voter lists, therefore, it is not anticipated that the coordination of service delivery will be at the top of the Agency’s management priorities for the coming year.

Similar challenges are observed in the Data Exchange Agency (DEA), which is responsible for the coordination of e-governance and e-services. Although the Agency works on the elaboration of common standards as well as the development of and technical assistance for the public service portal (webpage), considering its current mandate and the level of political support, its impact on the reform process is very limited.

The Ministries play a leading role in the implementation of PAR, which is logical based on their form-legal status and functions. However, considering the current context, separate ministries may play a particularly critical role against the backdrop of the current position of the Government. Considering the fact that the key challenge of reform is not the elaboration of legislation or methodological documents, but their practical implementation, the ministries have the full capacity to successfully implement new rules and methodologies developed as a result of the coordination of the

---

Administration of Government (or other agencies). In other words, today the ministries are less dependent on others and can succeed in various aspects of reform, as most of them enjoy significant support from international partners. However, this potential is not often utilized.

The Parliament of Georgia plays a rather passive role in the PAR implementation process. It performs a formal duty by adopting legal acts initiated by the government in the frame of Public Administration Reform. Otherwise, its role in the implementation process is minimal. After the shift to the Parliamentary Republic model and the adoption of the new Parliamentary Rules of Procedure, Parliament certainly has formal authority and the real capacity to act in this direction; however, it seems reluctant to use the opportunity. Under the new Rules of Procedure, the Parliament of Georgia and its committees have been actively engaged in a number of activities such as judicial reform, education reform, penitentiary reform, etc. However, they rarely overview and hold discussions on topics such as Public Administration Reform and public service reform, policy planning and coordination. In this respect, Civil Service Reform is the only exception. According to the information received from stakeholders, during the preparation/discussion of draft laws on Civil Service and the draft Rule for Remuneration in public Institutions, the Parliament was relatively active.

Considering the environment in which Public Administration Reform is being implemented, the role of international partners is particularly important. They provide funding for the reform and assist public institutions in various ways, such as the provision of international and local external expertise, organization of trainings, and others. In fact, over the last 2-3 years, most of the trainings conducted in Georgia were organized with the support of international partners and donor organizations. The implementation of this component without their support is hard to imagine. In addition, if we take into consideration the government's slow pace towards Public Administration Reform, international partners sometimes act as a push by demanding partners for public institutions, thereby facilitating the implementation of the reform agenda.

It is noteworthy that some of them are very flexible in meeting their newly identified needs and support the implementation of partner initiatives even if at the initial stage of project design, the implementation or support for such initiatives was not envisaged. Such an approach contributes to the integrity of the reform and represents an important resource for the institutions involved in the reform process.

The role of Georgian Non-Governmental Organizations and representatives of Academia is quite limited. Components such as civil service reform, accountability, and local self-government are the only exceptions, since several developed NGOs operate in these areas. Although there are certain formal and informal formats for NGOs to participate in the PAR process, the key challenge is a lack of organizations with the proper profile and expertise in the field. This mainly concerns such areas as public service delivery and policy planning. Until recently, there were no organizations that could carry out independent monitoring and play an effective role in terms of increasing government accountability in such areas of reform as policy planning and coordination and/or public service delivery.
Over the last 2-3 years, positive changes have been observed in this respect. Namely, some NGOs emerged that develop competences, specialize in different areas of Public Administration Reform, and start to play a role both in the areas of service delivery and government accountability.\textsuperscript{12}

5. Mid-term Study Findings

5.1 Coordination and Communication of Public Administration Reform

A formal framework for the coordination of Public Administration Reform (PAR) was developed in 2015-2016. In 2015, the Administration of the Government of Georgia was tasked to exercise the overall administration and coordination of reform. A list of public institutions responsible for each area of the reform was also specified.

Table 4. Responsible Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform Component</th>
<th>Leading Responsible Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Planning</td>
<td>Government Administration of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service Reform</td>
<td>Civil Service Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice of Georgia\textsuperscript{13}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Finance Management</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Self-government</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2006, by the Order of the Prime Minister of Georgia,\textsuperscript{14} the \textbf{Inter-Agency Coordination Council} for Public Administration Reform was set up to coordinate and monitor the implementation of PAR. The Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the AoG serves as the PAR Council Secretariat, ensuring analytical and organizational support for Council activities. At the initiative of the Council, \textbf{six thematic working groups} were set up in line with the reform areas.

Stakeholders’ opinions regarding the role of the PAR Coordination Council over the last two years were not uniform. On one hand, there is a belief that the Coordination Council and working group meetings are held regularly and operate more or less effectively. As an argument for this position, respondents mentioned the coordination council meeting held in October 2018 devoted to the discussion of the Public Administration Reform Roadmap and its action plan. The ministries and agencies participated in the joint working process, and the results were included in the updated Public Administration Reform Action Plan 2019-2020.

On the other hand, despite such examples, most respondents stress the opinion that despite the efforts of the Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the AoG, working groups and Council meetings

\textsuperscript{12} During the past 2-3 years, the UNDP project “Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia” has funded several initiatives aimed at strengthening NGOs and academia and enhancing their involvement in Public Administration Reform. The EU is also funding several initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society organizations engaged in the areas of public administration reform

\textsuperscript{13} The Public Service Development Agency and Data Exchange Agency were tasked to take responsibility for the service delivery component

\textsuperscript{14} Order of the Prime Minister of Georgia, dated May 3, on approval of the “Statute and Composition of the Public Administration Reform Council” \url{http://gov.ge/files/436_55439_676197_135.pdf}
have a formal character. They superficially and unilaterally discuss issues, and the quality of coordination is insufficient. These respondents believe that even if the Council and/or separate working groups met systematically, this activity would be insufficient for the coordination of such a large-scale reform.

In addition, some stakeholders believe that shortcomings in reform coordination are related to the weakening interest on the part of the government and ministries about Public Administration Reform.

Within the frame of the current Mid-term Study, a number of shortcomings in the coordination of Public Administration Reform have been identified based on the information collected through interviews with key stakeholders and the OECD/SIGMA baseline study, as well as on the characteristics of the implementation of separate initiatives of the reform and the analysis of their timeframe.

- Although higher-level supervision over the process represents one of the preconditions for the progressive implementation of Public Administration Reform, today it does not receive sufficient attention. There has been a marked decline from the country’s leadership in the readiness and interest toward the implementation of reform. It appears that PAR is no longer a priority for the Government.

- The lack/weakness of a unified approach and coordination of the Government negatively impacts reform. Despite the commitment revealed at the initial stage of reform, which was demonstrated in the initial Strategic Documents and Action Plan, today there is a lack of a unified state/government approach towards PAR. Some of the activities were implemented separately by specific institutions within their own authorities, however, the lack of strategic management caused the fragmentation of Public Administration Reform.

- Some stakeholders think that the role of the Public Administration Reform Council, when compared to the initial stage of the reform, has relatively diminished. Moreover, the involvement of civil society in the process is generally limited. This was strictly emphasized by the representatives of civil society during the meetings organized for the purpose of this study. The majority of stakeholders believe that the reform council and working group meetings are not efficient and do not produce any tangible results. They are mostly formal, where one party shares information with others about implemented and/or planned activities.

- To carry out key coordination functions, the Government/Council has increased the number of employees in the Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government (which also supports the Secretariat of Public Administration Reform Council and Reform Experts Working Groups). However, for the effective management and coordination of PAR, the number of professional civil servants who will have to address problems and deal with the growing workload may still be insufficient.

- The issue of structural and functional ambiguities is also significant. For instance, the Public Service Development Agency and Data Exchange Agency, both responsible for coordinating the public service delivery component, function under the management of the Ministry of Justice. Currently, when both agencies are engaged in the development and coordination of the state policy, the fact that they function under the management of the same ministry, as well

as their vague mandate and authority with respect to other institutions questions their role as coordinators.

- Coordination with donors within the frame of PAR is a separate issue that appears to be more efficient than coordination in any other direction. From the side of the government, two agencies are engaged in coordinating activities with donor organizations: 1. the PAR council, providing high-level coordination through quarterly meetings, and 2. The Donor Coordination Unit of the AoG, ensuring the coordination on more specific, technical issues. However, effective coordination with donors is still a challenge. The PAR council meetings are very formal and their main goal is to share information. Working groups that have been set up to work on thematic issues appear to be ineffective in this respect. The Donor Coordination Unit plays a key role in organizing in-depth thematic meetings, but it is not always efficient. In order to address this situation, donor organizations themselves organize informal regular (quarterly) meetings and additional meetings as needed if any important issues arise.

- It appears that international partners and donor organizations play a substantially positive and vital role in similar situations. They provide a significant amount of support to the Public Administration Reform process and assist public institutions in the pursuit of strategic goals. They also guide this process through a holistic approach. Public Administration Reform is supported by the European Union\(^\text{16}\), USAID\(^\text{17}\), the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the UNDP in Georgia.

Based on the above information, there is a clear need to strengthen the role of the Reform Council and to give high priority to Public Administration Reform for the Government agenda. Unless Public Administration Reform (PAR) becomes more important for political leadership than it is today (which, considering Georgia’s political calendar, is hardly imaginable for the coming year), it is unlikely that even the coordination function of the Reform Council will become more efficient or make any practical breakthrough in the implementation of reform.

5.2. Awareness and Support of Public Administration Reform

According to the outcomes of the qualitative survey carried out with civil servants, their awareness and support for reform is quite high.

Among surveyed civil servants, 86% point out that they have information about ongoing Public Administration Reform. The majority of respondents’ support reform irrespective of whether they are aware of it (79%) or not. Of the latter, the respondents strongly support reform (50%); 17% remain neutral, and the share of those respondents who do not support reform is the lowest (4%).

Considering the absence of a unified communication strategy on Public Administration Reform as well as Civil Service Reform during the reporting period, this data is impressive.

---

\(^{16}\) EU assistance includes budget and technical support

\(^{17}\) USAID focuses on the Good Governance Initiative (GGI). The GGI supports improved administrative and financial management of public institutions at all levels; increases the openness of government; and strengthens policy development, lawmaking processes, and institutional oversight of government

*Mid-term Study Report on Current Status of Public Administration Reform, ACT, 2019*
Chart 1. Civil Servants’ Awareness and Support of Public Administration Reform (PAR) (Civil Servant Survey)

Although the methodology for the civil servant survey does not allow for a direct comparison of 2016 and 2019 results, the analysis of current survey data shows that the level of civil servants’ awareness of Public Administration Reform has increased (2016 - 75%; 2019 - 86%). However, among informed civil servants, the rate of support for reform has declined. If in 2016, 92% of civil servants aware of the reform supported its implementation, in 2019 this figure does not exceed 79%. The qualitative study results explain this process: a rise in the level of awareness was caused by the active implementation phase of the reform, but the expectation of civil servants towards the reform was higher than the obtained results. These results are logically tied to the opinions expressed by the civil servants during discussions in which they said that amendments envisaged by the new law are acceptable, although not properly implemented in practice\textsuperscript{18}. It should also be noted that although general awareness of civil servants about PAR is quite high (86%), qualitative survey results confirm that in fact, civil servants only have general information about the reform. They find it difficult to assess its specific aspects.

As for the sources through which information about reform are received, traditional and online media and direct communication from the management are almost equally important sources. Employees are also considered as an important source for the dissemination of information.

\textsuperscript{18}Information on a similar assessment of civil servants is provided in the next chapter – Civil Service Reform
In order to collect information about the awareness of the main goals of Public Administration Reform, civil servants were given a list of the key goals of reform with eight possible answers. Two incorrect answers were deliberately included in the list. The survey showed that almost half of the surveyed civil servants identified two major goals of reform: establishing a merit-based civil service (48%) and improving the delivery of public services through the creation of a citizen-centered system (48%). Among respondents, 43% believe that increasing citizens’ trust in public institutions and government is the goal of reform, and 42% think that the main goal of the reform is to improve government performance through policy development and coordination. It is noteworthy that some civil servants selected incorrect answers, which indicates their lack of awareness: the introduction of a new public management system (19%) and a reduction in the number of civil servants (5%).
During the focus group discussions, civil servants find it hard to talk about the specific goals of reform, and only focus on the issues related to civil service reform they personally experienced. Thus, it appears that respondents have only superficial awareness about Public Administration Reform and its areas, except for the law on Civil Service and its respective changes. This is quite logical against the background of inconsistent and fragmented communication with civil servants and the public at large on PAR issues, which due to the absence of appropriate communication strategies and plans is not grounded in a uniform vision.

In general, as opposed to the awareness of Public Administration Reform, civil servants have more information about civil service reform. This is quite logical, as the overwhelming majority of them have experienced the reform themselves. The Civil Service Bureau is quite active in this regard as it enjoys significant support from partner/donor organizations and organizes trainings, prepares relevant materials to raise awareness and conducts workshops of various formats. The Bureau also oversees the functioning of the Human Resources Forum, which is an additional and highly effective information exchange platform.
Chart 4. Evaluation of the Impact of the New Law on Civil Service (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have heard about the Law on Civil Service</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused unequivocally positive changes</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused more or less positive changes</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No impact</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused negative changes</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused unequivocally negative changes</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/hard to answer</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vast majority of respondents (96%) appear to be aware of key civil service reform issues such as the new Law on Civil Service, and most of them believe that the changes brought about by the law are definitely (or more or less) positive (76%). Only 9% of the respondents think that the changes have not had any impact, while 6% expressed a negative attitude towards the changes.

In the context of PAR, civil servants’ awareness levels about the Open Government Initiative, which is the main goal of one of the areas of the reform (accountability component), proves to be quite interesting. The 2018-2019 Open Government Partnership Initiative Action Plan was familiar to 41% of respondents. As for participation in the development of the aforementioned action plan, 14% of the respondents confirm their participation in this process.
Chart 5. Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals and Open Government in Georgia 2018-2019 Action Plan and Participation in the Development of the Plan (Civil Servant Survey)

When compared with civil servant awareness, the level of public awareness about the Open Government Partnership is far lower (see Table 5). Only 22% of the population agree with the statement - I have information about the existence of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The majority do not have any information - half of the respondents directly admit that they lack information (50%), while 28% find it difficult to say whether or not they have relevant information.

Table 5. Assessment of Statements Related to State Politics and Other Activities of Citizens (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Do not know/unable to respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the existence of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the awareness of Public Administration Reform among the general population, 38% have heard about PAR. According to these respondents, television is the main source of information (84%). It should be noted that during group discussions, respondents found it difficult to name any specific reform carried out within public institutions. Consequently, based on the qualitative component of the study, public awareness about the ongoing reform in public institutions is clearly low.

Based on the fact that in 2016, the public awareness level of reform was only 19%, it is evident that the population has become more aware of Public Administration Reform in recent years. In addition, based
on the 2019 qualitative study results, the index of internet and other channels as sources of information has significantly increased.

Chart 6. Awareness of Public Administration Reform (PAR) among the Population (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have heard about the reform</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and acquaintances</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print media</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 2400
N = 947

5.3. Policy Development and Coordination

5.3.1. Unified System of Policy Planning, Legal Grounds and Methodological Framework

In 2017-2018, in the area of policy development and coordination, the improvement of the policy-making process (including the legal and methodological framework)\(^\text{19}\) was one of the highest priorities for the Administration of the Government of Georgia. In this respect, the Administration of the Government, namely, the **Policy Planning and Coordination Department** implemented a whole set of activities over the last two years with the support of partner/donor organizations.

In spite of the slow pace of Public Administration Reform, accompanied by the failure to meet the deadlines envisaged in separate target areas, some progress has been made in the conceptualization and development of a new methodological framework, namely the Rule for "Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and relevant Guidelines. Although the process of the formalization of the new methodological framework was not complete or fully implemented by summer 2019, the strides made in this regard provide a solid foundation for the achievement of practical results in 2019-2020. This primarily involves the formalization of an improved methodological framework for policy-making and its practical implementation.

Before the issue of the improvement and refinement of the methodological framework for policy development (implemented over the last two years) was listed on the agenda in 2017, the elaboration

---

\(^{19}\) UNDP Georgia 2018 Report on Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia (UNDP Georgia) pp. 9-10.
of policy planning documents utilizing unified methodological approaches had already started\(^2\). This process implies the elaboration of policy documents/strategies based on the “Policy Planning Guidelines” approved by the Government of Georgia (Resolution No. 629) in 2016\(^2\). Although Policy Planning and Coordination Department officials believe that this document could not fully meet the requirements and needs identified by the AoG, its enforcement was still a positive step, as this document created the precedent of a unified methodological approach for strategic planning.

The document was approved in late 2016\(^2\) and the relevant institutions began the application of the document in 2017. According to the Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government, which provides expertise for the strategies and action plans to be approved by the Government of Georgia, the launch of this document positively affected the quality of policy documents already in 2017-2018. When compared to the baseline study report period, significant improvements had been made to the technical and methodological components of the policy documents. For example, according to the baseline data (2015), only five of the 39 policy documents examined had relevant outcome indicators. In 2018, eight out of the 11 policy documents approved by the Government had task/activity outcome indicators, showing that the share of policy documents that focus on the indicators increased\(^2\).

In addition, according to data from the Administration of the Government, the share of high-quality policy documents that are successfully reviewed and required no significant amendments is gradually increasing. In 2017, 13 policy documents were submitted to the government for approval, and as a result of the AoG review, eight of those documents received instructions to ensure compliance with methodological standards. The government approved all of the documents after the appropriate changes were made. In 2018, the ministries submitted 18 documents (13 action plans and 5 strategy documents) for approval. The AoG assessed compliance with quality standards and recommended changes and alterations for nine of those documents\(^2\). Therefore, the percentage of documents that required significant correction decreased compared to the previous year.

