UNDP Georgia

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Final External Evaluation of the "Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia- DGG –" Project

Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and co-funded by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI)

Executed by UNDP under National Implementation Modality

for an amount of USD 4,075,519.45

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Final evaluation report

22 January 2024

Table 1. Project and evaluation information details

	Project/outcome Information
Project/outcome title	Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia - DGG
Project Number	00109456
Corporate outcome and output	CPD 2016-2020 Outcome 1, Output 1.4. SP 2018-2021 Output 1.2.1: Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development and deliver basic services including HIV and related services CPD (2021-2025) Outcome 1, Output 1.1. Inclusive national and local governance systems have greater resilience and capacities to mainstream gender, ensure evidence-based and participatory policymaking, map and address inequalities and deliver quality services to all. UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025): Output 2.3 Responsive governance systems and local governance strengthened for socio economic opportunity, inclusive basic service delivery, community security, and peacebuilding
Country	Georgia
Region	Caucasus
Date project document signed	27 December 2017

	Start	Planned end
Project dates	23rd March 2018	31st December 2023

Total committed budget	US$ 4,075,519.45
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	US$ 3,664,598 from Denmark US$ 81,341 from GoG
Funding source	Government of Denmark, Government of Georgia (GoG)
Implementing party[1]	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI)

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type	Project evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	23rd March 2018	31st December 2023
Evaluators	Christian Bugnion de Moreta	
Evaluator email address	cbugnion@suburconsulting.es	
Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	15 August 2023	31 October 2023

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[1] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CO:	Country Office
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
DGG:	Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance Project
EU4ITD:	Advancing Decentralized, Effective and Inclusive Governance in Georgia
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FRLD:	Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia
Geostat	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GoG:	Government of Georgia
HRGE:	Human Rights and Gender Equality
KII:	Key Informant Interview
LSG:	Local Self Government
MRDI:	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
MSC:	Most Significant Change
MSDA:	Municipal Service Development Agency
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
NALAG:	National Association of Local Governments of Georgia
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ToC:	Theory of Change
ToR:	Terms of Reference
UNDG:	United Nations Development Group
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG:	United Nations Evaluation Group

1. Executive Summary

The "Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia" – hereafter referred to as DGG – is a five-year project that was started on 23rd March 2018 and was extended until its current completion date of 31st December 2023.

The total project budget was US$ 4,075,519 mostly funded by the Government of Denmark, with a contribution by the Government of Georgia (GoG) of US$ 84,253. The project was executed under National Implementation Modality with the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) as the implementing party. The project goal was to advance "Decentralization and good governance at the local level, through promoting nation-wide policy reform, strengthening institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities, improving local service delivery and enhancing citizen participation in local policy making" as described in the project document. Four outputs contributed to this goal: 1) Improved policy and institutional framework to foster decentralization and promote good governance principles at the local level, 2) Enhanced institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities, 3) Municipal service delivery improved, and 4) Right holders empowered to engage in local policy making and claim their rights.

This final evaluation is taking place as the project is coming to a close. The objective of this final evaluation is to provide an assessment of the project performance and inform decision-making identifying lessons learnt that can inform the development of another project. It is commissioned by the UNDP Country Office and the project M&E specialist as the evaluation manager. The specific objectives of this final external evaluation are:

1) To assess the project implementation and results against the objectives and expected outcomes;
2) Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project;
3) Document lessons learned, good practices and challenges, provide actionable and strategic recommendations for a follow-up phase of the project

The scope of the final evaluation is the entire implementation period of the Project since its start on 23 March 2018 until 31st December 2023, with a particular focus on the last phase of the project since a mid-term evaluation was undertaken in mid-2022[2]. The donor has expressed an interest in supporting a new intervention building on the experience and networks developed under the current project, hence the evaluation was forward looking to provide evidence of results and recommendations that may inform the design of another project. The audience of the report is UNDP, MRDI, municipalities, the Government of Denmark, as well as civil society organisations and development partners.

