



CIVIL SERVICE REFORM DONOR COORDINATION MEETING

16 May, 2013 at the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia

SUMMARY

Civil Service Reform donor coordination meeting objectives:

- Receive overview from the Civil Service Bureau on activities, donor assistance, achievements, challenges up-to-date;
- Receive overview of donor activities (past/present/future) and lessons learned;
- Determine interest for joint projects/synergies among donors;
- Revive inclusive discussion on further implementation of Civil Service Reform;
- Determine interest and objectives of all stakeholders in the reform process.

Participants: Separate list provided

GENERAL

The meeting was the first attempt to coordinate donor effort in support of Georgia's civil service reform. All donors appreciated that this meeting was convened and requested it to be continued on a regular basis with the Georgian Government taking the lead. NATO-Georgia Professional Development Programme (initiator of the meeting) explained that it was a one-time activity on part of NATO. At the moment the Government does not have one designated body to coordinate all donor efforts, but State Chancellery is looking into the possibilities of either establishing or designating a body responsible for overall coordination of reform as well as donors' support.

KEY MESSAGES DELIVERED BY DONOR ORGANISATIONS

- The donors have not seen desired outcomes of their support efforts to the civil service reform due to lack of uniform vision on part of Georgian Government, which has prevented enforcing core principles (political independence, merit) in existing legislation, and institutionalizing HRM standards and best practices in government agencies.
- There is a need for a clear vision on public administration reform, with the civil service being one of the focal elements.



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- The Government and donors recognize that it is of utmost importance to ensure politically independent and merit-based civil service. Transparency and integrity are key values.
- In order to develop the vision on public administration reform, assessment of past and ongoing efforts is essential.
- One body for public/civil service reform coordination must be formed or designated within the Government. A proposal was tabled to set up a Reform Coordination Group compiled from representatives of all relevant government institutions.
- Public service reform cannot be viewed independently of other reforms. There is a need to ensure accountability, transparency, security and justice as enforcement mechanisms. Likewise, personnel of local municipalities should receive more attention.
- Further professionalization of the civil service is important. There should be effective usage of current assets (governmental training centres, training of trainers, etc, and development of a Government's policy for professional development of civil servants.
- Further coordination of donor activities is required and expected to be organized by the Government.

REMARKS/PRESENTATIONS FROM THE GEORGIAN SIDE

During the introduction the **Head of the Chancellery of the Government of Georgia Ms. Maya Tskitishvili** emphasized that the Government considers the reform as one of its priorities, but wishes to look at it from wider perspective of public administration reform and how it links up with other reforms, like court system reform. The local municipalities should also be viewed as part of it. The new Government has already taken steps to explore policy options for the reform with the help of SIGMA and has consulted with relevant government agencies, the Parliament and NGO experts. It is important to acknowledge and use effectively the existing resources for reform implementation and civil service development. There is a need for clear evaluation of previous efforts, especially regarding legislation, with the aim of taking a decision on whether these laws and regulations can be retained and improved, or whether is there a need for the development of a completely new framework. The desired values of public administration have been defined in the new Government's manifesto aiming for career-based civil service, political neutrality, merit and protection of civil servants. Currently the role of the State Chancellery is being discussed to lead the reform efforts.

Director of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) Mr. Irakli Kotetishvili presented the background of the reform, main stake holders, trends in the reform and challenges (presentation provided separately). The challenges identified by the CSB: lack of clear vision on what kind of civil service Georgia needs; lack of



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political ownership; insufficient human and material resources to implement the reform; and lack of institutional memory. Same challenges were also reiterated by several donors during the discussion. In addition, the vision of the Civil Service Bureau in regard of the future civil service reform was presented: full depoliticisation of the civil service by separating executive and political positions; merit-based recruitment and appointment; reforming HR departments by applying modern techniques and methodologies; reforming pay and bonus systems; setting up continuous training curricula for the Georgian civil servants; further enhancement of e-governance projects.

Head of the EU Assistance Coordination Department of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Mr. Roman Kakulia: Government considers close cooperation with SIGMA helpful for the development of a vision for civil service reform. The core values for civil service are defined by the new Government: merit and political neutrality. Issue of guarantees provided for a civil servant requires attention in order to ensure a sense of security. The Government needs adequate tools to assess the current situation and potential impact of the reform.