Obviously, the above data does not allow for a qualitative assessment of policy document indicators, and it is difficult to speak about radical improvement in the document development process. The fact that policy documents contain key instruments of a results-oriented approach and that the share of policy documents requiring serious alterations decreased, however, indicate that progress has been made in the policy planning system. In addition, some key stakeholders consider that there are notable improvements in the text, structure and wording of policy documents, but not in the policy-making process or the policies as a whole. Some stakeholders think that sometimes policy documents are isolated from real life, they represent documents “for external use”, and they were not developed based on the right cycle of policy planning, or on real outputs of policy analysis. Thus, management does not utilize them as guiding, working documents.


\(^{22}\) http://gov.ge/files/439_59408_877483_629.pdf


\(^{24}\) Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat / 2019 / Consolidated Report on the Implementation of the Public Administration Reform pp. 9-14
In spite of the fact that in 2016, the development of the “policy planning document”\(^{25}\), which proved to be the precedent of a unified methodological approach to strategic planning, positively impacted the quality and development of policy documents, the Administration of the Government considered that it did not fully comply with the requirements, and therefore further improvement and development was needed. More specifically, the need for detailed guidance or specific instructions necessary for each stage of public policymaking was highlighted. It was also acknowledged that the hierarchical system of the document required improvement in order to ensure links between policy documents at different levels. In addition, it was underlined that the methodology needed to provide information not only about what should be included in the policy paper, but also about how it should be provided.

In light of the above challenges, a number of activities were planned and implemented from the second half of 2017, which targeted the improvement of the legal and methodological framework for policy planning.\(^{26}\)

As part of the study carried out with the support of donor organizations, in parallel with other activities, the existing conditions of policy planning and coordination in the Georgian public sector was studied. The study identified four major challenges\(^{27}\): 1) ministries lack the sufficient capacity to manage the entire policy cycle; 2) the link between policy planning and budgeting is weak; 3) there is a weak link between different policy documents; and 4) ministries lack policy planning and coordination experience and their capacities are uneven.

In 2018 (also in the first half of 2019), with the coordination of the Policy Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government and with the support of partner/donor organizations, intensive steps were taken to address the above challenges, including the development of policy planning and guiding documents. As of Fall 2019, the following results have been achieved\(^{28}\):

- work on the policy planning, monitoring and evaluation rule is complete and the government has started formalization procedures;
- Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines have been developed, which are an annex to the above rule and create a common conceptual framework for policy planning, policy document preparation, monitoring and evaluation. The guidelines have their own annexes on issues such as budgeting, the rule for conducting public consultations etc.
- The unified e-government concept project for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation has been prepared.


\(^{26}\) UNDP Georgia 2018 Report on Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia (UNDP Georgia) pp. 9-10

\(^{27}\) UNDP Georgia 2018 Report on Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia (UNDP Georgia) pp. 9-10

\(^{28}\) Information on the progress is obtained through interviews with relevant authorities of the administration as well as with other stakeholders. The listed documents have not been published and were not available to the researchers. Part of the information is provided in the following documents: (1) Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat / 2020; (2) UNDP Georgia 2018 Report on Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia
• The Glossary of Terms containing the definitions of 75 terms that will be integrated in the unified e-government system for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation has been developed.

The above documents provide methodological guidance and detailed procedures for the policy development process and complement the shortcomings of the documents approved in 2016.29

Citizen engagement and the development of inclusive policies are notable issues for the discussion of the development of a policy-making system. In order to formalize the issue of citizen engagement, there are a number of positive initiatives aimed to include the process of engagement in the relevant regulatory/methodological framework:

• according to the AoG, the most recent Policy Planning Guidelines will devote a separate section (or annex) to citizens’ engagement,. The development of the annex was identified within the scope of the study as a work in progress during summer-fall of 2019, however the date of its completion is unknown;

• the Public Service Delivery Policy Document (draft) envisages the use of tools and techniques in the process of public service development that involve a great deal of citizen engagement and the co-creation of services; and

• the development of a unified government e-system for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation and its open interface to the public is another positive step in this regard. According to the AoG, the electronic system will have an open interface to the public; however, a number of issues remain to be determined (at least remain unknown to the authors of the study), such as: how the level of access to the system is determined for different users; how the system ensures the transparency of access; and how the system will promote participation in governance and enhance social accountability.

Despite separate progressive initiatives, majority of stakeholders agree that in terms of practical implementation, no significant progress has been achieved so far.

There are separate new and/or renewed initiatives envisaging the engagement of citizens in different forms, however the scale of their application and real, practical impact is still very low. For example, an official governmental platform for online petitions – ichtange.gov.ge was set up to encourage public involvement in addressing issues that fall within the competence of the government. Moreover, according to key stakeholders, with the support of different donor organizations, similar portals and mechanisms have been developed (or are being developed) in separate municipalities. These initiatives can be considered to be good precedents at the early stage of their development, but not as the examples of well-established, institutionalized, participatory policymaking.

29 These include resolutions of the Government of Georgia that were deemed to be inadequate because of their general nature.
In this regard, as an example of good practice, the representative of the Government of Georgia sometimes mentions “the village support program”, renewed by the Ministry of Regional Development, which engages citizens in the identification and prioritization of infrastructure and other projects to be implemented in different administrative regions of Georgia. This program can be a good example, as citizens are engaged in prioritizing the projects worth millions of GEL. However, based on interviews with stakeholders as well as photo and video footage of village meetings, there is an impression that the engagement process is chaotic, faulty and often formal. Namely, the methods for citizen selection, provision of information and communication are quite vague. In addition, the degree of effectiveness of such communication is unknown. In particular, there are cases in which 20 to 40 people attend the discussion on a certain issue, however, majority of them are civil servants or work in another state-funded institution. It turns out that a minimum of 80% of participants are either local self-government officials, schoolteachers, nursery schoolteachers, local medical staff members or other professionals. The involvement of employees of the public sector in this type of activity questions the methods of communicating with public as well as public trust in similar participatory processes.

Generally, the majority of stakeholders believe that, with the exception of some cases, there is a superficial, formal attitude from the part of public authorities regarding such issues, and they do not reveal sufficient interest and readiness to ensure a real, effective participatory process.

It should also be noted that the development and approval of the Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Rule and Guidelines were seriously delayed. The Government was expected to approve the new rule and guidelines in January 2019, but as of October, it had not been approved.

Although key policy planning documents (rules and guidelines) have not officially been approved and the initial deadlines have been breached, their development is still a significant step, as it provides a solid foundation and hope for the refinement of a policy planning practice by 2020.

5.3.2. Ensuring a Linkage Between Policy Planning and Law-making

According to the Public Administration Reform Action Plan of 2017-2018, in the context of ensuring a linkage between policy planning and law-making, the development and introduction of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) Guidelines was one of the main objectives, and activities were planned around this objective.

In addition, according to the Policy Planning System Reform Strategy - 2015-2017, the government planned to fully introduce the Regulatory Impact Assessment system in 2017, which has not been implemented. Pursuant to the RIA action plan developed by the Ministry of Justice in 2018, relevant

31 According to the Administration of the Government, as of November 2019, the official procedure for their formalization has started
32 Policy planning system reform strategy – 2015-2017: Goal 3) ensure the linkage between policy planning and law-making; activity 3.1) development of the guidelines (manual) for law-making activities (RIA) (deadline – 2016); Activity 3.2) RIA submission (deadline–2017); and activity 3.3) organizing and conducting training for the employees engaged in law-making activities (deadline–2017)
methodology and legislative changes were to be approved by late 2018\(^\text{33}\), however, it has been postponed several times and a final decision has not been made.

According to the key stakeholders, at the initial stage of reform, the Government of Georgia (The Administration of Government, Ministry of Justice and other key actors) expressed enthusiasm about RIA issues in the form of oral promises or underlined in documentation. There was an expectation that RIA would become mandatory for a wide range of legal acts; however, for the third consecutive year, discussion over the mandatory implementation of RIA has not ceased (when it should be mandatory), and no official decision has been made. Stakeholders who are closely involved in the process state that the list of mandatory cases for RIA application has significantly diminished. It is also possible that mandatory cases may not be identified at all, and that the government may decide to carry out a Regulatory Impact Assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Despite the lack of common standards/guidelines and formalization, several key ministries have already started piloting RIA reports\(^\text{34}\), although the scope of RIA pilot projects and the number of draft laws is too small to assess whether or not it has positively impacted the overall quality of analysis and decision-making.

In addition, the Parliament is implementing its own RIA pilot projects in parallel to those led by the Government; however, it is not clear how the methodologies and guidelines developed, and projects conducted in the Parliament differ from those used in the executive branch\(^\text{35}\).

According to OECD/SIGMA, the Baseline Measurement Report 2018 on Policy Development and Coordination\(^\text{36}\), despite ongoing efforts and pilots to introduce RIA, evidence-based policy making has not yet been implemented. Explanatory notes are the main documents used for analysing and assessing the impacts of policies, but they provide only limited information about the rationale for the introduction of new laws and their expected impacts. According to the report, the Government and the Parliament have been piloting RIA for several years, but no concrete plan exists for full implementation. This might hamper the effectiveness of ongoing pilot projects. It should be emphasized that after the publication of the SIGMA report, the situation has not significantly changed in practical terms.

In addition, based on the consolidated report made by the Public Administration Reform Council, RIA related issues have moved to the 2019-2020 agenda - “Currently, under the 2019-2020 Action Plan, the government aims to make the publication of RIA reports mandatory in cases prescribed by relevant legal acts, and to ensure its successful practical implementation”\(^{37}\).

---

\(^{33}\)Action Plan for the Implementation of the Regulatory Impact Assessment was submitted by the Ministry of Justice in April 2018. The status of the action plan is not identified

\(^{34}\)Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat p. 15


5.3.3. Linkage Between Policy Planning and Budgeting

Over the last two-three years, some steps have been taken to improve the link between policy planning and budgeting. In particular, the policy-planning guideline approved by the Government of Georgia in December 2016 stipulates that it is mandatory for all government-approved policy documents to contain financial estimates based on the calculation of costs of the activities specified in action plans\textsuperscript{38}.

All agencies are obrigated to provide financial estimates, including the estimated costs for specific activities in the plan. Apart from costs, the action plan must indicate the source of funding or relevant deficit (if any). If the activity is funded by the state budget, the Ministry should envisage these costs in the relevant budget.

It is also noteworthy that based on the data provided by the Administration of the Government, as of 2014, 80% of short-term planning documents were not related to the budget or to the Basic Data and Directions Document (BDD)\textsuperscript{39}. Considering the fact that the Policy Planning Guideline was approved in late 2016, some efficient practical steps toward this direction were taken in 2017. Therefore, 9 (i.e. 80%) out of 11 action plans approved in 2018 were related either to the budget or BDD.

\textsuperscript{38} Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat/2020, p. 16

\textsuperscript{39} Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat/2020, p. 16
Based on the AoG, under the Policy Planning Guidelines, improvement has been observed in the linkage between budgeting sector policy documents and the Basic Data and Directions Document (BDD)\textsuperscript{40}.

In spite of the progress achieved in this direction, the study conducted by experts invited with the support of donor organizations, identified four key challenges in the area of policy planning and coordination. One of the challenges is a poor link between policy planning and the budgeting process.

It should be noted that in the consolidated report of the Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat\textsuperscript{41}, while focusing on the issue of the linkage between policy planning and the budgeting process, the focus is mainly on the financial side of policy documents – financial estimates, which should be based on the cost estimation of activities outlined in the action plan. Therefore, there is no overall progress in terms of the linkage between policy planning, budgeting, and the public finance management process (which involves much more than just financial estimates of policy documents and the identification of funding sources).

According to the Administration of the Government, the new rule on Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and relevant guidelines will better regulate the issue of the linkage between policy planning and the budgeting process than that which was prescribed by the Policy Planning Guideline approved by the resolution of the Government in 2016. It is notable that within the frame of the current study, the new rule on Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and/or appropriate relevant draft guidelines were not accessible. Therefore, information provided in the mid-term report relies solely on the data collected during interviews with the Administration of the Government and other key stakeholders.

Considering the above, limited progress has been achieved in this area, and the link between policy planning and budgeting is still very poor.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{40} Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat/2020, p. 16}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{41} Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat/2020, p. 16}
5.3.4. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Until the end of 2016, there was no single formal rule which could more or less regulate the issue of policy monitoring and evaluation. In 2016, the Government of Georgia developed a "Framework Document for Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluating Government Performance"\(^42\), which outlines a unified system of planning government activities, key monitoring and evaluation principles, institutional functions, and responsibilities.

Considering the fact that the document was approved in December 2016, relevant public institutions started its application only from 2017. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms prescribed by this framework document and their impact assessment are available in line with the progress made in the 2017 and 2018 policy documents.

In order to improve the monitoring and evaluation system, it is important to incorporate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for policy implementation in the policy document. The Administration of the Government examined the extent to which policy documents incorporate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for implementation. Out of 21 strategies approved by the government in 2013-2014, only 9 strategies (42%) included information on monitoring and reporting. Seven out of the nine strategies approved in 2017-2018, (78%) have relevant monitoring and evaluation mechanisms\(^53\).

In 2018, the Administration of the Government studied the quality of monitoring and evaluation reports of relevant policy documents developed by ministries. They thoroughly reviewed the mid-term evaluation reports of five ministries as well as the Annual Monitoring Report of four Ministries\(^44\). According to the Administration of the Government, the quality of reviewed mid-term reports is not very high, but compared to the previous period, at least their existence can be considered a step forward. It is also worth noting that in 2018, five agencies developed a policy document in line with the standards prescribed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for the first time. Regarding the annual monitoring reports, according to the consolidated report on Public Administration Reform implementation developed by the PAR Council, some indicators have improved.

The abovementioned data shows that there have been advancements over the last 2-3 years in the area of policy monitoring. However, the majority of stakeholders surveyed in the frame of the study think that the progress indicator is very low, and the existing situation related to the policy monitoring framework, its practical implementation and capacities of relevant institutions is far from satisfactory.

Despite the development of policy documents and strategies, there is no systemic approach to the issue of monitoring. There is no real impact assessment system for the evaluation of these strategies and action plans.

In 2018, the Administration of the Government underlined that despite some progress, there were challenges in terms of methodology, in particular:

\(^{42}\)https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3526284?publication=0
• the existing (approved in 2016) guideline document required more specification;
• the introduction of more specific standards and more effective tools for quality assurance was needed; and
• the elaboration of supporting instructions that would improve the process and increase the quality of monitoring and evaluation was necessary.

Considering the above facts, the development of the rule and guidelines for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation that regulate monitoring and evaluation in more detail is a step forward in the area of policy monitoring and evaluation over the last two or three years.

In addition, as underlined in the previous section, in 2018-2019, a unified government electronic system for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation was developed. It is anticipated that the system will provide government with sufficient information that can be used to monitor and evaluate programs and strategies.

Based on the information provided by the Administration of the Government about the functions and characteristics of the system, we can presume that with proper implementation, this tool has the potential to improve and simplify the monitoring and reporting process in the entire public sector.

We believe that despite some progress in the area of the development of a formal methodological framework, the issue of its practical implementation remains the primary challenge in the context of this sub-component of reform – namely, against the weakening pace of reform and how quickly the ministries can ensure full application of the new framework.

5.3.5. Capacity Building in Policy Planning and Coordination

In 2017-2018, certain steps were taken to strengthen the Administration of the Government and ministries, as well as facilitate the capacity building of employees in the area of policy planning. Based on 2018 data, all of the ministries (11 in total) have structural units that have relevant functions and obligations and are responsible for policy planning.

The following structural units are responsible for policy development and coordination in the Administration of the Ministries/State Minister:
### Table 6. Structural Units Responsible for Policy Planning and Coordination (secondary data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Structural Unit/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Sciences, Culture and Sports</td>
<td>Strategic Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia</td>
<td>Policy and Analysis Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Strategic Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Growth and Policy Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ministry of Defense</td>
<td>Defense Policy and Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>Analytical Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Public International Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Department of European Integration and Reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Political Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EU Assistance Coordination and Sectoral Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ministry of Finances</td>
<td>Budget Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality</td>
<td>Department of Policy Analysis, Planning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs</td>
<td>Administrative Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research and Reforms Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Social Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Human Resource Management and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the four main challenges identified as a result of the 2018 study, two are set forth below:

1. Weak capacities of the ministries in strategic planning, policy development and in the entire cycle of policy management;
2. Uneven knowledge and experience about policy planning and coordination mechanisms in different ministries.

To address these challenges, with the support of the Policy Planning and Coordination Department of AoG and partner donor organizations, specific needs were analyzed in the ministries. A nine-module Public Policy Analysis training course was developed based on this analysis.
In 2018, 225 civil servants were selected from 16 central public institutions, and 173 of them successfully completed the training course.

In parallel to trainings, employee retraining and coaching was carried out for different ministries and agencies. In order to elaborate high quality policy documents, according to AoG, the abovementioned training module will be delivered at the training facilities of different ministries to meet their training needs in the future. After the adoption of the guidelines on policy planning, additional training courses and educational programs are planned.

Over the last two years, some progressive steps have been observed in the AoG in terms of strengthening policy planning and employees’ capacity building. In particular, the Government Supervision and Monitoring Department was set up to monitor government programs, implement annual action plans and provide recommendations/decisions related to the reform. Additionally, the number of employees in the Department of Policy Planning and Coordination has almost doubled and instead of eight employees in 2016, there are currently 16 employees working in the department45. In addition to increasing the number of employees, their experience has significantly broadened as a result of cooperation with international and local experts hired within the scope of various projects regarding policy planning issues.

In addition, it should be underlined that in AoG, (as in other public institutions), qualified staff turnover remains a problem that calls into question the sustainability of progress made in capacity building.

5.4. Civil Service Reform

According to the Public Administration Roadmap, the goal of civil service reform is to ensure the establishment a unified and stable civil service based on the principles of merit, professionalism, good faith, political neutrality, impartiality, and accountability.