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[2] Roderick Ackermann, Mid-term Evaluation of the DGG project – Final report, 5th May 2022

Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation used an "Utilization-focused Evaluation" approach, as described by M.Q. Patton in his book of the same name, which has been consistently used as an example of good evaluation practice[3]. The evaluation was largely qualitative and worked from the perspective of the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach, to obtain feedback from the different stakeholder groups, using appreciative inquiry. The combination of methods used are described in the body of the report but included a desk review of the available documentation, in-country field data collection through 19 Key Informant Interviews (KII) at national and municipal levels, and observation. KII also leveraged the perspective of the respondents on two key questions using a five-point rating scale.

The criteria for undertaking the assessment are mentioned in the ToR and are the standard criteria used for project evaluations: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

Key findings

At the central level of the GoG, DGG provided MRDI with capacity development and direct support in preparing and informing the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the two Action Plans for 2020-21 and 2022-23. In addition, the support from a legal expert allowed to review and ensure consistency in the legislation regarding decentralisation. Another key result is the linkages made through the support to the CSB between the national and local institutions in human resource management, something that was not taking place before the project. While the entry point was too advanced for the level of preparation regarding the Public Administration Reform- PAR- (e.g., as requested by CSB itself, DGG supported in rolling-out the performance appraisal (PA) system that is being introduced under the PAR), one important result is that it established through the mentorship programme linkages between the central and local levels which didn't exist before.

At municipal level many changes are taking place, but the key results are: 1) fiscal decentralisation – through the direct grants given to the municipalities, the project has opened an additional source of funds for municipalities that is no longer exclusively coming from the budget of the central government. This is a critical result and highlighted as such by municipalities interviewed, because it makes a substantial difference in widening its resource base. 2) Municipal capacity development linked to the process of establishing the Municipal Development Documents (MDD) and corresponding support from UNDP and NGOs that were providing assistance to the municipalities. Some municipalities interviewed indicated proudly that they are now able to complete the MDD process on their own without further external support. 3) The combination of direct grants implementation and capacity development has contributed to visible results in many municipalities, showing that these are constructive entry points that are vital for the improved performance of local service delivery. With the support to the unit in Geostat in charge of tracking and collecting local level data,

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[3] https://www.utilization-focusedevaluation.org/

the conditions have strongly improved to allow to generate reliable data of local level achievements[4]. The support was given by the DGG project and the EU. 4) A series of pilot projects were undertaken with civil society organisations testing different models of participatory accountability mechanisms, among which: a) participatory budgeting with EDEC, b) women empowerment and local decision making with Association Imedi, c) youth empowerment and participation with EGI, d) local government index with IDFI, e) capacity development training with 63 municipalities by PMCG.

Because different municipalities have different interests and different capacities, the pilots were tested with different target municipalities. For the future of the good governance efforts in Georgia it may be useful to develop an analytic and comparative report on the results from the different types of participatory mechanisms tested to see if some model could emerge, that could also be used for donor coordination.

In terms of the Results Framework, 15 out of 16 output indicators are coloured green (fully achieved or exceeded), while one indicator is coloured yellow (partially achieved). This shows that up to where DGG has attribution, e.g., at the output level, it has fully obtained the expected results.

Conclusions

DGG has provided valuable support and obtained concrete results regarding its support to improved decentralisation and good governance at the local level. DGG largely exceeded the targets of its results framework and went in many cases beyond the initially planned expected results. By working both upstream with the central level and downstream at the municipal level, in an inclusive way venues were opened for collaboration between municipalities and NGOs, DGG contributed to a shift in mindset and attitudes among local actors. If at the national level the single most important result could be the elaboration and implementation of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the technical assistance provided, at the municipal level the key results were, for the municipalities, to obtain direct grants from donors and improve their capacity to manage grants on a learning by doing basis. This was further supported by capacity development through both trainings and joint pilot implementation of innovative projects that contribute to increased transparency, partnership development with civil society organisations, increase citizen awareness and better accountability. Certainly not all 24 municipalities of the three target regions benefitted from the same level of capacity development, as the approach was not a uniform approach particularly regarding the testing of innovative pilots, which targeted only some of the municipalities on trial basis.