DONOR EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVITIES

NATO-Georgia PDP: The activities so far have included assessment of draft civil service code developed by the CSB; support to CSB's Knowledge Transfer Campaign by providing operational and tactical level training and experience sharing opportunities for government HR managers; Civil Service Reform Conference in June 2012; development of an HR Manual for government agencies in cooperation with USAID/MSI. Desired end-state – relevant legislative framework developed enforcing merit principle and division of political and executive powers; institutionalized HRM practices across the government; self-sustained civil service professional development capacity in the form of centralized government approach/policy and training centre. Future plans: support development of public sector reform policy options; support further training of HR managers of government institutions; support centralized civil servant training capacity. NATO-Georgia PDP is open for synergies and looks for cooperation on projects implemented by other major donors.

Open Society Foundation Georgia: Politically independent civil service is of utmost importance. There is a need of clear definition what is a civil servant. The pay system also needs to be addressed to create a joint, transparent system for salaries and bonuses. Professionalism of civil servants needs to be increased. OSFG runs Rule of Law – Good Governance programme. Until now OSFG has mostly supported monitoring projects (premium bonuses, transparency of government, etc) as the organization did not see opportunities for implementation of reform oriented projects.

USAID Georgia: Politically independent civil service is of utmost importance. USAID supports good governance projects and civil service reform effort in Georgia for over 10 years. However, the output has not been satisfactory. USAID welcomes new government's recognition of the need for public service reform and stands ready to continue providing support. The local municipalities require more attention, especially in the view of recent shift of staff following change of political power.



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MSI/G3 (The project funded by USAID): MSI proposes an initiative to help develop concept for the reform implementation (project description provided separately):

- White paper: assessment of past and current
- Dialogue process: government, NGOs, international consultancy
- Debate with wider society: using regional centres for civic engagement
- Operational plans: how to implement the reform (by the end of the year)

MSI informed that 2013 is the last year for G3 project. For the remaining year MSI is conducting training of up to 3000 civil servants (July-December); developing the HR Manual for government agencies (includes novelty – chapter on Gender Issues); is ready to develop concept on government's capacity to train civil servants. MSI is open for cooperation with other donors.

GIZ: Following Georgian-German government consultations it was agreed that the German side will support the public administration reform, thus providing GIZ with official mandate. Besides general consultations on public administration and the civil service reform, GIZ's Legal Programme focuses on transparency and integrity in the public sector. GIZ offers assistance in the areas of: recruitment system, performance appraisal, asset declaration, and ethics. Regarding training in ethics, along the in-classroom training also an e-learning module will be developed. GIZ plans to introduce Training of Trainers element to their activities. GIZ also works with Armenia and Azerbaijan and is open for cooperation with other donors.

European Union Delegation to Georgia: The public sector reform is part of Neighbourhood Action Plan. However, until now EU has not seen expected progress and results due to lack of firm policy from the government's side. SIGMA has developed a policy options paper which will be handed over to the government. The paper is based on the experience from previous SIGMA's work in Georgia. It is important to depoliticize the civil service and base the reform on EU principles (integrity, merit, etc) in order to make it stable. It is also important to have a clear definition of civil servant. The EU has allocated ½ million Euros for the Civil Service Bureau to support reform efforts. The EU views civil service as the key component in the Justice, HR and public sector reforms. Future priorities:

- Support to e-governance projects;
- Producing uniform standards for civil servants;
- Decentralization of civil service and reducing discretion of managers;
- Support to SIGMA activities.

SIGMA will continue work with the Prime Minister's office and also contribute to the discussion of the role of the State Chancellery in coordinating the reform process. SIGMA will also look into the state procurement reform and contribute to government's anti-corruption efforts. The expected visit is planned for either end of May or June.

NATO Liaison Office: The NLO expects a voluntary national contribution from an Allied country by autumn – new staff officer to work on civil service reform in the NLO. It is important to view other



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reforms – like the court system reform – in the context of public service reform. There is a need for enforcement and accountability mechanisms.