In 2017-2018, Civil Service Reform enjoyed more attention, and to some extent dominated other areas of Public Administration Reform. It refers to the development and implementation of the new legal framework and strengthening the institutional capacity of public agencies in this field. In 2017, most of

45Total number of employees in the Department— including permanent staff and those employed on the basis of labour contract
the activities were aimed at the improvement of the legal framework, but in 2018, most activities were focused on the implementation of activities.

Against the backdrop of the decline of Government attention toward Public Administration Reform and delays in PAR deadlines, over the last two years, a number of specific initiatives have been implemented in the field of Civil Service Reform.

- The elaboration of a new legal framework has been finalized – apart from the adoption of the new law on Civil Service in 2017, the law on Remuneration in Public Institutions and 13 bylaws were adopted.

- In accordance with the new Law on Civil Service, in 2018, all ministries adopted the rule for performance appraisal and introduced the appraisal system\(^{46}\).

- The implementation of e-HRMS intensified, and for the current reporting period, it operates in all ministries and LEPLs subject to the ministries, 37 institutions of the Adjara and Abkhazia Autonomous Republics, all administrations of State Attorneys – Governors Administration, and in all local self-governing bodies.

- In order to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms in the civil service, a monitoring system for civil servant asset declarations has been refined and enhanced. The Civil Service Bureau started to publish the results of declaration monitoring online – the 2017-2018 monitoring reports have been prepared and published.

- The Resolution of the Government of Georgia on Defining General Rules of Ethics and Conduct in Public Institutions has been approved. During 2018, certified trainers of the Civil Service Bureau trained around 1,000 civil servants on the updates related to the Law on Civil Service and Ethics.

- In order to support the implementation of the new Law on Civil Service, trainings were held for civil servants, including top and middle managers of ministries, courts and Parliament Administration. The goal of the trainings was to raise awareness about the new legislation and Civil Service reform. In addition, working groups were held with more than 100 NGOs/media organizations and youth representatives.

- In 2018, the Government drafted and issued the Resolution on Professional Development of Civil Servants, creating a decentralized model of professional development for Civil Servants. According to the resolution, the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of the Ministry of Education and Sciences will be entitled to grant accreditation for all basic professional development programs.

More detailed information on the progress of Civil Service Reform in the above and other areas is outlined in the relevant sections below.

\(^{46}\) Consolidated Report on the Implementation of Public Administration Reform/Public Administration Reform Council Secretariat/2020, pp 21
5.4.1. Reforming the Legal Framework on the Civil Service

The development of the basic part of the new legal framework on civil service was completed in 2017-2018 and in the first half of 2019. The law on civil service of 2015 came into force in 2017, with the aim to establish the status of qualified civil servants in order to enhance merit-based career advancement and neutrality principles in the civil service.

On December 22, 2017, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the law on Remuneration in Public Institutions, aiming to develop a transparent, fair and forceable remuneration system for civil servants. The law specifies the basis for granting various components of remuneration, as well as the rule on the calculation of remuneration, supplements and monetary rewards (bonuses). This law applies to any person employed in a public institution regardless of their legal employment status.

Based on the new law on civil service, 13 bylaws have been drafted and a majority of them were adopted in 2017-2018. These bylaws specify the issues outlined in Civil Service Reform, including recruitment, competition, performance appraisal, servant ranking and classification of positions, delivery/accreditation of professional development programs, and other important issues related to the establishment of a professional civil service. A full list of bylaws issued/adopted in 2017, 2018 and in the first half of 2019 related to civil service reform is set forth in Annex 2.

While discussing the progress achieved in the area of legal framework development, some stakeholders interviewed within the frame of the current mid-term study focused on LEPLs (legal entities under public law). They believe that the reform and expected/desirable changes in this respect have been delayed.

In spite of the fact that over the past decade, we have witnessed constant criticism of the existing set-up of LEPLs and promises about possible changes in their current arrangement, they have not been categorized so far. The Law on Civil Service applies to their work only partially (i.e. employees receive similar remuneration to civil servants).

The Civil Service Bureau has carried out certain activities and preparation work in this area, and functional and institutional analysis of LEPLs has reportedly been implemented. According to the Bureau, the concept of categorization/sectoral division of LEPLs and relevant draft law has been developed and is currently under review in the Government and the ministries.

With regard to LEPLs, stakeholders consider that despite a certain “preparatory process”, there is no clear political will (position), and therefore the resolution of this issue has been delayed.

5.4.2. Recruitment and Career Development in the Civil Service

One of the necessary preconditions for the implementation of PAR goals is the improvement of recruitment procedures for Civil Servants. In particular, to comply with the principles of transparency, impartiality, political neutrality and professionalism, and ensure proper implementation.

To this end, on July 1, 2017, based on the new Law on Civil Service, the Government of Georgia issued and put into force the Resolution concerning the Rule for Holding Recruitment Competitions in the Civil
Service, which differently regulates the issues related to the selection of applicants. The main goal of the changes introduced by the new law and the above Resolution is to ensure that recruitment competitions in the civil service are transparent, fair and free of political influence.

The new legal framework developed in 2017 on the recruitment procedures in the civil service has been fully effective since 2018.

- During 2018, in accordance with new legal regulations, 6,196 vacant positions were published on the hr.gov.ge website administered by the Bureau. Among those positions 4,822 were open competition, 363 were closed, 619 were simplified, 377 were internships, and 15 were other types of competitions\(^47\).

- In 2018, the number of recruitment competitions increased by 690 units, and the number of closed vacancies by 290 units (compared to 2017); however the number of simplified competitions decreased. In the second half of 2017, 795 simplified job openings were published on the webpage\(^48\). The reduction in this number is mainly attributed to the change in legal regulation, as it enables support, technical or temporary staff to sign labour contracts even without participating in the simplified public competition. Based on the same amendment, however, in order to monitor the functions and obligations outlined in such contracts, public institutions are instructed to submit the contracts concluded without competition to the Civil Service Bureau.

In accordance with the new legal framework on recruitment competitions in the civil service, the Bureau started to implement the tasks outlined in the framework, namely:

- monitoring labor contracts;
- examining the compliance of applications with job requirements;
- analyzing competition minutes; and
- monitoring job interviews.

**Monitoring Labour Contracts**

In 2018, the Bureau examined the content of 1,431 labour contacts concluded without participation in simplified public competitions. Various types of violations were identified, and relevant recommendations were drafted and sent to relevant public institutions (103 cases in total) in the form of comments\(^49\). The comments mainly addressed the following issues:

- violations were related to the functions outlined in labour contracts, which were similar to the functions of a qualified civil servant and did not imply support or temporary tasks; and
- contracts did not describe the functions assigned to the employee.

---

\(^{47}\) Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2018. pp. 7-8  
\(^{48}\) Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2018. pp. 7-8  
\(^{49}\) Civil Service Bureau Activity Report. pp. 7-8
Examining the Compliance of Applications with Basic Requirements

In order to protect the rights of an applicant, the new Law of Georgia on Civil Service enables the examination of the formal compliance of applications made by applicants with the requirements of the competition. In 2018, in accordance with this mechanism, 69 applications were submitted to the Bureau. After checking compliance with the requirements, various faults were identified. Based on the identification of substantiated gaps in the application process, at the recommendation of the Bureau, 20 candidates were admitted to the next stage of the competition\(^{50}\).

Analysis of Recruitment Competition Minutes

In 2018, pursuant to Article 21 of the Law of Georgia on Civil Service, the Civil Service Bureau studied the process of recruitment competitions conducted in the civil service. To this end, the Bureau examined the competition minutes made by public institutions. During the first stage, in order to study how recruitment competitions were held, the Bureau requested 100 different public institutions to submit open and closed competition minutes announced in the first quarter of 2018. The bureau analyzed the received documents and identified trends in this field\(^{51}\).

Interview Monitoring

In 2018, in order to meet the obligations defined by the Law on Civil Service, the Bureau monitored job interviews conducted within the framework of recruitment competitions. In particular, from October 23 to December 23, 2018, a representative of the Bureau monitored interviews held for 25 vacant positions in 10 different public institutions. It is noteworthy that five of the institutions audio/video recorded the interviews\(^{52}\). According to the Bureau assessment, the overall attitude of the competition committee towards the applicants is positive - the adequacy of the questions asked during the interview, the environment of the interview, non-discriminative questions, etc. As the Bureau points out, the shortcomings identified during the interview monitoring process were mainly related to technical issues, for example: the duration of applicant waiting time and in some cases the lack of a structural interview format, etc.

A review of the activities shows that the implementation of the new legal framework on Recruitment and Competition in Civil Service adopted in 2018 has begun. This is particularly evident if we look closely at the examples in which the Bureau exercises the authority assigned to it. It is obvious that the Bureau has started practical application of its new authority, and within the scope of its competencies attempts to influence proper implementation of the new legislation.

\(^{50}\) Civil Service Bureau Report. pp. 7-8
\(^{51}\) Civil Service Bureau Report. p. 8
\(^{52}\) Civil Service Bureau Reort. p. 8
However, it should also be emphasized that it is impossible to evaluate the progress of one of the most important aspects of this reform only through the number of conducted competitions or the activities implemented by the Bureau. It is crucial to evaluate the extent to which these changes facilitate the achievement of the main goals of reform – holding transparent, impartial competitions, establishing a professional civil service, and how civil servants perceive these changes themselves.

Although the legal framework on the recruitment and competition procedures has been effective for two years, it is too early to make a final assessment of the successes and the results it has facilitated. However, an analysis of the perceptions and attitudes of civil servants and the public at large towards the issue may provide valuable information and give us the possibility to identify certain findings or trends.

Civil servants’ attitude towards new recruitment procedures (as well as towards other aspects of reform – servant rankings and the appraisal system) is mostly positive. However, there are some criticisms. One of the complaints is regarding the perceived incomplete and incorrect implementation of the rules prescribed by the law. Within the frame of the qualitative study, we often come across the statement “provisions of the law are right but they are not practically implemented”. During focus group discussions, it was noted that during recruitment competitions, special attention should be paid not only to theoretical knowledge but also to practical experience, as according to respondents’ arguments, practical experience gives a civil servant the necessary skills to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Therefore, during the evaluation, more attention should be paid to this point.

Despite substantial changes made to the legal framework, a vast number of civil servants think that the **profesionalism of human resources and their fair selection is still a challenge**. In particular, four out of ten civil servants believe that the civil service recruits professionals (41%). It is noteworthy that 26% of the respondents do not agree with this statement and 29% remain neutral. It is worth mentioning that according to a similar study carried out in 2016, 50% of respondents agreed with the statement that employees in the civil service are professionals.

**Only 40% of respondents believe that the staff selection process in the civil service is fair.** Of the surveyed respondents, 28% disagree with the opinion that the human resources recruitment process is fair, 26% select the position - neither agree nor disagree, and 6% find it difficult to respond. As for the outputs of the baseline study period, in 2016, more civil servants believed (62%) that the staff selection process in the public sector was carried out in compliance with the requirements of the law – which is almost 22% higher than the same indicator of a similar period in 2019.

As for the dismissal of staff, only 38% of the respondents share the opinion that this process is fair. A similar study carried out in 2016 showed that 61% of surveyed civil servants believed that civil sector dismissal was carried out in compliance with the requirements of the law.
A comparison of the above data shows that according to the qualitative survey outputs, civil servants’ perceptions regarding professionalism, fairness of recruitment and dismissal have worsened when compared to the 2016 data. This of course calls into question the efficiency of the new legal framework, which is mainly focused on the professionalism and improvement of civil servant recruitment and dismissal procedures.

The results of the qualitative study carried out among civil servants also deserves our attention. Based on the dominant discourse, the fair recruitment of civil servants remains one of the most challenging issues. According to the civil servants participating in the discussions, the recruitment and further promotion of civil servants should be based on the principle of fairness. Professionalism and a sense of responsibility among potential and/or current employees represents key criteria for fairness. Fair competition will no longer cause a sense of injustice among other employees and their involvement in the processes will be much more efficient.

Focus group participants also mention individual cases in which a vacancy in civil service is filled and career advancement is based on professional qualification, however, they say that such a practice is quite rare. This opinion is shared even by those respondents who say that they were hired for the position advertised on hr.gov.ge after going through the testing and interview process, and therefore climbed the career ladder based on their qualifications. In spite of their experience, they still consider the practice to be an exception and perceive themselves to be “lucky”.

“What I personally worry about, and I am not the only one, is that I have been working as a specialist in this system for 7 years already… I think that I do everything quite well... You don’t have to remain in the position of a specialist for years... Then they bring someone who has no knowledge, appoint him/her to a certain position, and give such a salary. I am not envious, but the ones already employed should also be promoted, shouldn’t they?... This should definitely be promoted, and a person should not stay at the same position for 7 years while someone brings a person who has no knowledge and appoints them to the position of chief specialist to receive a far higher salary than I do.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“Nepotism prevails in the public sector, but there are exceptions too… I have been lucky…” [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]
According to the civil servants participating in the qualitative study, there are several cases when it is possible to be recruited in the civil service without nepotism. One is related to rare professions in which there is a lack of specialists, and/or the positions that are not so popular or prestigious. The other refers to cases in which there are relatively many vacancies announced, “however, to be hired for a position in which the number of vacancies is few is practically inconceivable”. According to civil servants taking part in the qualitative study, another case when you can be hired in the civil service without having acquaintances already in the civil service is when the institution needs a qualified employee. There might be cases in which a person is pre-selected for a vacancy published on hr.gov.ge and the interview only has a formal character. However, there are also cases in which interviewers like the applicant and include his/her resume in the reserve list, which means that in case a qualified employee is needed, the civil service will directly get in touch with that person and offer the job.

“I myself have been a member of a selection commission during the interview… If there was a good applicant, his/her resume was saved and when a vacancy appeared, we would call her/him.” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

Even though the civil servants’ opinions about the recruitment practice vary, parallel to cases of violations, they also talk about examples of fair selection. The elimination of nepotism was named as one of the most immediate challenges that needs to be addressed. According to focus group participants, nepotism should be eliminated in the civil service.

“The problem of nepotism should be solved, as the appointment of unqualified human resources demotivates the rest of the employees, or at least they should be trained before appointment...” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

As for professionalism, during the focus group discussions with civil servants it was emphasized that the majority of public sector employees are under-qualified, which can be explained by two reasons. One reason is nepotism, which is a mechanism for recruiting under-qualified staff, and therefore such staff are over-represented. The second reason is the demotivation of qualified personnel.

“The staff has increased so much that the lack of expertise cannot surprise me. Everyone can say that our agency can function quite well even if the number of employees is halved.” [Male, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“There are a lot of competent people [in the civil service], but the staff needs to be trained, motivated, brush up their knowledge. This is what is missing in all public institutions.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“When you see that a person has less work than you do and received twice as much salary...” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]

Regarding lack of motivation, quantitative study results reaffirm the qualitative study results, according to which 46% of respondents stated that there is a lack of motivation among employees in their agency. Only 36% disagree with this opinion, while 15% do not reveal a uniform position.
Chart 9. Assessment of Employees’ Motivation and Professional Development Capacity in the Agency (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is lack of motivation in my agency</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is lack of professional development opportunities in my agency</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quantitative and qualitative surveys reveal that civil servants themselves have more critical and negative attitudes towards the qualifications of civil servants (only four out of ten civil servants believe that the civil service hires professionals - 41%) than other members of the general public (58% of the population believes that the civil service employees qualified personnel).

The comparison of the above-mentioned outputs with the results obtained from a similar study in 2016 gives a very interesting perspective. Of five statements, four do not indicate a considerable difference. There only exception – in 2019 – is that the belief of the population that public institutions have qualified personnel declined by 16%.

Table 8. Assessment of Various Characteristics / Factors Of Civil Servants and Public Institutions Made by the Population (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Qualified personnel work in public institutions</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Civil servants are focused on the provision of quality services to citizens</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The rules and procedures applied by civil servants when providing services to citizens are easy to understand</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If any questions arise, civil servants substantiate the necessity and legality of procedures</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>For civil servants, it is important to provide services in compliance with legal requirements</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey results show that the new legal framework on recruitment competitions in the civil service has been fully operational since 2018, and the Bureau has actually started to perform the tasks prescribed by the new legislation. Moreover, the majority of officials have a positive attitude towards this component of reform. It should be noted that a significant part of civil servants believes that the issues of incompetence and nepotism in the civil service remains a challenge that needs to be addressed.
5.4.3. Performance Appraisal System for Civil Servants

One of the main goals of civil service reform is the introduction of a civil servant performance appraisal system. The purpose of the appraisal system is to identify employees’ career development, rewards and professional development needs. The system would also analyze the preconditions for other legal consequences envisaged by Georgian legislation as well as the organizational development of other public institutions.

In order to develop a unified evaluation system, on April 28, 2017, the Government of Georgia issued the Resolution on Approval of the Rules and Conditions for the Evaluation of Professional Civil Servants[^53], which was put in force on January 1, 2018. Accordingly, public institutions started to use the evaluation system in 2018.

This resolution specifies general principles for civil servant performance appraisal in public institutions, appraisal procedures, rights and responsibilities of the appraisees, rules for appealing results, and reporting.

According to the general procedures prescribed by the resolution, a civil servant can be evaluated based on the results of his/her competence, performance of functions and/or results of performed work. However, the manager of the agency, in consultation with the structural unit responsible for human resources management, selects a specific method for the appraisal and reports it to the Civil Service Bureau at the beginning of the year.

By 2018, all ministries whose qualified civil servants were to be evaluated had approval the method in accordance with the relevant legislation and submitted it to the Civil Service Bureau.