The project effectiveness has been high as shown in the achievements of the results framework and according to the **high overall average rating of 4,12 out of 5** given by the KII respondents. UNDP's role has been further recognized and highly rated with an **overall average rating of 4,57 regarding the respondents' satisfaction with UNDP** under DGG. Since decentralisation and good governance at the local level are objectives

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[4] See www.geostat.ge/en

that require a long timeframe, it would be of interest to ensure a consolidation phase of the efforts undertaken by ensuring another phased support over another project period.

The project was able to achieve a good network of partners working for local good governance and has laid a strong foundation for the application of good governance at local level, building on sound programming principles and practices and on the assisted capacity development of the municipal actors. DGG has been instrumental in a strong improvement of local good governance efforts, although the project design was overly ambitious and did not sufficiently describe the expected results from the intervention. There are other partners that also support the decentralisation process, and it is not always clear how the municipalities for the pilots have been selected or targeted, as the rationale for the choice is not provided. Because DGG also worked in synergy with other UNDP executed projects such as FRLD or EU4ITD, there would be a clear advantage in setting up a formal coordination structure, to provide evidence of how the different projects complement each other in some municipalities, and the rationale for the choice of the municipalities. This is one area where greater transparency is warranted. The high number of development partners requires a clearer strategy between like-minded projects to avoid overlap and ensure that responsibilities are defined adequately and attribution to the respective projects can be made. More concrete information on the sharing of the activities across projects is deserved.

Recommendations

1) Consider a consolidation phase for the results obtained to ensure their sustainability
2) Continue direct funding through grants to municipalities and NGOs as part of the capacity building process and consolidation phase
3) Prepare an analytic report on the various pilots on transparency, participation, and accountability, and identify a potential model to be tested for replication about what constitutes local good governance in Georgia. This could be shared and discussed with MRDI and donors to have a blueprint of local good governance in Georgia and avoid different concepts being implemented at the same time.
4) Create a formal coordination structure and information reporting when multiple projects complement each other (e.g., FRLD, DGG, EU4ITD)
5) Justify the choice of the municipalities that are targeted for the pilots and other innovative approaches, when not all municipalities benefit from a given intervention.

Lessons learned

- Strengthening capacity development at the local level is a critical benchmark for improved local good governance.

- Using direct grants managed by municipalities, with the support of the UNDP and of the NGOs, is a learning-by-doing methodology that directly contributes to institutional capacity development

- Ensuring linkages between the central and the local level authorities, such as through the mentoring method used by CSB to roll out performance appraisal of human resources, provides an added value by improving knowledge on the challenges of state administration

- UNDP has a good reputation and is seen as a valuable facilitator that is able to create and open collaborative venues and partnerships between municipalities and civil society organisations

- Piloting and testing innovative approaches implemented through the NGOs with the municipalities should only be part of a wider process: defining what are the mechanisms and tools that are relevant to the context and bring the desired results, so that a model can be identified as roadmap towards local good governance in the country.

- It is important to operationalise the conceptual terms in project documents, so there is no misunderstanding on what the expected results will be. If good governance is defined in DGG by the contents of its results framework, there needs to be a higher-level analysis of what local good governance means in concrete terms. One of the challenges of the other project that DGG had partnership with, FRLD, was to use a term that is not used in Georgia, not even by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development: Local Economic Development. The use of conceptual terms requires an operational framework that allows to streamline the efforts of the different actors and ensures a common understanding.

- A shared approach, in this case, towards what constitutes local good governance in Georgia, mindful of the current context and after Georgia has been recommended to be granted the candidate status by the EU, could bring increased coordination and collaboration value amongst development partners and the GoG.

