

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the research is to assess the representation of ethnic minorities, in particular, Azerbaijani and Armenian-speaking groups, in civil service and identify barriers that limit their active engagement in this sector. In addition, the study evaluates the practices of data collection on civil servants' ethnic background in accordance with the indicator of Sustainable Development Goals and examines the perspectives of different stakeholders on this issue.

The methodology of the study is based on a mixed-method design and combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Focus group discussions were conducted with HR managers employed in civil service, civil servants from ethnic minorities, and Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking individuals interested in employment in the civil service. In the course of the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with the representatives of civil service and civil society organizations. As a part of the quantitative analysis, the demographic profile of civil servants has been studied, focusing on gender and the proportion of women in managerial positions. The analysis has been carried out country-wide and additionally, in municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities.



## KEY FINDINGS

Ethnic minority civil servants consider their limited Georgian language skills to be the biggest challenge in civil service. However, they also believe that language skills are less likely to pose barriers to their employment or promotion in civil service at the municipal level. It should be noted that the importance of fluency in the Georgian language increases if civil servants want to advance in their career in civil service at the regional or national levels.

Civil servants who participated in the study believe that ethnic minorities are not being discriminated against or treated differently in the workplace based on their ethnicity. Although, such cases have been reported when they interact with civil servants beyond their municipality. HR managers believe that strengthening state efforts to improve the knowledge of the Georgian language among ethnic minorities is the only way to increase the engagement of ethnic minorities and do not see the need for other initiatives for their integration.

Based on the quantitative data analysis, female participation rates in the target municipalities are not lower than those in other municipalities. However, due to the lack of data on ethnicity, the share of ethnic minority women among the female civil servants in target municipalities cannot be determined. Quantitative analysis suggests that the engagement of ethnic minority women, especially Azerbaijani-speaking women, in civil service remains a challenge.

1+4 internship program is an important mechanism for increasing the engagement of young people from ethnic minority groups in civil service. Internship program is being implemented as part of the partnership arrangement between the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and the Civil Service Bureau and provides the opportunity for the young people from ethnic minority groups to be engaged in an internship program in public entities from one to six months. However, the effectiveness of this program is limited as it does not ensure the employment of program graduates in the public sector. Also, the study revealed that in many cases, public agencies fail to use the potential of bilingual young people effectively.

In the municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, there are certain practices for collecting data on civil servants' ethnicity. However, this data is not consolidated at the national level in the Civil Service Bureau. The methodology used by individual municipalities is inconsistent and, in many cases, does not meet the principles of self-identification and anonymity stipulated in international standards.

Civil society organizations largely support the collection of data on civil servants' ethnicity for assessing and further enhancing the representation of these groups in civil service. However, the attitudes differ among civil servants and HR managers. Compared to the Armenian-speaking group, Azerbaijani-speaking civil servants are more supportive of data collection on ethnicity.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

For accurate analysis of the representation of ethnic minority groups in civil service, a legal basis and a unified methodology should be developed to collect data on ethnicity. At the same time, to ensure the collection of valid information, civil servants need to be properly informed about the importance and purpose of collecting ethnicity data.

Along with data collection, effective steps should be taken at the policy level to increase the engagement of ethnic minority groups in civil service. It is important to ensure that the engagement of ethnic minority groups is not limited to the municipal level, and real opportunities for their professional growth are created at the regional and national levels. To achieve this, it is recommended to strengthen the internship component of the 1+4 program, expand the opportunities for learning Georgian, introduce appropriate mechanisms in the recruitment process, raise the awareness of HR managers and other civil servants on ethnic diversity issues.



Research



Prepared by the PMC Research Centre with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UK aid from the UK Government. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP and UK aid from the UK Government.