According to the information obtained from the Civil Service Bureau, in 2018, all ministries introduced a performance appraisal system and evaluated all civil servants subject to appraisal. The Ministries submitted performance appraisal results to the Bureau by January 31, 2019.

Based on the reports received from the ministries, the Bureau prepared a summary report emphasizing the main challenges identified in the performance appraisal process and identifying relevant plans for the future[^54].

It is noteworthy that during the introduction of the performance appraisal system, the Civil Service Bureau, ministries and other public institutions enjoyed extensive support from donor organizations, including the provision of external expertise, which implied consultation with (coaching) the civil servants responsible for the introduction of the performance appraisal system, the provision of training and development of certain methodological documents[^55]. Some of the key stakeholders surveyed within the scope of current study think that although the first year of reform implementation has passed and some experience has been accumulated, the majority of public institutions lack competence in the

[^54]: Information about the summary report on the implementation of the appraisal system was obtained from authorized representatives of the Bureau, however the report was published during the reporting period and only represents the document for the Bureau’s (Government’s) internal use
[^55]: GIZ, USAID GGI. In terms of supporting this component of Civil Service Reform, key partners are the UNDP—“Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia”, GIZ, USAID, GGI
application of the performance appraisal system and need external assistance in order to efficiently operate the system and introduce further improvements.

Considering the fact that the successful application of the performance appraisal system needs the establishment of a relevant culture within the civil service, which requires time. It is hard to evaluate the efficiency of a system based only on the process of its implementation and results of the first year, therefore it is too early to make any assessment. Based on the analysis of secondary sources, interviews with key informants, and survey of civil servants, however, it is possible to identify some challenges and key findings related to the performance appraisal system.

Based on the results of the quantitative study of civil servants, most respondents positively evaluate the introduction of the performance appraisal system and believe that it will facilitate the achievement of goals set by the institution. More specifically, 60% of surveyed civil servants support the introduction of the performance appraisal system, while 57% agree with the statement that the appraisal system facilitates the achievement of goals set by the institution.

**Chart 10. Supporting the Introduction of the Civil Servant Performance Appraisal System (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral position</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/refused to answer</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 571
In addition, despite the overall positive attitude towards the appraisal system, in the course of the discussions, focus group participants revealed negative attitudes and concerns about one aspect of reform. In particular, dissatisfaction is associated with the risk of a subjective appraisal, which according to the respondents’ opinions, is conditioned by the widespread practice of nepotism. Apart from that, the focus groups emphasized that changing the law is insufficient, and that its actual implementation is crucial.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that 76% of the surveyed civil servants believe that the performance appraisals were carried out in compliance with the law, while only 56% think that the performance appraisal process is fair. These results show that civil servants positively evaluate the performance appraisal system introduced by the law, but not its practical implementation.

Some civil servants complain about the performance appraisal system because the results of the appraisal system are not tied to salary/pay raises or other incentives. Several mid-level managers also confirm the existence of similar challenges and say that some employees were really frustrated that the appraisal system was not related to pay raises and had no other immediate, tangible result. “We went through the evaluation process and got very high results...But we received no promotion and I wonder what’s the point of this system? No promotion, nothing at all…” [Civil Servant, aged 20-35, Kutaisi]. Only 33% of those surveyed share the opinion that performance appraisals resulted in some incentive.

The very fact that performance appraisal results are not directly and immediately tied to salary is not a concern in itself, since such linkage may have both positive and negative consequences. The main issue is with incorrect expectations on part of civil servants that point to their lack of awareness and to flaws in communication. Although based on the quantitative survey results, 70% of civil servants believe that during the performance appraisal process, they had sufficient information about the goals of the appraisal, the focus group discussions paint a different picture.
In this regard, it can be argued that additional efforts are needed to raise civil servants’ awareness about the goals and objectives of the performance appraisal system.

**Chart 12. Civil Servant Attitudes towards the Performance Appraisal Process (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the process of appraisal, civil servants were well aware of the appraisal goals</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of appraisal was carried out in line with the law</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal was fair</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal of my performance resulted in some incentives</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{N} = 429\]

The results of interviews held with key informants as well as the results of the civil servant study show that the analysis of professional development needs is not always effectively linked to performance appraisals. Only 48% of surveyed civil servants believe that their supervisor identified their professional development needs based on the performance appraisal. It seems that additional efforts are necessary to enhance the capacity of ministries to effectively link appraisal results to the identification of training needs.

According to the results of the quantitative research, 63% of respondents think that managers have the skills to effectively evaluate employee performance, while 51% of respondents pointed out that they received feedback on their work performance from the manager before the final appraisal.

Despite the results of the quantitative study and the fact that in 2017-2018, a wide range of activities were carried out by the Civil Service Bureau with the support of international and donor organizations (including capacity building for public institutions), within the framework of the qualitative study, many respondents pointed out that managers and employees sometimes are not aware of how to fill out performance appraisal forms.

It appears that not all ministries and public institutions are ready to conduct an independent evaluation with internal resources, and they need additional assistance and external expertise for 2019-2020.
## Chart 13. Civil Servant Perceptions of the Role of Managers in Performance Appraisals (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers had sufficient skills to effectively evaluate the employees</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 428</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the final evaluation I received some feedback from my manager</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 414</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the appraisal, my manager identified my training needs</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 407</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The introduction of a performance appraisal system as well as other tasks of Civil Service Reform enjoy considerable support from international partners. Most of the activities aimed at the implementation of a performance appraisal system in 2017-2018 were carried out with the support of partners, which is definitely a positive development. However, for the future, it is recommended to elaborate a more sustainable mechanism, including the institutionalization of relevant trainings. In this context, according to the Civil Service Bureau, this component is set to be included in basic mandatory training programs for managers.

It is crucial that the CSB is able to, in the medium term, translate legislative and procedural adaptations into substantive behavioral and institutional change. The conducted appraisals process needs to be evaluated, and analyzed to plan and implement modifications as required.

### 5.4.4 Civil Servant Independence from Political Influence and Feeling of Security and Stability

In the context of Civil Service Reform, civil servants’ freedom from illicit political influence and the general independence of the civil service, as well as civil servants’ perception of these issues is particularly relevant. Thus, one of the key objectives of reform is the establishment of independent civil service that is free from undue political influence.

According to the 2019 study, 42% of surveyed civil servants agree that the civil service is free of political influence, and 24% of employees disagree, while 27% neither agree nor disagree with this statement. It is noteworthy that based on the results of the similar quantitative study carried out in 2016, 56% of the surveyed civil servants agreed that the civil service was free of political influence, while 20% thought that the civil service was under political influence. Although there are some limitations to the generalization of the civil servants’ study results of both 2016 and 2019, the difference is still significant. Moreover, more civil servants refrained from responding to the question in 2019 than in 2016 (27% in 2019 and 19% in 2016).
Chart 14. Assessment Made by Civil Servants about the Freedom of the Civil Service from Political Influence (Civil Servant Survey)

As for the attitude of the general population towards the presence of political influence in the civil service, a vast majority of citizens (56%) thinks that decisions within public institutions are politically influenced, 45% agree, and 11% completely agree with this statement. On the other hand, 35% do not agree with the statement that the decisions in the public services are made in public interest.

As in the case of the civil servant survey, the results of the quantitative study of the public have slightly worsened. In particular, while 56% of respondents in 2019 believe that decisions in public institutions are politically influenced, in 2016 only 34% held that view. As for the statement that decisions in the civil service are made in the public interest, slightly more than half of the population shared this statement during the baseline study as well as the mid-term assessment period (53% and 54%, respectively). The share of people who clearly disagree with the statement that decisions in the civil service are made in the public interest has increased.

Table 9. Assessment of Civil Service Independence from Political Influence (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Don’t know/unable to respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions in state agencies are made in the public interest</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions in state agencies are politically influenced</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the frame of the qualitative study, the statement that the civil service is now far freer from political influence than in the past was repeatedly stressed. However, despite such dominant discourse, the FGD participants have also stated different opinions; respondents noted that a civil servant is not free from pressure and the situation in the civil service is unstable since a political change often implies the need for

---

56 While discussing such issues, as a rule, focus group discussion participants imply that they are talking about the period until 2012, and not the period until 2017.
"reorganization and change of everything". Moreover, it should be mentioned that during the discussions, respondents spoke about differing levels of political pressure in Tbilisi and the other administrative regions. According to civil servants, political pressure is less severe and less frequent exercised in Tbilisi, while such cases are more common in other administrative regions.

“In Tbilisi it is a bit difficult do so (political influence) but we all know that to some extent this happens in the other (administrative) regions.” [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“There is no pressure in our agency, but when you are in the civil service, you have your inner censor. You don’t want to say too much because you don’t want to get certain consequences, but no one exercises direct pressure or asks you to do certain things.” [Male, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

Noteworthy, one respondent says: “but when you are in the civil service, you have your inner censor. You don’t want to say too much because you don’t want to get certain consequences, but no one exercises direct pressure...” Based on this opinion, the civil servant who considers himself free from political influence thinks that in fact saying “too much” may have some negative consequences and calls it self-censorship. Moreover, he substantiates the absence of influence with the argument that no one “demands of you to do certain things”. A civil servant believing that you may have problems if you “say too much” indicates certain problems with freedom from political influence.

Even some of those civil servants who consider the public sector free from political pressure point out that there is a flawed practice of reorganization in public institutions, which takes place alongside the change of the political team in charge. As the respondents noted (especially in Kutaisi), it is important for the state to abandon such practices and give experienced personnel a sense of stability.

“I would like to talk about the reorganization process... They bring their people from the party... this should be changed.” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]

Coming from the respondents who consider the civil service free from political influence, one argument deserves particular attention: In their view, there are "some details" in the law on Civil Service that protect civil servants from "political pressure". In this regard they are often citing a number of court cases won by civil servants in recent years against unlawful administrative decisions of the state agencies.

“Let’s talk about court decisions…out of 10 dismissed employees, 7 were re-instated... and if someone exercises political pressure (on the employee), the court may make a decision in his/her favor and the person will be re-instated. Thus, there are some details in the law on Civil Service that protect citizens.” [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

It is significant that respondents that advance this argument do not deny the existence of “political pressure”, but emphasize that civil servants can protect their rights in court – as implied in the response “there is something in the law on Civil Service.” Despite the fact that some fired civil servants win court cases – this may not provide effective redress, since court proceedings sometimes last two or more years. In addition, even if the court decides in favor of a civil servant, due to legal or other practical reasons, they are sometimes unable to return to their previous job.

Regarding the civil servants’ perception/evaluation of stability and security at work, focus group participants identified two distinct positions within the scope of the study. A group of relatively young
people believe that civil servants are more protected under the new law, while the group consisting of elderly people, on the contrary, does not have the same feeling. The argument coming from one group of young people depends on the existing practice in which the acquittal of a dismissed employee, and even the much rarer case of their reinstatement, is based on a court decision.

Participants in the group of relatively older people (over 40 years) noted in the discussion that for cases involving misconduct "low level employees are punished". Consequently, low-level employees feel less secure. In their view, the law protects civil servants from unjustified dismissal from the civil service, but the reality is quite different. As their main argument, the group of older people, speak about cases in which civil servants’ contracts were terminated earlier than prescribed and were not reinstated despite the civil servants winning their court cases.

"I think I am protected from unjustified decisions. I will file a case to the court, as I trust the court. I think I am protected ." [Male, aged 20-35, citizen of Kutaisi]

"We are not protected, I can not believe that any employee in the civil service may consider himself/herself as being protected by the head and has a 100% guarantee that they will not be dismissed unfairly. I can’t believe that". [Female, aged 36-65, citizen of Kutaisi]

Representatives of older generations also noted that despite the difficulties, civil servants have gradually learned to express their opinions and defend their positions, but this is not associated with legislative guarantees and is largely related to the overall transformation of society.

As for the results of the quantitative survey, 56% of civil servants say that they have a feeling of stability at work, while 18% disagree with that statement, and 23% neither agree nor disagree with the opinion that their current job gives them the feeling of stability.

In this respect, the current situation does not differ from the data of 2016. Based on the 2016 survey, 55% agreed with the statement “my job gives me a sense of stability”, 17% disagreed, and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 15. Sense of Stability at Work (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My job gives me a sense of stability</th>
<th>N =571</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not agree</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/hard to answer</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among respondents, 42% believe that they will not be punished for initiating a formal procedure within their own agency, including appealing a supervisor’s decision. As for conflicts (or disputes) within the agency, the majority of respondents say that they have not had any dispute and/or conflict over the last year (76%).

**Chart 16. Civil Servant Attitudes towards Challenging Situations (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I will not be punished for initiating any formal procedures within my agency, including appealing a supervisor’s decision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =551</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had a conflict within the agency over the last year</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new legal framework on the civil service, finalized in 2017-2018, provides a number of tools for the protection of civil servants’ freedom from illegal interference. However, for a vast majority of civil servants, the independence of the civil service from political influence is still relevant, which is mainly related to staff turnover and reorganization that is associated with a change in the ruling political party. The share of civil servants that believe that the civil service is not free from political influence and that decisions are politically influenced is still large. It should also be noted that such problems are more frequently mentioned in the other administrative regions of Georgia than in the capital.

### 5.4.5. Remuneration and Incentives

The introduction of a fair and transparent system of remuneration is one of the key components of Civil Service Reform. In this respect, the main progress is the preparation of a new legal basis for remuneration in the public service - the adoption of the relevant law and its enactment.

More specifically, in cooperation with the Civil Service Bureau and the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, the draft Law of Georgia on Remuneration in Public Service was developed, which was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on December 22, 2017 and entered into force on January 1, 2018. In addition to the aforementioned law, on April 21, 2017, the Government of Georgia adopted a Resolution on the Promotion of Qualified Public Officials, which also came into force on January 1, 2018.

The purpose of the law is to establish a fair, transparent and predictable system of remuneration for public sector employees. Under the new law, the remuneration system was defined for each rank and category.

The aforementioned law regulates remuneration for civil servants, public-political officials, political officials, professional (qualified) civil servants, persons employed under administrative contracts, and persons employed under labor contracts.
The law defines the legal basis for remuneration, the rules for calculating an official salary, as well as salary supplements and monetary rewards (bonuses). The law also sets out the conditions for the remuneration of persons working part time, during night hours, on days off and holidays, and in working conditions involving health risks.

Unlike the Law on Civil Service, the Law on Remuneration applies to a wider range of employees. In particular, any person employed in a public institution, regardless of employment status, employees of LEPLs and non-profit (non-commercial) legal entities funded by the state, or persons employed in public institutions of the central authority, the Autonomous Republics and local self-government units.

The attitudes of civil servants towards the new remuneration system vary. Within the scope of the qualitative study, most of the respondents reported the motivation to effectively perform assigned work (59%), while 38% agreed with the statement about the recognition of performed work. Only 26% of respondents were satisfied with their remuneration. More than half (51%) of surveyed civil servants are dissatisfied with remuneration, while 20% refrain from expressing unequivocal positions, which may mean that, in fact, the number of dissatisfied employees may be higher than 51%.

**Chart 17. Perception of Fairness and Motivation at Work (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have motivation to efficiently perform my work</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work is distributed fairly between me and my colleagues</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my remuneration</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am recognized for good work</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the qualitative research results, one of the reasons for the demotivation of employees is low salary. Respondents note that in addition to a low salary, the absence of bonuses and supplements is another negative factor. It has been emphasized that similar incentives positively impacted employee performance in the past. The elimination of the old system of bonuses fails to encourage employees to spend more time at work or to perform their duties more efficiently. According to one respondent, it does not matter how much effort the employee puts into their job, since they receive an identical pay regardless. Therefore, it is logical that the majority would prefer to put less effort into their work.

“The salary may be 800 GEL, and the supplement, let’s say 250-300 GEL. I knew that I had a bonus every quarter in the same amount as my salary. The bonus was guaranteed, and a 100-350 GEL supplement, it was as a great motivator for taking additional responsibility. Now I have neither a supplement, nor a bonus... and no interest in this hard work. I will not rack my brain... I will not review 200 pages of law-
instead I’ll use all my days off, holidays, and other benefits. I have no motivation. Of course, I will do my job, but not so quickly and not with such interest as before”. [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“Everyone thinks only of himself/herself, to get something as a result of performed work, or to gain something…only hardwork and the same salary for a long time…I don’t think that there is a person here who doesn’t want to take a step forward…” [Male, aged 20-35, Kutaisi, Civil servant,]

“A bonus was a real motivator. People said that the management received lots of bonuses, but we also did. For every holiday, we received a bonus and it motivated us. In addition, there was no aggression towards management for receiving bonuses…” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

Although the current system has not eliminated material incentives, some officials view the new arrangement of monetary rewards (bonuses) as the “abolition of bonuses”.

However, there are different views regarding the elimination of the old bonus and supplement system. According to one view, the changes made in this regard are quite good, since the earlier system of bonuses and supplements was not related to work performance, and everyone received a bonus or supplement. Consequently, the old system was not fair. On the contrary, in the current system, where bonuses are tied to work performance, they are considered to be fair.

“The supplements had no function. It did not matter whether a person worked hard or not, he/she could receive a supplement in any case, and I think it was not fair. Based on the manager’s decision, everyone received a supplement… If I stay at work until 12pm, which has often happened, is it not modern slavery? When you do extra work, you should receive payment for that, someone should acknowledge your effort”. [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

Two different attitudes towards the incentives show that there are two different types of civil servant with two different experiences. On one hand, civil servants talk about a practice in which, at the manager’s discretion (which means that the manager has the authority to decide who deserves a bonus), a flexible, effective mechanism for encouraging and motivating employees was applied. On the other hand, despite merit, everyone received a supplement and a bonus, which was seen as a reason for the demotivation of employees. In the context of the remuneration system, it is also noteworthy that when discussing the desired changes in the civil service, qualitative research participants emphasized the importance of recording, monitoring and appropriate remuneration of overtime work. As underlined during the discussions, the new law was supposed to regulate this issue, but as the respondents’ outline, it is hard to put into practice.