2. Introduction

UNDP has hired an independent consultant to undertake the Final Evaluation of the Project: "Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia –DGG". The project started on 23rd March 2018 for an initial period of more than five years until 31st March 2023. The project was extended until its current end date of 31st December 2023. The total project budget is USD 4,075,519. --, of which the Government of Denmark contributed US$ 3,953,220.23.— plus US$ 122,299.23.— co-funded by Government of Georgia (GoG) through the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI).

This final evaluation has been contractually foreseen in the project document and has been included in the UNDP evaluation plan. The key evaluation questions have been identified in the inception report and vetted by the evaluation commissioner. This final evaluation is meant to provide evidence of results and accountability to the UNDP, to the donor, the Government of Georgia, MRDI, municipalities and Civil Society Organisations (CSO). It may be published for dissemination and communication purposes. It is undertaken under the oversight of the UNDP Georgia Office. The UNDP evaluation manager is the UNDP project M&E specialist, supported by the Country Office (CO) M&E specialist and UNDP management. Her role is to ensure that the final evaluation remains on track with its work plan and submits the required deliverables. In line with the UNDP policy, the evaluation report is publicly available on the website https://erc.undp.org.

The report is structured according to the UNDP evaluation report template. Following section I Executive summary, this section 2 introduces the evaluation and the intervention evaluated, section 3 describes the project being evaluated, section four defines the evaluation scope and objectives, while section 5 details the evaluation approach and methods used in this final evaluation. Section 6 explains the data analysis process, while section 7 presents the findings. Section 8 draws the conclusions from the findings, and section 9 contains the recommendations, while section 10 draws the lessons from the DGG project.

3. Description of the intervention

This project started on 23rd March 2018 and was established for a five-year duration. With the agreement of the donor, the project has been extended until 31st December 2023.

The overall goal of the project is "decentralization and good governance at the local level advanced, through promoting nation-wide policy reform, strengthening institutional

and human capacities of national and local authorities, improving local service delivery and enhancing citizen participation in local policy making"[5].

The project is structured around four outputs[6]:

The table articulating the different levels of results is as follows:

Table 2. Results Framework Goal/Outcome-Outputs from DGG project document

Goal/Outcome	Indicator
Decentralization and good governance at the local level advanced, through promoting nation-wide policy reform, strengthening institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities, improving local service delivery and enhancing citizen participation in local policy making	*1. Number of subnational governments/ administrations with transparent, accountable and effective planning, budgeting and monitoring systems.* *2. % of Local budgets with the consolidated budget* *3. Level of public satisfaction with local governments. Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities.* *4. Level of citizen engagement in local decision making. Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities.*
Output	**Indicator**
1. Improved policy and institutional framework to foster decentralization and promote good governance principles at the local level	1.1 % of initiatives implemented from the Good Governance Strategy and action plan 1.2. Number of laws and policies adopted or initiated to fulfil GoG's commitment with regard to decentralization 1.3. Number of municipalities with Gender Equality Councils and Gender Equality strategy/action plans in place 1.4. Number of municipalities engaged in Open Government Partnership Initiative
2. Enhanced institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities	2.1. National Training system operational 2.2. Number of municipalities with effective human resources management systems 2.3. Number of municipalities with integrity strengthening systems established 2.4. Number of municipalities which apply gender budgeting and strategic planning guidelines including localizing SDGs 2.5. Number of public officials qualified, including central and local government officials and municipal leadership disaggregated by sex

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[5] DGG project document, Results Framework, p.20
[6] Note that the overall goal of the project mentioned on page 1 of the project document is the same as the outcome statement on p. 10 of the expected results and on p. 20 of the Results Framework, so there is no higher-level goal project specific other than the outcome statement. UNDP should deliver at the outcome level at the end of the project, while the overall goal may be a longer-term objective not within the remit of the project lifetime.