5.4.6. Professional Development of Civil Servants

One of the important aspects of Civil Service Reform is the creation of a civil servant professional development system. The Civil Service Reform Concept approved by the Government of Georgia in 2014 outlined and formulated the need for a systemic approach to the professional development of civil servants.

In the recent past, the overwhelming majority of public institutions had no vision according to which they could plan employee trainings. Prior to the enactment of the Law on Civil Service (2017), legal acts regulating the civil service did not deal with the systemic issues of civil servants’ professional
development. As a result, the trainings were usually chaotic and did not meet the professional development needs of civil servants or the objectives of the public institution.

Article 54 of the Law of Georgia on Civil Service adopted in 2015 provided legal grounds for the preparation of a unified, systemic, needs-oriented professional development cycle.

Pursuant to Article 54 of the Law of Georgia on the Civil Service, on May 22, 2018, the Government of Georgia adopted the Resolution on the Approval of the Rule for the Determination of Professional Development Needs of Qualified Civil Servants, as well as the Rules and Standards for Professional Development. This resolution specified the rules and procedures for the analysis of professional development needs, the rules and standards for professional development, as well as the rules for quality assurance of professional standards and mandatory professional development programs.

According to the resolution, the LEPL- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement under the Ministry of Education and Science, was designated as the body responsible for granting accreditation to basic training programs. The government's initial idea involved the development of a unified system for training provisions, in which the Civil Service Bureau would act as a leader in a centralized/semi-centralized system of professional development. This initial plan was significantly modified. Based on the amendments, the role of the Civil Service Bureau (of the received data analysis), mainly implied the monitoring and implementation of the resolution, developing training needs assessment tools, creating a program for the administration of these processes, and participating in the process of the accreditation of basic programs ensured by the LEPL- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The above Resolution of the Government specified the following measures necessary to be introduced in the new professional development system:

- creation of the Accreditation Board by the Civil Service Bureau;
- approval of the Charter and Authorisation Fees for Civil Servants’ professional development program by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport;
- selection of required staff for the administration of the accreditation process by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (LEPL) and the establishment of an expert corps.

During the preparation of this study (spring-summer 2019), the tasks listed above have been completed or are in the process of implementation.

The May 22, 2018 Government resolution specified two types of professional development programs for civil servants: basic and supplemental. The basic program is mandatory for a person who, in accordance with the Law of Georgia on the Civil Service, is appointed for the first time to an official position of a Civil Servant through an open or closed competition. The resolution also defined topics that the Civil Servant (according to the relevant rank) should cover within the basic program as well as the training methods applied by the professional development program, which may include e-learning, classroom teaching, master classes, and/or other.

The basic program for civil servants of the III and IV level covers the development of personal and professional competencies, while for civil servants, levels I and II cover the managerial skills component.
Along with the basic program modules, a list of subjects, competencies, and minimum and maximum academic hours are specified.

In order to ensure the integrity of the professional development system, by the Order of the Civil Service Bureau dated January 14, 2019, the annual professional development plan and report form was approved, which enables public institutions to create a uniform standard for annual professional development plans and reports.

After the elaboration of an annual professional development plan, each public institution is obliged to submit the above information to the Civil Service Bureau through the electronic e-HRM program.

In order to facilitate training activities and enhance quality monitoring, public institutions, upon the selection and/or completion of a training program (both in Georgia and abroad) are obliged to submit this information to the unified system of Human Resource Management in the e-form developed by the Bureau.

Taking into account the fact that the Government Resolution on the Approval of the Rule for the Determination of Professional Development Needs of Qualified Civil Servants and the Rules and Standards for Professional Development were adopted on May 22, 2018. The planning of professional development needs as well as the collection and submission of annual professional development plans in accordance with new rules commenced in 2019.

Although in 2018, the accreditation system defined by the above resolution was not officially put into force, the Bureau attempted to coordinate the training so that more emphasis was placed on the quality and control of content. This process was facilitated by the Civil Service Bureau through purposive trainings organized with the support of donor organizations.

Considering the fact that staff trainings were carried out in accordance with the existing system, until May 2018 (prior to the adoption of the Government Resolution), it was too early to assess the new system of professional development, particularly its impact on civil servants and their attitudes. Moreover, implementation of the new system of professional development requires analysis and further planning of a civil servant’s needs according to his/her performance appraisal, which was also introduced in 2018.

Notwithstanding the above issues, results of the quantitative and qualitative studies of professional development opportunities and current practices of civil servants show that attitudes based on (partially reformed) practices as applied in 2017-2018 are very interesting.

According to the results of the quantitative study, 32% of respondents indicate a lack of professional development opportunities. However, some employees (19%) who refrain from expressing a position may have negative attitudes about this issue and may share the view that there is a lack of professional development opportunities.
Chart 18. Assessment of Employee Motivation and Professional Development Capacity in the Agency (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is lack of employee motivation in my agency</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is lack of opportunities for professional development in my agency</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative study respondents also assessed the fairness of professional development opportunities. Half of the respondents say that they are sent to trainings, seminars, conferences, and are given professional development opportunities based on the fairness principle (52%). However, 21% of the respondents disagree with this opinion, while 22% maintain a neutral position. Most of those who have gained knowledge from the trainings and conferences offered by their agencies over the last three years say that they have applied the knowledge efficiently in their work (71%).

Chart 19. Assessment of Professional Development Opportunities (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees are given fair opportunities for professional development (sent to trainings/seminars/conferences/advanced trainings, etc.)</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =562</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have efficiently applied the knowledge gained from trainings/conferences offered by my agency</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =524</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the qualitative study results, the majority of respondents believe that if an employee cares about personal development, nowadays there are more opportunities, since it is foreseen by the Public Administration Reform. In this context, they also positively assessed the changes that oblige local self-government bodies to appropriate funds in the budget for civil servants’ professional training. Due to the fact that a public institution is obliged to foresee some funds in the budget for professional training and an employee has the right to express desire for professional development, now a motivated employee has the legal opportunity to more actively get involved in professional development than before recent reforms. In this context, discussion participants believe that the reason why opportunities are not often used is either lack of motivation, or that specific managers do not sufficiently care for the employee’s professional development.
“The greatest advantage of public administration reform is that the issue of civil servant training was included in the law. Although many employees have no willingness to learn something new and be retrained, they can still learn something at least electronic record keeping, because now it is mandatory.” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“My job does not give me any chance to develop. The Law on Civil Service states that it should be based on career development, good faith and merit… but I do not think that they pay attention to it…” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]

“All budgets envisage funds for training. Our city hall allocated 1%, which means that it is mandatory to train all employees. The ministry may have more, of course, but at this stage we have not used those funds…” [Male, aged 20-35, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]

The study related to professional development opportunities revealed that despite the existence of funds allocated for staff training, some public institutions are less interested in using those funds. Although these opinions refer to public institutions in general, the remarks are mostly directed towards self-government bodies. According to participants, in self-government bodies, the qualified cadre are in short supply, and the managers prefer to keep them in office to perform the regular duties, rather than on training. On the other hand, limited access to training opportunities and professional development in general, is considered to be the reason for the disqualification of the civil servants. Therefore, providing civil servants with professional development opportunities is one of the major issues along with the establishment of relevant recruitment and staffing strategies.

“There is motivation when, in the case of the ranking system, you are promoted, and you see that your work is appreciated. If you see that this is not the case, you lose motivation.” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]

“Our municipality has 64 employees, and in fact only only 5-6 people do the assigned work. Some of them are even illiterate…” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

With regard to professional development opportunities, within the scope of the qualitative study it was also noted that the environment in the Civil Service is less competitive and that stability is valued. Despite the budgetary allocation and relevant changes to the law, an agency itself is less concerned with employee development. It is noteworthy that while some of the civil servants participating in the study have attended various professional development trainings, they feel that professional development mostly depends on the motivation of individual civil servants rather than on the system in place. According to some respondents, the Civil Service, seems to be “attractive” due to its stability. It is natural that employees are more focused on maintaining the status quo than on developing themselves professionally.

“No competitive environment [in the Civil Service]. It is just stable, and in a highly stable environment there is no competition…” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“I have already attended two trainings this year and I have to to attend one more in August. If you want to develop professionally, you have the chance for that”. [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]

“Development depends on the person. I have not taken my regular vacations for the purposes of rest for so many years. I always use vacation time for trainings and courses… Current changes in legislation enable
Almost all respondents share the view that it is their responsibility to think of professional skills development in order to more efficiently perform their work (93%). Among them, 66% believe that they have access to various means of enhancing their professional skills and knowledge. Many also state that management supports their professional development (66%).

**Chart 20. Opportunities for the Development of Professional Skills (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is my obligation to develop my professional skills in order to more effectively perform my work</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have access to different tools that facilitate my professional skills development</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management supports me in professional development</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although 66% of civil servants surveyed within the frame of the quantitative study believe that they have access to different means that may enhance their professional skills and knowledge, and a similar number (66%) of civil servants underline that management supports their professional development, qualitative research results reveal a different perspective. Part of the focus group participants consider that the lack of professional development and career advancement opportunities is the reason for insufficient motivation among employees, which in turn leads to low professional qualification. One additional cause for demotivation is that qualified employees sometimes have to take over work assigned to their underqualified colleagues. Yet another mentioned reason for demotivation are low salaries.

It is also relevant to pay attention to civil servants’ perception of career development opportunities within their agency. The results of the quantitative study show that respondents’ attitudes towards the merit-based career development system in their agency is not overtly positive. Only 39% of respondents share this opinion related to merit-based career development, while 30% disagree. For 24%, it is difficult to give either a positive or negative answer.

Only four out of ten respondents believe they have career advancement opportunities within their agency (44%). Almost half of the respondents believe that there are mechanisms that protect them from the biased decisions of managers (47%).
5.4.7. Alternative Mechanism of Dispute Resolution

Certain preparatory steps have been taken for the creation of alternative mechanisms of dispute resolution during the last two years. Key stakeholders view the creation of alternative mechanisms of dispute resolution as one of the most significant aspects of civil service reform. According to an evaluation made by experts participating in the implementation of civil service reform, such mechanisms have critical importance, because under the conditions of large-scale changes and novelties, certain controversies and disputes between officers and managers are inevitable, especially in the process of introducing a performance appraisal system.

With the assistance of donor organizations supporting Public Administration Reform, and with the participation of international experts, international experience had to be studied and an optimal model had to be selected. Also, it was planned to develop guidelines and organize a Training for Trainers. Certain (research) tasks were performed in this direction in 2018, however, work on other tasks continues.

In addition, a survey was conducted with the financial assistance of a donor organization, supporting reforms that envisaged the study of the situation related to employment and labour disputes as well as the identification of needs in public services. The legislative framework, judiciary practice, existing reports and statistical data were studied. Key findings and recommendations were prepared as a result of the survey.

In this context, where only 47% of the interviewed public officers share the opinion that today there are mechanisms protecting them from the biased decisions of managers, the importance and need of alternative effective mechanisms of dispute resolution are particularly high. In this regard, the following results of the study are also noteworthy – only 38% of employees in the Civil Service consider that the process of dismissal is fair, and 56% of the interviewed employees share the opinion that the evaluation carried out in 2018 was fair.

---

57 With the financial assistance of the UN Development Program (UNDP), New Vision University conducted a survey that envisaged the study of the situation and the identification of needs related to labor and job disputes in public service.
Despite repeated attempts of stakeholders to support the reform to officially introduce an alternative mechanism of dispute resolution in the public sector, from a practical point of view, the progress achieved in this direction in 2017-2018 is rather limited. Some key stakeholders consider that limited progress in this direction is mainly preconditioned by low political will.

5.4.8. Job Enjoyment / Prestige Value of the Civil Service

Despite the fact that a majority of civil servants are dissatisfied with their salary (51%), and a significant portion believe that they do not receive adequate recognition for good performance (39%), a majority of the interviewed civil servants are still proud of the work they do (80%). Overall, a majority like their job (77%). It should be mentioned that the number of respondents who are not proud of their job (4%), or do not like it (7%), is minimal.

In this regard, the situation has not essentially changed since 2016. According to the 2016 study results, 78% of officers agreed with the statement “I am proud of my job”, and 76% stated that overall, they like their job.

**Chart 22. Assessment of Employee Feelings Related to Pride and Job Enjoyment (Civil Servant Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am proud of what I do</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally like my job</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for prestige: within the framework of the civil servant study, the focus discussion participants noted that the Civil Service is perceived as more prestigious from outside, and employees perceive it as less prestigious. In the opinion of respondents, low prestige of the Civil Service is predetermined by factors such as low salary, nepotism, and limited opportunities for development and promotion. The society’s perception of the Civil Service as prestigious (i.e. from outside) is preconditioned by the fact that the Civil Service is associated with participation in the country’s governance.

“There is a generation that thinks that it is prestigious to start working in the Civil Service. For example, the generation of my parents and older generations… When you tell them that you work at the ministry, for some reason they think it is very cool, but I do not agree with them… In my opinion, if you have a high salary, this is prestigious… How can a job be prestigious where 500 – 1000 persons are employed, while 1/5 and 1/6 of the Georgian population is employed in the same system? Despite a lot of protectionism, it is not unimaginable to start working there…” **[Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]**

“This is because of our mentality. In general, all Georgians want to be engaged in public governance. Similar to the fact that all people receive a higher education; likewise, everybody wants to participate in the
As for the society’s evaluation of the same issue, in connection with work at a public institution, more than half of those interviewed (56%) stated that they would like to work at a state/public institution, and the remaining 44% would not like to work there. Those who are not willing to work at a public institution, named old age (22%), working environment (20%), lack of adequate salary (15%) and health problems (13%) among their reasons.

Chart 23. Willingness to Work in a Public/Civil Institution and Reasons for Lacking Such Willingness (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not like to</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to age/old age/retirement</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like the work environment</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is insufficient remuneration</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to my health condition</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my current job/not interested at the moment</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have the relevant education/experience</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not prestigious</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to family reasons</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to work</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/hard to answer</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In connection with this issue, interesting evaluations were made during the focus group discussions. The participants had to evaluate how prestigious they consider public institutions to be, and whether or not they would like to be employed there. In their opinion, prestige largely depends on the specific position, and the higher the position, the more prestigious it is. In the opinion of one part of the discussion participants, generally, working at the public service is not prestigious, while the other part considers that it is prestigious, because the Civil Service gives a civil servant some guarantees of predictability.

The qualitative survey participants who declared that they would like to work at the civil service named prestige of working at the service, a guaranteed and regular salary, and the opportunity to enjoy maternity leave in accordance with the law, as attractive factors. On the contrary, part of the discussion
participants consider that employees are less appreciated in public institutions, the salary is lower and the employees are not free from political influence. For them, these are sufficient reasons for not wanting to work at public agencies.

“Perhaps, one is more protected by law [in the public sector], than in the private sector, but they may also ‘frameyou’ up there and dismiss you”. [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi resident]

“(The public sector) is prestigious. We are a Georgian society and are in touch to a certain extent… for example, to nepotism - you have an acquaintance and you go work there”. [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi resident]

[The public sector] should be prestigious but it is not. Maybe employees enjoy some benefits there, but these benefits should exist. It should be prestigious to work in the public sector as a policeman, rescuer, or work at the Registry, but unfortunately this is not the case”. [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi resident]

“It is prestigious now. Somebody works in the city hall and you look at this person with respect”. [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“I think that it is prestigious, because you may be a private entrepreneur and have more income, and you may be a public officer and have less income, but if you appear in some situation and say – I work there …”. [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“Even if the employee does not do anything, it is prestigious anyway”. [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

Results of the quantitative study show that in the opinion of 77% of the Georgian population, working at public institutions is prestigious, which confirms the perception of the public sector as a desirable employer.

Table 10. Assessment of Different Factors of the Civil Servants and Institutions (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Do not know/unable to respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working in a public institution is prestigious</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust civil servants</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust public institutions</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions in public institutions are made in the public interest</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions in public institutions are politically influenced</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mid-term Study Report on Current Status of Public Administration Reform, ACT, 2019
As it is seen from the comparison of the population study results and similar data of 2016, working in a public institution is traditionally viewed as prestigious among civil servants and the society, and more than half of them (56%) express a willingness to work in the civil service. In reality, the indicator of enjoyment/willingness to work in the civil service is much higher, because out of those 44% who would not like to work in the civil service, 22% name old age rather than any negatively perceived characteristic of this sector as the reason.

5.4.9. Public Trust in Civil Service

Within the framework of the study, civil officers were interviewed to find out to what extent the society trusts the civil service. Four out of ten interviewed civil servants consider that the society has confidence in the civil service (39%), and two out of ten interviewed civil servants consider that the society does not have confidence in the civil service (20%). As for the perception of civil servants regarding the compliance of their activities with society’s interests, a majority considers that this public institution acts in the public interest (59%).

Chart 24. Civil Servants’ Perception of the Civil Service (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that civil agencies act in the public interest</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the public has confidence in the civil service</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the attitude of the society, results of the quantitative study show that the majority of respondents have a rather positive attitude toward civil servants and their activities (provided services). In particular, seven out of ten respondents share the opinion that their main concern is that any service is carried out in compliance with the necessary requirements of the law (74%). About seven out of ten respondents agree with the statement that “in case of any question, civil servants justify the need and lawfulness of procedures they follow” (68%). In addition, many believe that it is easy to understand the rules and procedures followed by civil servants when providing services to citizens (60%) and civil servants are oriented at providing quality service to citizens (66%). Out of the offered statements, the respondents agree least of all with the statement that qualified personnel works at public institutions – 50%, but 32% of the interviewed persons disagree with this statement.
Table 11. Assessment of Various Characteristics of Public Officers and Agencies (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Don’t know/unable to know/unable to agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified employees work at public institutions</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants are oriented at providing quality service to citizens</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to understand the rules and procedures followed by civil servants when providing services to citizens</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In case of any questions, civil servants justify the need and lawfulness of procedures they follow</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the feeling that it is important for civil servants to provide any kind of service in compliance with the law</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.10. Assessment of Negative Factors Affecting Work Process

To see the overall picture of the progress (results) of civil service reform, it is important to review the factors that are considered by civil servants to be the main negative factors affecting the work process in the public service.

The civil servants participating in the quantitative study evaluated negative factors affecting the work process, such as a frequent change of priorities, employees and management at the agency, an unstable situation, procrastination in the decision-making process, etc.

Results show that the least problematic factor is the strict differentiation of activities by management on a gender basis (82%). Six out of ten respondents do not agree with the opinion that there is an unstable situation in their agency (61%), or that management is frequently changed (61%). The majority of the respondents also do not agree with the statement that the manager at the agency is biased. It may be said that out of the negative factors affecting the working process, the most frequently named are procrastination in the decision-making process on important issues at the agency (30%) and a frequent change of employees (25%).

It should be mentioned that civil servants within the framework of the quantitative survey, tend to express moderate, neutral, and less critical opinions especially when the question is about management and/or if the object of evaluation is more or less personalized. During the focus group discussions, they demonstrated critical attitudes even more. In this regard, we can assume that some of those who selected the position "Neither agree nor disagree" in respect to a negative evaluation (sentence), are critical more often, and in reality, agree with a negative evaluation.
The qualitative survey participants, out of the named factors, focused on the significant delays decision-making process, which was explained by bureaucracy. At the same time, it was mentioned that since there is a vertical hierarchy of public agencies, the lower levels do not assume decision-making responsibility and wait for confirmation from the upper levels. In the case of so-called "routine" decisions, discussion participants do not see many complications, but in cases even slightly different from "routine" cases, the situation requires a certain analysis and it needs to undergo many bureaucratic steps, leading to delays. The latter often hinders the process of providing services directly to citizens, which leads to the dissatisfaction of citizens with public services.

Focus group discussion participants mentioned that the delivery of services to a citizen by a specific agency is particularly slow when the service to be provided to the citizen does not imply the settlement of the issue by one agency, and requires the involvement of several agencies.

"While we have been in touch with various agencies, we have seen that there are bureaucracy problems. The decision-making process is delayed, and providing a response is delayed. Meanwhile, the citizen faces problems with his/her issue, and this is a serious problem". [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi, Civil Servant]
5.4.11. Ability of Civil Servants to Affect Decisions, and Management’s support for in the Introduction of Novelties

Civil servants participating in the quantitative study evaluated the ability of themselves and fellow civil servants to affect decisions related to their work. According to the study results, nearly six in every ten respondents (59%) declared that they were able to affect decisions related to their work, while more than half of respondents declared that they were encouraged by management to introduce their own ideas to their activities (54%). Fewer than two in every ten respondents stated they were unable to affect decisions (17%) while exactly two in every ten respondents claimed they did not feel encouraged by their management when putting forward an initiative to introduce innovations to their activities (20%).

Chart 26. Civil Servants’ Perceptions of Their Powers (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have the authority to influence the decisions that are related to my work</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =553</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel encouraged by management when introducing novelties to my activities</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =547</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative study dedicated to issues related to the managerial encouragement of innovative ideas and the consideration of employees’ opinions in the civil service showed that such encouragement and consideration was relatively infrequent. A lack of encouragement mechanisms was named as one of the causes for the lack of managerial encouragement in this regard. According to one respondent, a new idea had been repeatedly expressed by a civil servant who then was given no credit when this idea was eventually implemented. This example and others like it were cited as factors explaining civil servants’ reluctance to introduce novelties to their activities. Meanwhile, some of the discussion participants outlined that sharing different opinions before decisions are made, reviewing positions and viewing tasks and problems from various perspectives were not common features of the of the decision making process. Thus, public officers generally refrain from expressing opinions and making a decision. Instead, public officers tend to simply agree with whatever decision has been reached by the senior manager.

It was mentioned during the discussion that even though various agencies conduct internal interviews to gather the opinions of civil servants, this is perceived as a mere formality. Therefore, as the expressing of opinions and the making of independent decisions are not encouraged, and because some staff fear losing their jobs if they were to express such opinions or make such decisions, then such activity is rarely encountered. Nevertheless, one respondent emphasized the courage of young civil servants who do make unconventional decisions. While young servants are more likely to make unconventional decisions and are more inclined towards introducing new ideas, for older civil servants, their job insecurity creates certain barriers to the expression of their opinions and the generation of new ideas.

“It greatly affects employee motivation. If you mention an idea, you must be sure to stress who the author of the idea is. I have learned to identify who I should talk to: only a person you can trust...” [Female, aged 20-35, Kutaisi, Civil Servant]
5.4.12. Implementation of Ethical Standards

Significant steps have been taken during 2018-2019 years in terms of the establishment of ethical standards in the civil service, as well as the facilitation of their introduction in practice and raising awareness among civil servants.

In 2017, the Government of Georgia adopted the Resolution “On Defining General Rules of Ethics and Conduct at the Public Institutions” (No. 200, April 20, 2017). In 2018, the Bureau developed commentaries\(^5\) on the resolution of the Government of Georgia on Defining General Rules of Ethics and Conduct at the Public Institutions, which aimed at the facilitation of introducing the uniform practice of using general rules regarding ethics and conduct in the public institutions of Georgia. In 2018, with the support of international partners, the Civil Service Bureau implemented a project entitled “Support of the introduction of civil service reform through raising awareness of the Law of Georgia on the Civil Service and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms,” which entailed the retraining of hundreds of civil servants.

Together with other activities, for the purpose of raising the awareness of civil servants, in connection with issues governed by the Law of Georgia “On Civil Service” and the Law of Georgia “On Conflict of Interests and Corruption at the Public Institutions” as well as the Resolution of the Government of Georgia on General Rules of Ethics and Conduct, an itinerary and a video clip were prepared.

Ethics forums organized by the Bureau have been held during 2018-2019, in which representatives of the internal audit and inspection unit as well as delegates from the human resource management units of the central public institutions participated. At such forums, problematic issues are reviewed and respective recommendations are developed for the creation of mechanisms to enhance the ethical environment in the civil service. The topics for each ethics forum are defined based on the analysis of questionnaires issued by the Civil Service Bureau.

\(^5\) The comments were developed with the financial assistance of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).
In 2018, the Civil Service Bureau developed the concept of an electronic learning platform through which ethics could be taught in the civil service. The concept defined the overall purpose, the main topics, the length of the electronic course, the teaching methodology, the target audience, and the modules.

5.4.13. Evaluation of Actions Treated as Misconduct, Procedures Used in Such Cases, and the Fairness of Responses

The results of the quantitative survey of public officers showed that more than nine in every ten respondents knew which action amounted to a disciplinary offence (93%), while slightly less than nine in every ten knew what procedures would be applied in the event of such an offence (89%). As for the responses to the commission of a disciplinary offence, 56% of those interviewed considered these to be fair, and 11% considered them unfair. Otherwise, 20% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with that the responses to misconduct were fair, while 12% said they found it hard to answer.

Chart 27. Assessment of Responses to Misconduct (Civil Servant Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>DK/hard to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know what activities/behaviors are treated as misconduct</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what measures should be applied in cases of misconduct</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =565</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responses to misconduct is fair</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =555</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5. Public Service Delivery

Following the publication of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Roadmap 2020, there were various examples of high-quality public services being delivered. The progress made in the field of public services was recognized nationwide and received international acclaim. However, despite this progress, some problems persisted with respect to the fractional, non-systematic and inconsistent development of public services. Indeed, a united legal or methodological framework for service design and delivery had not been put in place. On one hand, there were some clearly distinguished, successful institutions in the field of public service delivery, namely the separate units of the Ministries of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. On the other hand, in some other public institutions, public service delivery remained at a low level that had barely evolved since the 1990s.

59 At the time this report was prepared, based on this concept, on the basis of the tender announced by the Law Program of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), a company was selected that had to develop software for the electronic course
The following weak points relating to public services were specified in three key directions in the PAR Roadmap 2020:

- A lack of a united policy for high-quality services and the delivery thereof, which should ensure the establishment of public services tailored to meet the needs of consumers.
- The unavailability of a united legal framework in the field of services, delivery and e-services.
- A lack of formal systems for quality assurance.

Considering all of the above-mentioned issues, the following objectives were set:

1) Development of a united policy for the delivery of high-quality services, which will ensure that public services are customized to meet consumers’ needs;
2) Development of a universal legal framework of administrative procedures in order to minimize special regulations;
3) Establishment of a universal system for quality assurance of public services; and
4) Implementation of Digital Georgia: e-Georgia 2014-2018 strategy and action plan.\(^{60}\)

In compliance with the tasks and priorities envisaged in the PAR roadmap, within the public service delivery component, the main focus was placed on the creation, delivery, quality assurance and policymaking of pricing during 2018-2019. In this regard, the following main tasks have been accomplished in the public service delivery field:

- With the support of donor organizations\(^ {61}\), local and international experts were invited to develop a **baseline evaluation of public service delivery**. This report presented an in-depth review of public service delivery practices with an emphasis on service design, delivery, pricing and quality evaluation. It also provided an analysis of best practices and gaps. The review document was the first to compel the Georgian government to review the existing practices of public service delivery in the united context of public administration reform.

- The development of a policy document of unified standards for public service delivery started in 2017 and continued in 2018. It was expected that the document would be approved in the same year (2018) by the Public Administration Council or the relevant state authority. In addition, a public service design, delivery, pricing and quality assurance policy document was completed in February 2018. This document created a credible basis for the harmonization of quality standards for public service providers. The document was supposed to be approved in 2018, but the deadline was postponed and, as of July 2019, it had still not been approved.

- Despite the fact that the policy document for unified standards of public service delivery has not yet been approved, some units of the Ministry of Justice (for example, the Public Service Development Agency and Public Service Hall), in order to adhere to the standards envisaged in

---

\(^{60}\)Digital Georgia: e-Georgia 2014-2018 strategy and action plan is not officially approved/confirmed and is not used as a universal official strategic/guideline document for e-governance, but the Data Exchange Agency as well as other institutes still perform tasks envisaged in the strategy.

\(^{61}\)UNDP Public Administration Reform project.
the policy document, have already tried to introduce certain changes. These agencies are the largest public service providers.

At this point, some of the key tasks of the action plan 2019-2020 are the establishment of a unified policy, the implementation of the above-mentioned policy document, and the establishment of new standards in practice. The plan also envisages important activities such as the development of a service design roadmap (in which necessary approaches and methodologies for engaging consumers in the process of service creation will be integrated), as well as the development of relevant methodologies for a roadmap of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF), guidelines, and a new pricing manual.

The unified policy document on service development, delivery, quality assurance and pricing has not been officially confirmed, and this process will continue as part of the action plan 2019-2020. Accordingly, the development of a unified legal framework of administrative procedures has also been postponed but remains an objective for the future, with the overall aim to restrict certain regulations and unite service delivery administration across agencies under common procedures.

Apart from the tasks mentioned above, other activities have been carried out in the public service delivery field, impacting upon the quality of public service delivery and consumer satisfaction:

- **Community centers are being intensively constructed** so that as much of the population as possible can benefit from public and private services without having to leave their village. As of summer, 2019, there were 65 functioning Community Centers throughout Georgia;

- Fifty-five municipalities use the e-system of municipal administration to differing extents (26 target municipalities use the full package of services included in the municipal management system, meaning that they provide all available services electronically through the municipal management system);

- The official state platform (ichange.gov.ge) for **electronic petitions** of citizens was created, the aim of which is to ensure civic engagement in public policy, transparency of decisions and activities of the Georgian government, as well as the simplification of communication between the GoG and the public;

- In 2017, the Public Service Development Agency issued the first **pilot digital stamp**. The large-scale provision of qualified e-stamp certificates commenced in July 2018, and both state and private organizations can now obtain them.64

Despite the progress achieved, as of July 2019, one of the key tasks of the PAR service delivery component had not been implemented. Specifically, a unified policy document on public service design and delivery had been neither established nor approved.

Currently in Georgia, the process of designing public services is not usually implemented in compliance with principles envisaged in a policy document that has been developed in a structured, unified

---

62Municipality management system is a software created by Public Service Development Agency designed to provide municipality services in electronic form
63Consolidate report on PAR implementation / Secretariat of PAR council / 2020. Page 35
64Consolidated report on PAR implementation / Secretariat of the PAR council / 2020. Page 35

Mid-term Study Report on Current Status of Public Administration Reform, ACT, 2019
approach. The innovations lab of the Public Service Development Agency assists the agency as well as other public institutions to perform the service design or redesign process in compliance with principles envisaged in the policy document. Some good practice has been established in this direction, but the process is not yet systematic and rather applies to specific separate institutions and services; thus does not affect the overall picture.

In this context, no significant changes have been made during 2018-2019 years in terms of practical improvement of public services. The results regarding public satisfaction with respect to public services taken from the survey performed in the first half of 2019 (presented in Chapter 5.3.) show that there has been little difference in the perceptions of which organizations perform best. The majority of public institutions usually work in an outdated manner in terms of service design and, from a practical point of view, little has changed apart from certain exceptional cases.

5.5.1. Policy and Practice of Public Service Delivery

From institution to institution, there are significant differences in public service delivery. In addition, as noted above, progress achieved in the field is not consistent across the board, as the practice and quality of service delivery varies markedly.

As demonstrated by the results of the baseline study, the overall level of satisfaction with services provided by public agencies is high: in 2016, 88% of respondents with experience of using public services positively evaluated the quality of the obtained services. In a 2019 study, no significant differences were detected in terms of general perceptions, but certain changes have been made in certain institutions.

The services of the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency, which are mostly delivered at the Public Service Hall, take leading positions with respect to public awareness and utilization thereof among public services in terms of awareness as well as utilization. In addition to quantitative data, qualitative analysis confirms that the Public Service Hall is the public institution with which the population has had most contact.

Despite an increase in general awareness, citizens still often find it difficult to identify issues that need to be focused on in the PAR process in order to improve the quality of services provided. Some respondents did nevertheless identify areas of priority. A quarter of respondents stated that a focus should be placed on the improvement of service standards (25%) and the improvement of civil servants’ competence (24%). Other issues highlighted as requiring improvement included increasing the wages of public servants (14%), the taking into consideration of the needs of various groups (11%) and increase in the number of service units (8%).
The results of the quantitative survey of citizens confirmed the low quality of civic engagement in public service delivery. Within the scope of the survey, the respondents were asked to evaluate whether they had had a chance to provide relevant agencies with feedback. According to the results, when using public services, nearly half of the respondents (49%) said they had had a chance to provide feedback with regard to services used, but only 7% of respondents had actually sent their feedback to a public agency.

Respondents who had not been active in terms of providing feedback to public agencies cited the following reasons: not having any feedback to offer in general (70%); and a lack of knowledge as to how to provide feedback (18%). A small proportion of respondents (8%) believed that there was no point in providing feedback, since their opinions would not be taken into consideration anyway.
Chart 30. Reasons for Not Providing Relevant Public Agencies with Feedback Regarding Service (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not have any remarks</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not know how/in what form to provide my remarks</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no point/nothing will change/they will not take it into account</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not deem it necessary</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not have time for that</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to my health condition/age</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 2234

In the course of the group discussions, a relatively nihilistic attitude was evident from many participants in terms of civic engagement and activism. According to participants of the qualitative study, in the decision-making process, public institutions usually do not take citizens’ opinions into account. Discussion participants were generally aware of the importance of civic activism and the high involvement rate of citizens in public policy implementation, but some noted that such activity in Georgia was not prevalent and assumed that their opinions would not matter anyway. For example, participants declared that citizens were mostly engaged by public institutions in Tbilisi and Kutaisi for the purpose of fixing various types of infrastructural problems.

“Civil engagement is even more necessary now.” [Male, aged 20-35, Tbilisi resident]

“I believe that each Georgian needs to be engaged in order to wake them up; to remind them that we exist.” [Male, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“Engagement is necessary, but the question is what outcome will it bring? There is no response and it is a waste of time.” [Female, aged 20-35, Tbilisi resident]

“Nothing changes; their doors are closed. These people are like sheep on their own. The government is on its own and does its thing.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“Each person should feel responsible. The fact that City Hall does not work and the structure does not work properly is not solely the fault of the people who work there. This is society’s fault, but in our country, people and self-government (bodies) are so isolated that you cannot change anything – it is almost like a wall.” [Female aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“I do have [the right to manage], but no one enables us to find a place in government and we are far from it and do not have an interest in it. There are no conditions – yes, we do say that we want to manage too, but we are not actually interested deep down. We do not believe, and we are not sure that we will be active and it will make things right for society.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency

Of all services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency, the ones of which respondents were most aware were those relating to new ID card, with more than half of the respondents (51%) stating they knew that this service was offered by the agency. Other services with high awareness rates were: passports (46%); land, residential houses and/or real estate registration (30%); and birth, marriage, divorce, death registration and/or certificates (28%). No other service gained more than 12%, while 23% of respondents said they found it difficult to name any service offered by this agency.

Chart 31. Awareness of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Awareness Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New ID card</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of land, residential house or other real estate</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration/certificate of birth, marriage, divorce, death</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archive certificate of property ownership</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence permit/certificate</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record from public registry</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of citizenship</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of name/last name, establishment of fatherhood or registration of adoption of a child</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2016, of all the services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency, those related to new ID cards were best known to respondents, albeit the percentage in 2016 (83%) was far higher than in 2019 (51%). In addition, differences were identified in terms of services related to birth, marriage, divorce, and death registration, with the awareness of these services falling from 51% in 2016, to 28% in 2019. Differences between 2016 and 2019 with respect to other services were minimal, for instance residence permits dropping slightly from 11% to 9%.