Goal/Outcome	Indicator
3. Municipal service delivery improved	3.1. Number of municipalities with performance management systems for selected services established through project support 3.2. Number of municipalities replicating performance management systems through the knowledge sharing platform 3.3. Number of municipalities with effective E-governance systems
4. Right holders empowered to engage in local policy making and claim their rights	4.1. The level of public awareness about he LSG reform, participation tools and mechanisms (%). Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities 4.2. Number of local CSOs with strengthened capacities. Sub-targets for CSOs led by women, youth and ethnic minorities 4.3. Number of citizen participation initiatives implemented by CSOs. Sub-targets for initiatives led by women, youth and ethnic minorities 4.4. Number of communities with mobilization schemes developed with active engagement of youth, women and ethnic minorities.

The original project document contained 20 indicators to appraise the project's progress, of which four are used to measure the outcome level results, while sixteen are used to measure the output level results.

In addition to its national level activities, the project operates in three regions of Georgia (Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Imereti).

DGG operated in conjunction with two other UNDP projects, one of which was the FRLD2 (Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia Phase II) project, considered as a "sister project" since it was contributing to a similar goal, but through a different pathway focusing more on local economic development while DGG's focus was maintained on policy reform and capacity building activities. The FRLD2 project ended in March 2023. Both projects shared one region in their coverage: Kvemo Kartli. Since 2021 DGG is also working with another UNDP project funded by the EU: EU4ITD. The coverage of the EU4ITD shares one region with DGG: Imereti. It is expected to end in September 2025. While documentation indicates that there has been strong collaboration and coordination between the three projects, there is no structured coordination mechanism that has been established to provide supporting evidence on how the coordination is formally taking place. But DGG and the EU4ITD projects are reported to share staff members.

4. Evaluation scope and objectives

The objective of this final evaluation is to provide an assessment of the project performance and inform decision-making identifying lessons learnt that can inform the development of another project. The criteria for the evaluation are standard evaluation criteria defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG): relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The evaluation is also requested to assess the cross-cutting normative principles of the United Nations namely regarding the Human Rights Based Approach and the inclusion of Gender Equality as a specific line of inquiry, following the UNEG guidance materials[7].

The specific objectives of this final external evaluation are:

4) To assess the project implementation and results against the objectives and expected outcomes;
5) Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project;
6) Document lessons learned, good practices and challenges, provide actionable and strategic recommendations for a follow-up phase of the project

The scope of the final evaluation is the entire implementation period of the Project since its start on 23 March 2018 until 31st December 2023, with a particular focus on the last phase of the project since a mid-term evaluation was undertaken in mid-2022[8]. The donor has expressed an interest in supporting a new intervention building on the experience and networks developed under the current project, hence the evaluation will also be forward looking in order to provide evidence of results and recommendations that may inform the design of another project.

5. Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation follows the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards (2017 revision), and the UNDP "PME Handbook" established by the UNDP in 2009 and revised in 2011, the UNDP Outcome-level evaluation, a companion guide to the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and evaluation for development results for programme units and evaluators, December 2011, the UNDG, Results-Based Management Handbook, Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level, October 2011, as well as the updated UNDP evaluation guidelines of 2021[9]. It is carried out under the provisions of the revised UNDP Evaluation Policy of 2019[10]. The final evaluation also adheres to and is a signatory of the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct both of 2008. The approach follows a "utilization-focused evaluation" approach that is described by M. Q.

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[7] UNEG, "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, Towards a UNEG guidance", HRGE Handbook, 2011,
http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/980
UNEG, "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations", August 2014, www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616
[8] Roderick Ackermann, Mid-term Evaluation of the DGG project – Final report, 5th May 2022
[9] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/index.shtml
[10] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2019/DP_2019_29_E.pdf

Patton in his book of the same name[11] that continues to be a good practice reference material for the conduct of evaluations. It applies the UNEG HRGE guidance materials from 2011 and 2014 regarding Human-Rights and Gender Equality principles in evaluation (see footnote 1).