As well as awareness, the population survey also studied the rate of use of services. Of the services provided by the Public Service Hall, Community Centers and territorial units of agencies of the Ministry of Justice, the respondents all named the services they had personally used within the past year. According to the results of the quantitative survey, similar to 2016, one of the leading services was the issue or renewal of an ID card, with 23% of respondents having obtained a new ID card within the past year.
The use of other services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency has increased compared to the baseline period, broken down as follows: passport services (2016 – 5%; 2019 – 13%); and birth/marriage/divorce/death certificates (2016 – 7%; 2019 – 11%). None of the other services has been used by more than 5% of respondents during the last year.

Chart 32. Use of Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency Over the Past Year (Population Survey)

As for where the given service was provided, the majority of respondents (83%) either visited the Public Service Hall or a Community Center (12%), while 9% had referred to territorial units of the Public Service Development Agency. Clearly, the way in which services are obtained depended significantly on the respondent’s place of residence.

Chart 33. Place of Receiving Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey)

Within the scope of the study, respondents evaluated the extent to which they were satisfied with the provided services, and almost all services provided by the Public Service Development Agency scored high. The highest level of dissatisfaction (24%) was reported for the assignment of socially vulnerable families and archiving certificates based on household composition (10%). With regard to all other services except for one (archive certificate on property ownership – 89%), the satisfaction rate was higher than 90%. The level of satisfaction with services provided by the Public Service Development
Agency was also high in to the baseline study conducted in 2016. However, the level of satisfaction for some services had increased by 2019. For example, in 2016, a total of 92% of respondents were satisfied with passport services, but in 2019 this rose to 98%. Elsewhere, a significant positive difference was reported in the case of ID cards (68% satisfaction in 2016, rising to 92% in 2019) and the assignment of socially vulnerable families (2016 – 54%; 2019 – 76%). In addition, positive differences were also revealed for the process of obtaining a general education certificate (2016 – 91%; 2019 – 100%). Aside from these improvements, the level of satisfaction with several services has decreased slightly. For example, 98% of respondents were satisfied with apostille and/or legalization services in 2016, but this dropped to 93% in 2019.

Qualitative study findings confirmed a high level of satisfaction among respondents with services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency. Focus group discussion participants unanimously noted that obtained services had fully met their expectations. The only exceptions were for relatively complex and difficult services require the cooperation of multiple state agencies.

As for the specific criteria by which to evaluate services provided by the Public Service Development Agency, the majority (75%) of respondents named the attentiveness of service personnel as a positive indicator, while promptness of service was noted by 58%, and 52% mentioned the competence of personnel. With respect to the same evaluation criteria, some dissatisfaction was expressed by some respondents. Indeed, 5% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the attentiveness and competence of personnel, while the promptness of implementation of a service appeared problematic for 8%. The most frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction were queue management (12%) and service pricing (10%).

From the qualitative component of the study, a similar picture was revealed during a detailed assessment of the service process. Specifically, the attentiveness and competence of personnel, promptness of service, environment, and general attitude towards consumers were all evaluated positively.

“I had an experience with the Public Registry. I registered a plot of land. I wanted to make certain small changes, but there was a mistake regarding the last name – I could not change it during the Soviet era. It required so many documents in the past and now, this issue was simply solved in a matter of a month or a month and a half. They changed Lobjanidze to Lobzhanidze. I was satisfied.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“I had to wait in line for an ID card. I visited the café, I had a line number, and an employee approached me before I finished my coffee. My card was ready, and I did not need to stand in line. I got my ID card during the time it took me to drink a coffee in the café…” [Male, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“I believe that the Public Service Hall works perfectly; I like their service and everything.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“[I’m satisfied with] Public Service Hall. I registered my land, then divided, and then united. I am satisfied.” [Male, aged 35-65, Kutaisi resident]
Even in cited cases when an employee of the Civil Registry Department was unable to solve complex and/or difficult issues for the consumer, the group discussion participants were still satisfied by the attentiveness and competence of the personnel. Along with a clearly positive attitude towards the Public Service Hall, when speaking about the improvement of services, some respondents noted that it would be desirable to add a notary service bureau within the Public Service Hall for added convenience. Meanwhile, respondents expressed some dissatisfaction regarding passport services, particularly with respect to queuing times and price.

Table 12. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing Services Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reason for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Reason for satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness of personnel</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of personnel</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of implementation</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment in the center</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue management</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service fee</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of obtained information</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>1184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 34. Assessment of Service Quality Provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration of birth/marriage/divorce/death</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of established paternity / change of name and/or surname / adoption</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New ID card</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence permit /certificate</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostilization and legalization of document</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document certifying general education</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An archive document about the composition of a household</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An archive document about property ownership</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land or real estate registration</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record from Pubic Registry</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of business enterprise</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of entrepreneurial agency</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information card</td>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4% 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awarding points for socially vulnerable family</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Compared to their awareness of services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency, respondents were less aware of services provided by the MIA’s Service Agency: 64% of respondents said they found it difficult to name even one service offered by this agency. Overall, 16% of respondents were able to name vehicle registration and the same percentage named driving licenses as services delivered by this agency. Other services of which respondents were aware included the issuance of a certificate on conviction (12%), a ballistic inspection certificates for firearms (8%), and
a certificate declaring that a vehicle or means of transport has passed an expert inspection (8%). None of the other services provided by this department were named by more than 4% of respondents.

**Chart 35. Awareness of Services Provided by the MIA’s Service Agency (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration (including temporary registration) of vehicles or other mechanical means of transportation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a license to drive a vehicle or other means of transportation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a certificate of conviction</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballistic inspection and registration of firearms</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate declaring that a vehicle or means of transport has passed an expert inspection</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Chart represents only those services named with a frequency above 5%*  
*N = 2400*

As confirmed by the results of the mid-term study, the rate at which the services of the MIA’s Service Agency are being used is still low, but this has increased since 2016. In particular, vehicle registration (2016 – 3%; 2019 – 8%) and the issuing of driving licenses (2016 – 2%; 2019 – 7%) have risen.

**Chart 36. Use of Services Provided by MIA Service Agency Over the Last Year (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration of vehicles or other mechanical means of transport and temporary registration</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a right to drive vehicle or other means of transportation</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of vehicle or other mechanical means of transport and expert inspection</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a Certificate of Conviction</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate confirming crossing of a state border of Georgia</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostile or legalization of documents</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballistic inspection and registration of firearms</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 2400*

The low rate of use of services provided by the MIA’s Service Agency was also confirmed by the qualitative component of the study: only a few respondents were able to point to vehicle registration and obtaining a certificate of conviction when asked to name services offered by this agency. In this section, respondents did not express any dissatisfaction with regard to the services which were positively evaluated. According to the quantitative component meanwhile, those who had been provided with services by the MIA’s Service Agency were highly satisfied, with the satisfaction level...
exceeding 90% in all cases. According to the 2016 baseline study, the services of the MIA’s Service Agency were positively evaluated by 90% or more of the respondents. Compared to 2016, the level of satisfaction for certain services had increased between 2016 and 2019. In particular, the registration and temporary registration of mechanical means of transportation (2016 – 93%; 2019 – 96%) and the issuing of certification of conviction (2016 – 90%; 2019 – 97%) both rose. Notably, the level of satisfaction with the services of the MIA’s Service Agency was evaluated according to only three services in 2016: registration and temporary registration of mechanical means of transportation; driving licenses; and certificates of conviction.

**Chart 37. Satisfaction with Services Provided by the MIA Service Agency (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration of vehicles or other mechanical means of transport and temporary registration</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>N = 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a right to drive vehicle or other means of transportation</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>N = 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate declaring that a vehicle or means of transport has passed an expert inspection</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>N = 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing a Certificate of Conviction</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>N = 61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to various parameters, the highest levels of satisfaction were reported for attentiveness of personnel (60%), promptness of service (59%), and competence of staff (46%), while the main reasons for dissatisfaction among respondents were service fees (16%), queue management (12%), and attentiveness of personnel (7%).

**Table 13. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing Services Provided by the MIA’s Service Agency (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Reason for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Reason for satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness of personnel</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of personnel</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of implementation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment in the center</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue management</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service fee</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of obtained information</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The awareness among respondents of services offered by 112 was rather high. Only 9% of the surveyed population was not aware of the services provided by 112. However, it is important to note that, compared to 2016, the awareness rate of services provided by 112 has slightly decreased (medical emergency – 99%; fire emergency – 50%; police – 59%; rescue service – 44%). It is also worth mentioning that, compared to the services of other agencies, the awareness rate of respondents about services provided by 112 was among the highest in 2016.

**Chart 38. Awareness of Services Provided by 112 (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Awareness Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical emergency</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol police</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire emergency</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescue service</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the use of services, medical emergency was still the leading service used in 2019 (40% of respondents). The rate of use of the following services remained low with no significant difference in uptake reported: patrol police; fire emergency; and rescue service.

**Chart 39. Services Used by Respondents Over the Last Year (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Usage Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical emergency</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol police</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire emergency</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescue service</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on a comparative analysis of data collected in 2016 and 2019, it can be concluded that the level of satisfaction regarding certain services has changed. In particular, the satisfaction level with respect to the rescue service has decreased (2016 – 92%; 2019 – 86%), but for fire emergency it has increased significantly (2016 – 60%; 2019 – 95%).
Chart 40. Satisfaction with Obtained Services (Population Survey)

While the general evaluations were positive according to the quantitative component, the qualitative component of the study revealed some dissatisfaction among respondents with respect to the services provided by 112. As demonstrated by the focus group discussions held in the regions, some respondents were dissatisfied with the fact that their calls to 112 were answered by a Tbilisi station. Many respondents claimed that the late arrival of emergency teams was connected to the call center being based in Tbilisi, and this negatively affected customer satisfaction. Clearly, the promptness of the implementation of service is critically important when it comes to a medical emergency. Some respondents reported that they felt uncomfortable answering the operator’s questions and when going through other formal procedures related to using the services of 112. Many claimed that such procedures felt unnecessary in an emergency situation, where every second is precious. Respondents were less dissatisfied with the patrol police, fire emergency, and rescue service.

“As for 112, I don’t know whether this happens only in Kutaisi or everywhere, but late arrival is frequent.”
[Female, aged 20-35, Kutaisi resident]

“What I can say about a medical emergency is that you need to call Tbilisi, then Tbilisi will report to Kutaisi. For example, my neighbor died last year; we called the ambulance and when they arrived my neighbor was already dead… I called Tbilisi, and they did not know the location, I explained, then another call was made, it took 5 or 6 calls…” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

According to the results of the quantitative component, the primary reason for respondents’ dissatisfaction was related to the promptness of the arrival of the ambulance (15%), while 8% reported dissatisfaction with personnel competence, and 7% reported dissatisfaction with the late arrival, or non-arrival, of a fire brigade. On the other hand, the prompt arrival of a fire brigade was the most-cited reason for respondents’ satisfaction (66%), followed by personnel competence (54%), and the prompt service of the operator (51%).
Table 14. Positive and Negative Factors of Services Provided by 112 (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reason for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Reason for satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of service of operator</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of service of brigade</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of brigade</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness/favorable attitude of brigade</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late arrival / non-arrival</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganized / unpleasant procedures</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>1019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by the Social Service Agency (SSA)

Among the surveyed population, 35% were not informed about the services provided by the SSA. As for awareness of specific services, similar to 2016, the leading service is social assistance (2016 – 51%; 2019 – 18%).

Chart 41. Awareness of Services Provided by the Social Service Agency (SSA) (Population Survey)
As for the use of services offered by the SSA, when compared to 2016, the rate of use of universal healthcare has significantly increased (2016 – 11%; 2019 – 21%). The leading service of the agency, in terms of uptake, is applying for social assistance which stayed at a consistent level for both years (2016 – 11%; 2019 – 10%).

**Chart 42. Use of Services Provided by the SSA Over the Last Year (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying for social assistance</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C program</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying for pecuniary social assistance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 2400

The level of satisfaction with services provided by the SSA is high overall, but the levels of satisfaction with applying for both social assistance and pecuniary social assistance is comparatively low. This is mostly attributable to applications being rejected rather than the quality of service per se. Among respondents, 34% were dissatisfied with their experience of applying for social assistance, while 18% expressed dissatisfaction in relation to applying for pecuniary social assistance. Compared to the 2016 baseline data, the level of satisfaction with the following SSA services has increased: applying for social assistance (2016 – 54%; 2019 – 66%); and the universal healthcare program (2016 – 88%; 2019 – 90%). As for the Hepatitis C program, every respondent (100%) was satisfied with this service in 2016, but the level of satisfaction dipped slightly to 96% in 2019.

**Chart 43. Satisfaction with Services Provided by the SSA (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal healthcare program</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 502</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying for social assistance</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 278</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C program</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 133</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying for pecuniary social assistance</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most-cited reasons for being satisfied with obtained services included the attentiveness of personnel (65%), promptness of implementation (41%), and personnel competence (40%), while the most-cited reasons for dissatisfaction included queue management (12%), inattentiveness of personnel (10%) and service fees (10%).

**Table 15. Positive and Negative Factors When Assessing SSA Services (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Reason for satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness of personnel</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of personnel</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of implementation</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment in the center</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue management</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service fees</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of obtained information</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>790</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noteworthy that, according to the results of 2019, the awareness of profile programs offered by the SSA has increased significantly since 2016. In particular, 72% of respondents in 2019 were aware of the program focused on female victims of domestic violence, a notable increase from 48% in 2016. Awareness of all programs has improved, including programs for disabled persons (2016 – 48%; 2019 – 69%), children (2016 – 40%; 2019 – 68%), and women’s social issues (2016 – 31%; 2019 – 49%).

**Chart 44. Awareness of Targeted Programs of the SSA (Population Survey)**

- **Issues of female victims of domestic violence**: 72%
- **Issues of disabled persons**: 69%
- **Children’s issues**: 68%
- **Improvement of women’s social issues**: 49%

**N = 2400**

**Use and Evaluation of Agriculture-related Services and Local Self-government Services**

Similar to 2016, the rate of use of agriculture-related services was low in 2019, which is largely attributable to the specific nature of these services (2016 – 2%; 2019 – 6%). Due to insufficient data, it is difficult to analyze the results for each service separately. However, based on the existing data it can be concluded that the Agricultural Projects Management Agency and the Agriculture/Agriculture Development Agency are the leading agencies with respect to the provision of such services.

As for self-government services, the main provider is City Hall/Gamgeoba. The rate of applications to Council and Village Trustees is relatively low. Compared to the baseline period, the picture has not changed significantly in terms of the use of services in general or in terms of the use of specific services.
Various self-government bodies frequently receive applications for one-time allowance or for various types of funding. The table below presents the cited reasons for applying to self-government bodies by different agencies.

### Table 16. Services Used by Respondents (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Permit/registration documents</th>
<th>Infrastructural issues</th>
<th>One-time allowance/ Various types of funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City hall/Gamgeoba</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Trustees</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
<td><strong>214</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents who had had experience of communicating with self-government bodies stated that the procedure of applying to these bodies is simple (74%), and assessed the communication of the district/municipality administration with applicants as efficient (68%). Some criticism was however expressed in relation to the extent to which services met citizens’ needs. According to 21% of respondents, the self-government body had made no attempt to meet consumers’ needs. Nevertheless, more positive evaluations were received than critical feedback but, when compared to other agencies, self-government bodies can be considered the weakest link in public service delivery.

### Chart 46. Self-governing Bodies Solving Problems of Respondents and/or their Family Members (Population Survey)

- They solved problem(s) I applied about: 42%
- Problem was partially solved: 28%
- They did not solve any problem and did not even attempt to do so: 21%
- They made an effort to help, but the problem was not solved due to factors beyond their control: 8%

N=620
Respondents also evaluated whether the district/municipality government takes the needs of various groups into consideration. According to the results, at least seven in every ten respondents claimed that local government takes into consideration the needs of children (75%), disabled persons (74%), and female victims of domestic violence (71%). Meanwhile, respondents were less convinced that the district/municipality government takes the needs of women and the entire population of the municipality into account.

**Table 17. Consideration of the Needs of Various Groups by District / Municipality Government (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs of population of municipality</th>
<th>Does not consider at all</th>
<th>Does not consider</th>
<th>Considers</th>
<th>Totally considers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs of population of municipality</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of women</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of female victims of domestic violence</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of children</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of disabled persons</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that a significant proportion of consumers have had a negative experience when communicating with self-government bodies, when compared to other agencies, it is perhaps unsurprising that the share of consumers giving an overall negative evaluation of local self-government services is considerable (23%). This trend remains similar to the 2016 level.

**Chart 47. Satisfaction with Self-government Services (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 456

Respondents evaluated the parameters of the self-government services they liked and disliked most of all. According to the results, the attentiveness of personnel was considered the most important parameter, with 65% of respondents naming this as the most important criterion. A lack of attentiveness of personnel was one of the main reasons for disappointment with services for 13% of respondents. Other reasons for dissatisfaction related to promptness of service (13%) and the clarity of obtained information (12%).
Table 18. Positive and Negative Elements of Services Provided by Local Self-government Bodies (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Reason for satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness of personnel</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of personnel</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of implementation</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment in the center</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue management</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service fees</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of obtained information</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the qualitative component, there was a clear difference in opinion between respondents from Tbilisi and those from Kutaisi with regard to the work of local self-government bodies. Respondents who had had any communication with the City Hall/Gamgeoba in Tbilisi mostly gave positive evaluations, while numerous concerns were raised about such communication by Kutaisi respondents.

Importantly, the respondents in Kutaisi did not consider the city to have genuine and effective self-government, which they cited as a major factor in various problems in general.

“It is being administered from Tbilisi. The Mayor is appointed from Tbilisi, as well as the head of the Council. Self-government is just a name; it says self-governing, but it is not actually. Kutaisi has not elected this governance; it is centralized and this says it all.” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“Governance is the main thing; where it comes from, our city is self-governing, but it is not in reality…this is centralized governance.” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“If decentralization takes place, we will take care of ourselves and we will use everything of our own.” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

In addition, respondents expressed disappointment regarding alleged political influence and nepotism in City Hall. There was near unanimous agreement among group participants that recruitment and appointment of employees in Kutaisi City Hall was conducted based on nepotism and political affiliation. Another problem cited with regard to Kutaisi City Hall was the extensive number of staff and level of bureaucracy, which respondents claimed significantly hindered the effectiveness of the work of the self-governing body.

“Self-government is not distinguished by a high level of qualification. There are serious problems with professionalism.” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“When I was in City Hall last year regarding my child’s employment, they told me “not yet.” I told them I was in between, they told me that everyone on Kharebava street is a supporter of the National Movement.” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“There are too many useless positions in City Hall. Too many people are employed who don’t know what they are doing.” [Male, aged 25-35, Kutaisi resident]
Use and Evaluation of Services Provided by Other Agencies

Apart from the services provided by the Civil Registry Department of the Public Service Development Agency, the MIA’s Service Agency, 112, the Social Service Agency (SSA) and local self-government, respondents were also asked to evaluate the services of other public service providers.

Based on survey results, however, the rate of use of services provided by other agencies was very low and did not exceed 5% for any such provider. Only 5% of respondents reported having used the services provided by the Revenue Service, 4% had used those of the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC), and 2% reported having used the services provided by the National Bureau of Enforcement. Within the small proportion of respondents who had used services provided by the Revenue Service, the NAEC or the National Bureau of Enforcement, the evaluations of the services were quite positive, largely due to the personnel’s attentiveness and competence, and the promptness of service.

Chart 48. Use of Services Provided by Other Agencies Over the Last Year (Population Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Usage Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Service</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEC</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Bureau of Enforcement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=2400

5.5.2. Policy and Practice of E-service Delivery

In the field of public service delivery, apart from the creation of public services and the development of a unified delivery policy, the following examples of progress have been made in terms of e-services:

- **A unified electronic portal (My.gov.ge)** was updated, in order to improve users’ experience. The interface of the portal has been improved and navigation therein has been simplified. A total of 63 central government services are available for physical entities, while legal entities have access to 92 services. Up to 80 utility payments can also be made for the private sector companies using the portal.

- A special section **for legal entities** was added to the portal, including e-services that are available for legal entities only. For example, there is a service on the portal which enables a director (or eligible person) from a legal entity to issue a power of attorney to a natural person and grant the authority to receive a particular service on behalf of the legal entity, which simplifies the everyday work of the relevant legal entities. Thanks to a strong emphasis being
placed on integration, several services of the private sector have been added to my.gov.ge since 2018.

- As of 2018, in 55 municipalities the integration of 370 municipal e-services into the citizens’ portal my.gov.ge had been completed.
- The Data Exchange Agency, based on consumer feedback, has made efforts to improve its services that, overall, will help to increase the uptake of services.
- The Data Exchange Agency has developed a package of legislative changes, according to which public agencies will be obliged to make their services available in electronic form.
- Certain services in various areas have been added to the portal (my.gov.ge) since 2017.

2017
- Municipal Services – 370;
- Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) – 1;
- Agency of Nuclear and Radiation Safety – 23;
- Produce in Georgia – 2.

2018
- National Agency of Public Registry – 20;
- Land Transport Agency – 12;

2019
- GNERC – 2;
- Data Exchange Agency – 2;
- Business Ombudsman – 1;
- Entrepreneurial Registry – 5;
- Property Registration – 5;
- Mortgage/lease Registry – 5;
- Land Transport Agency – 2;
- Registry of Economic Activity – 2.

With the support of international partners, the knowledge and experience accumulated within e-services has been collated in order to prepare e-governance and training materials regarding cyber-safety. Public servants have thus gained access to basic training courses in cyber-safety. More than 70 civil servants (including employees of the Data Exchange Agency and other institutions) attended trainings on the development of e-services, as well as on information systems and cyber-safety. In addition, an electronic study module for electronic management and cyber-safety trainings has been developed, which, from a long-term perspective, will ensure the continued availability of up-to-date information.

In order to share the successful outcomes achieved in e-service delivery and to increase level of trustworthiness towards the e-service, a Competence Center concept has been developed. Information on successful reforms has been collected from various state agencies and posted on the webpage of the Competence Center launched in the reporting period. The goal of the Competence

66 Based on information obtained from the Data Exchange Agency, they are working on insurance services, while utility services are already integrated
Center is to provide interested countries and delegations visiting Georgia with information on the reforms and associated achievements of Georgia, and, where applicable, to assist them with implementing similar reforms. Within this process, a memorandum with the e-Governance Unit of UN University was signed, envisaging the sharing of best practices and the organizing of joint events in the field of e-governance.

Results of the mid-term quantitative study implemented in 2019 confirmed that, compared to 2016, the rate of ownership of an ID card among citizens of Georgia increased by 10%.

**Chart 49. Possessing an ID Card (Population Survey)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID card possession - 2016</th>
<th>65%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID card possession - 2019</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 2400

Despite increased possession, when it comes to using an ID card to perform electronic operations, the awareness level of respondents was very low. Indeed, most had not used this service. According to the results of the quantitative survey, the vast majority (84%) of those who held an ID Card declared that they had never performed any electronic operation with their card. In this regard, there has been no positive development since 2016. As noted above, in general, the awareness level of e-services was very low, as also confirmed during the focus group discussions. Many citizens in Tbilisi as well as in other administrative regions stated they did not know what operations they could perform electronically using their ID Cards.

The low rates of awareness and use are evidenced by the fact that an absolute majority of respondents had no experience of submitting any application in electronic form to public agencies and that, in order to obtain a service, most definitely preferred to visit the relevant public agency in person. The proportion of respondents who had downloaded an e-form from the webpage of a public agency or had submitted a completed application electronically was very small (4% and 2%, respectively). Data are too scarce to enable us to perform analysis of any kind on this issue.

As for the use of websites of public agencies to obtain information, the situation has improved compared to 2016. During the baseline period, only 6% of respondents reported having obtained information from the webpages of public institutions, but this increased to 12% in 2019. This clearly indicates that the level of use of online resources in the field of public services remains low, but at least has an upward trajectory.
The most actively used of all webpages of public institutions is that of the Public Service Hall. Among respondents who had obtained information from the webpage of a public institution, 31% reported using the webpage of this agency. The next most frequently used webpages were those of the Revenue Service (25%), my.gov.ge – citizens’ portal (23%), the NAPR (18%) and the Pension Agency (10%). None of the other webpages of public institution were mentioned at any significant rate.

The qualitative survey meanwhile revealed a generally positive attitude among respondents towards e-services in general, with almost none of the respondents expressing any kind of negative attitude towards receiving public services in electronic form. However, only a very small proportion of respondents had actually used e-services.

The majority of respondents named the absence of any need as the main reason for them not using e-services, with a significant number of respondents claiming they prefer to personally visit the agency for a service, even if it can be obtained electronically. Consequently, raising awareness among the population about e-services will be crucially important if their rate of use is to increase.

5.5.3. Inclusivity of Service and Quality Assurance

An important goal of the reform in the public service delivery field is to ensure the availability of services for citizens with special needs. Accordingly, the PAR Roadmap 2020 envisages making services available to citizens with special needs, such as disabled persons, elderly citizens, and foreigners.

In addition, the public service design and delivery policy document, developed with the support of donor organizations and the involvement of international experts, the improvement of public service delivery for people with special needs as a standalone objective. In this regard, service providers should ensure the existence of accessible infrastructure and procedures. According to the policy document, this should refer to e-services as well as services provided in person.

In this regard, the results of the population study were particularly interesting. According to nearly every fourth (24%) citizen of Georgia, public institutions do not provide a suitable environment for disabled persons that would enable them to use the services offered by these institutions. Meanwhile, according to 22%, there is no problem in this area, while more than half (54%) of respondents stated that the conditions of the public institutions have been partially adapted to accommodate disabled persons.
Chart 51. Evaluation of the Suitability of the Conditions for Disabled Persons to Obtain Services in Public Institutions (Population Survey)

| Conditions are fully suitable | 22% |
| Conditions are partially suitable | 54% |
| Conditions are not suitable | 24% |

N = 2400

The outlook was almost identical in terms of services tailored to the needs of disabled persons. According to 20% of the Georgian population, services are fully tailored, while 55% stated that services are partially tailored and one-quarter (25%) claimed that public services are not tailored to the needs of disabled persons.

Chart 52. Evaluation of Services Tailored to Disabled Persons (Population Survey)

| Services are fully tailored | 20% |
| Services are partially tailored | 55% |
| Services are not tailored | 25% |

N = 2400

Within the qualitative component’s focus group discussion, participants expressed their opinions on how effectively public institutions communicated with specific groups of people, such as single mothers, disabled persons, and socially vulnerable residents.

Here, a special emphasis was placed by respondents on socially vulnerable residents. Discussion participants agreed that the process of assigning points to them is often unfair, with many pointing to the vagueness of criteria according to which vulnerability status is defined.

“This social status is a dream for some, and you can’t figure out who has it and who does not.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“My employee was provided with social assistance, and she was told that as soon as it is terminated, she would be evicted from their apartment. She has not moved in yet and is afraid of being evicted if her status is terminated.” [Female, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“It is wrong when social agents come to assess. How can they give scores based on a residential area or someone’s space? They deduct scores when someone gives you something for free.” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]
Group participants agreed that representatives of the mentioned vulnerable groups require more attention from the state. According to many of the discussion participants, vulnerable groups do not have any privileges and public institutions often fail to effectively communicate with them.

“In general, there is a situation that these people cannot use many services; they cannot even use transport on their own.” [Male, aged 36-65, Tbilisi resident]

“I do not have personal experience, but I have the impression that they do not have any privileges. They should have them, but they do not.” [Male, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

“I am a single mother, and there is another single woman who is divorced and raises her child on her own. Since she still has her husband’s last name, the State does not help her. I don’t receive any assistance either.” [Female, aged 36-65, Kutaisi resident]

5.5.4. Gender Aspects of PAR

In order to identify gender-sensitive aspects, gender issues were studied within each component (analysis of secondary materials, survey of public servants and population) of the study.

Representation of women in the civil sector is considered to be of critical importance, given that decision-making bodies create rules that affect the rights, behaviors and life choices of all people (men and women). In general, an increase in the representation of women in the civil sector, and especially in decision-making positions, results in the mainstreaming of issues such as the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted a Law on Gender Equality in March 2010, which aimed at prohibiting gender discrimination in all fields of public life and promoted equal rights for both women and men. According to chapter six of the Law on Gender Equality, which refers to labor aspects of gender equality, the state should support the equal availability of employment opportunities for both genders. In addition, it is important to ensure equal accessibility of civil services for women and men, and to consider women’s special needs, if any, in the process of designing public services.

According to the annual reports of the Civil Service Bureau, the number of female employees in the public sector has increased consistently, by 2% annually, since 2016. The increase of female employees (excluding the data of the MIA) is even higher: 3% in 2017; 9% in 2018. The same applies to the hiring of women in high-ranking positions: compared to 2016, the share of females in managerial positions has increased by 4%, while in 2018 the share of females in managerial positions increased by 13%.66,67

---

66 Civil Service Bureau report of 2017
67 Civil Service Bureau report of 2018
According to the Civil Service Bureau’s annual report of 2018, in terms of achieving gender equality, the fact that evaluation of managerial positions is based on ranking (first and second ranks) can be considered as progress. However, international indicators tend to break down such data further, with a clear distinction between first- and second-rank positions, rather than combining the two under one category. At present, the annual reports of the Civil Service Bureau do not provide information on indicators that would more accurately describe the gender situation, such as outlining the fields in which women are represented in first- and second-rank positions. It was demonstrated in an international study that women are mostly represented in socio-cultural fields when it comes to first- and second-rank positions in post-Soviet states, which leads to horizontal segregation. Segregation, both horizontal and vertical, is an important indicator of gender equality according to the UN and other international organizations (e.g. International Labour Organization).

In addition to official statistics, an analysis of the research results revealed that, according to civil servants, the situation in terms of gender equality has improved in Georgia over the past decade. In addition, the absolute majority of stakeholders interviewed within the study declared that women and men working in the civil sector have equal opportunities of employment and promotion, and that there is a unified approach in terms of gender issues. Indeed, Georgian Legislation ensures the equal participation of women in the civil sector.

---


70 Gender equality in public administration, UNDP, 2017. [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/UNDP-Gender%20equality%20in%20public%20administration.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/UNDP-Gender%20equality%20in%20public%20administration.pdf)
Within the mid-term study of civil servants, no significant differences were revealed based on gender. 6% of female civil servants and 6% of male civil servants agreed with the statement that management makes a clear distinction of duties by gender. In addition, the share of women and men who claimed that the hiring and dismissal process of employees in the civil sector is implemented fairly and that employees are provided with professional development opportunities equally, was almost equal.

Despite the fact that the civil servant study did not reveal any significant differences in gender, there were differing opinions and attitudes observed between women and men in some situations:

- More men (45%) than women (37%) agreed with the statement that success in a career depends on merit;
- Male civil servants (49%) were more confident than their female counterparts (37%) that they will not be punished for filing any formal procedure in the agency, including appealing the decision of a superior.

As for gender differences in terms of using public services, a detailed analysis of the opinions of women and men towards the use of services and satisfaction levels has been conducted within the scope of the PAR mid-term study. Notably, the assessment of women and men with respect to the accessibility of services did not differ in most institutions. The only exception here was the services of the SSA, the awareness of which was higher among women than men. Some important observations are noted below:

- 71% of surveyed women had heard of SSA programs focusing on improving the situation of female victims of domestic violence and disabled persons, while only 60% of surveyed men had heard of the same services;
- 76% of women had heard of programs for female victims of domestic violence, while 68% of men were informed about these programs;
- 54% of women and 43% of men were informed about programs on women’s social issues.

Overall, women are more informed about the programs offered by the Social Service Agency than men, which could be explained by women having a greater need to apply for the relevant services. Such a situation is partly attributable to the assignments of duties traditionally performed by women in the family in Georgia.

In terms of employment in the civil sector, this was found to be more attractive for women than for men. According to the population study, 56% of surveyed women would like to work in the public sector, compared to 47% of men.
Annex #1 – a list of documents mentioned within the scope of the study

1. PAR Roadmap 2020
2. 2015-2017 Strategy of Policy Planning system reform
3. Consolidated report on PAR implementation / Secretariat of PAR Council / 2020
4. PAR Action Plan 2019-2020
5. CSB annual report of 2018
6. CSB Annual report of 2017
8. Ordinance of the Government of Georgia №627 dated on November 19, 2014 on Approval of Public Service Reform and some activities related to it
10. Digital Georgia – strategy and action plan of e-Georgia for 2014-2018
11. Constitution of Georgia
12. Georgian Law on Public Service
13. Georgian Law on “Public Service Development Agency”
17. Ordinance of the Government of Georgia #243, May 22 of 2018 on “Defining rule of conducting and thematic of certification of professional civil servants”
18. Ordinance of the Government of Georgia N204, April 21 of 2017 on the rule of competition in civil service
22. Public Administration Reform in Georgia Implementation Context Analysis 2017
23. Public Administration Reform in Georgia Implementation Context Analysis 2018
# Annex #2 – a list of sub-legal acts issued / enacted in 2017, 2018 and the first half of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name of normative act</th>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Date of enactment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Ordinance of the Government of on “Defining rule of conducting and thematic of certification of professional civil servants” | 22/05/2018       | 24/05/2018  
(Was published)  
Entered into forced after being published |
| 2  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia on “Approval of rule for defining professional development needs of professional civil servants, standard and rule of professional development” | 22/05/2018       | 24/05/2018  
(Was published)  
Entered into forced after being published |
| 3  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On name of positions of professional civil servants and rule of distribution in hierarchy ranks, defining hierarchy list of ranks of servants that belong to the respective hierarchy rank” | 26/04/2017       | 28/04/2017  
(Was published)  
Entered into forced after being published |
| 4  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On conducting competition in public service”    | 21/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 5  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On rules and conditions of evaluation of professional civil servant” | 28/04/2017       | 01/01/2018 |
| 6  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On rules and conditions of using leave of absence by civil servant for professional development” | 23/05/2018       | 01/07/2017  
(Was published)  
Entered into forced after being published |
| 7  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On defining rule of sending professional civil servant on assignment, reimbursement for costs of assignment duty, amount and terms of compensation for it” | 25/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 8  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On rule of part-time work in civil servant, work during night hours, holidays and weekends, work under working conditions that contain risk for health” | 21/04/2017       | Ordinance went in force together with Georgian law  
“On reimbursement of labor in public service”. |
| 9  | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On approving standard forms of administrative agreement” | 25/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 10 | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On the rule of mobility of professional civil servant” | 20/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 11 | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On rules and conditions of assigning classes to professional civil servants” | 28/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 12 | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On defining special requirements necessary for each hierarchy rank of professional civil servant” | 28/04/2017       | 01/07/2017 |
| 13 | Ordinance of the Government of Georgia “On rule of incentives for professional civil servant” | 21/04/2017       | 01/01/2018 |