The criteria for undertaking the assessment are mentioned in the ToR and are the standard criteria used for project evaluations: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Originally the definitions of each of the evaluation criteria had been given by the OECD/DAC in its glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management in 2002. However, in 2019 the evaluation criteria were revised and updated as follows[12] :

"**Relevance:** The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change?

Relevance answers the question: Is the intervention doing the right things?

Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Note: "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).

Efficiency answers the question: how well are resources being used?

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. Note: Analysis of effectiveness involves taking account of the relative importance of the objectives or results.

Effectiveness answers the question: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Impact answers the question: What difference does the intervention make?

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

Sustainability answers the question: will the benefits last?"

Tools and methodology

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[11] "Utilization-focused Evaluation", Michael Quinn Patton, 3rd Edition, Sage publications, 1998
[12] https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

The evaluation used a combination of methods that included:

a) Desk review of available documentation, leading to the preparation of the inception report, workplan and identification of the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ);

b) 19 Individual Key Informant Interviews (KII) with key project stakeholders: Project Board members including MRDI, donors, UNDP project team and management, as well as other partners in Tbilisi. Three Interviews/discussion were held with UNDP management and the project team. A few of the interviews could not be held during the field visit of the evaluator in the country and had to be carried out through virtual means (Zoom). The categories of respondents interviewed were as follows:

Table 3. Evaluation respondents

Nr of KII	Respondents	Men	Women	total	time
1	GoG	1	1	2	45
4	municipality	2	5	7	260
4	institutions	2	4	6	230
5	NGO	1	5	6	275
2	Donor	1	1	2	90
3	UNDP	2	5	7	155
19	**Total**	**9**	**21**	**30**	**1055**

c) Field work in four selected municipalities (Rustavi, Khoni, Kutaisi, Tskaltubo) to conduct:
   - Interviews with municipalities to obtain their perception regarding the project results;
   - On-site observation

Figure 1. Georgia map

The evaluation used a purposive sampling strategy. Since the donor has already expressed interest in a regional intervention building on the achievements of the project, the choice of municipalities was based on the learning value of the results were obtained. Findings are therefore not statistically representative of all 24 municipalities in the 3 regions covered by the project.

The evaluation was largely qualitative and worked from the perspective of the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach, to obtain feedback from the different stakeholder groups, using appreciative inquiry.

KII was done through semi-structured individual interview process of around one hour, using a questionnaire guide to ensure comparability and consistency amongst the different respondents interviewed. The KII included open and closed questions and used a five-scale rating to obtain respondents' feedback regarding their perception about the project, both in terms of results achieved and in terms of satisfaction with UNDP. This allowed to gather indicators relating to the perception of the project stakeholders. Each rating was in turn be based on a qualitative justification explaining why such a rating was given. The KII are coded to ensure confidentiality of the respondents in line with UNEG norms and standards. Probing was used when necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the responses to the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ).

Contribution analysis was used to infer the causality between the observed effects and the factors that led to such outcomes to the extent possible, taking into consideration that some of the effects are not yet fully visible.

Sampling of respondents: the Project Board members were compulsory KII, but the sampling strategy for municipalities is based on purposive sampling, i.e., using "best cases" to identify best practices, aspects that need to be replicated or upscaled, and practices that contribute to the positive effects generated. Conversely, the evaluation also used a "worse case" to learn from the difficulties in a municipality where the expected results were not achieved, to inform future planning and to avoid the gaps and pitfalls that were encountered during implementation. In both cases of purposive sampling (best and worst cases), the focus is on learning from the qualitative perspective of the evaluation respondents. The evaluation provides the required evidence to sustain the conclusions and recommendations that flow from the data collection analysis and interpretation phases.

5.2. Risks and limitations

There has been a delay in the fielding of the evaluation as additional preparation was required by the donor to inform a regional intervention that covers Georgia, Moldova, and the Istanbul Regional Hub. As a result, the field work in Georgia was scheduled for the month of November 2023. Limited time was available for the data collection given the low evaluation budget and no national evaluator/consultant was available to peer with the international evaluator given the low budget. To mitigate this constraint UNDP hired an evaluator with previous experience in the country and who evaluated the sister project FLRD, which shared common objectives with DGG. An interpreter was provided by UNDP for those interviews that could not be held in English.

6. Data analysis

Notes taken during KII were coded, and content analysis used in the reiteration of key words to extract from the word documents. Respondents' ratings were placed on an excel spreadsheet to calculate the means and provide the tables in the findings section. Financial data was obtained from the UNDP CO in excel format. The sample of municipalities and local authorities interviewed are not representative of the whole range of stakeholders in the three regions but rather used as illustrative evidence of some of the results of the project. Regarding the perceptions from KII, some respondents had to indicate the answer N/A for Not Applicable in cases where their level of knowledge did not allow to provide an informed rating.

7. Findings

7.1. Relevance

7.1.1. How aligned to national priorities, CPD and SDGs was the project?

The project is fully aligned with the national priorities. Decentralisation has been and remains a key priority and the adoption of the Decentralisation Strategy 2020-2025 produced with the support of the project, as well as the first two action plans (AP) for 2020-21 (Phase I) and 2022-2023 (Phase II) are the products that align directly with the previous CPD 2016-2020 Outcome 1: By 2020, expectations of citizens of Georgia for voice, rule of law, public sector reforms, and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance at all levels, as well as the current one: CPD (2021-2025) Outcome 1, Output 1.1. Inclusive national and local governance systems have greater resilience and capacities to mainstream gender, ensure evidence-based and participatory policymaking, map and address inequalities and deliver quality services to all.

The project further supports directly Output 1.2.1. of the previous UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development and deliver basic services including HIV and related services. It also aligns with the current UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025): Output 2.3 Responsive governance systems and local governance strengthened for socio economic opportunity, inclusive basic service delivery, community security, and peacebuilding.

According to Georgia's Socio-economic development strategy "Georgia 2020", "*consistent decentralization and the leading role of sub-national units in stimulating local economic processes are seen as very important factors for achieving general i.e., national development"[13]*. The strategy indicates that inclusive economic growth is underpinned by macroeconomic stability and an effective public administration.

The project further contributes to SDGs 1, 5, 8, 11 and 16.

The project was and remains relevant today to the challenges faced by the GoG in fulfilling its development priorities.

7.1.2. How responsive was the project to changes (political, COVID 19, etc.)?

The major challenge experienced by the project was the COVID-19 pandemic which was declared on 15th March 2020 and the ensuing lockdown and mobility restrictions. UNDP was able to demonstrate adaptive capacity and shifted all activities that could be held on-line to internet-based applications and platforms. Still, the unforeseen crisis also meant that not all activities could be undertaken as foreseen in the workplan, and some components suffered from delay because of the change in the operational context. As a result, the project benefitted from an extension of its life cycle from 31 March 2023 to 31st December 2023, to be able to complete all the projected activities as described in the project document.

Another aspect which also affected project implementation is the parliamentary elections in 2020. Even though the ruling party won the elections for the third time,

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13 GoG, "Georgia 2020", p. 5

there were nonetheless demonstrations and tensions because of the war in Ukraine and the "foreign agents" law project was eventually dropped in 2023 as a result of internal and international pressures. The proposed bill did however tense the relationship between Civil Society and the Government, making the facilitation of UNDP as a neutral and apolitical player more relevant.

7.2. Efficiency
7.2.1. Is the project bringing value for money?

DGG has been working both upstream and downstream. At the upstream level (informing policy), DGG has contributed to the development of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 which has been adopted by the GoG, and the first two Action Plans (2020-21 phase I and 2022-2023 Phase II). Hence it has directly been contributing to advancing decentralisation and good governance at the local level, even if the process is still on-going and an increasing number of competencies will have to be decentralised in the future. By setting up the proper policy environment, DGG enabled substantial changes to take place at the local level, particularly in terms of capacity development of local self-governance institutions and ensuring participation of civil society organisations in informing local decision making. While there are differences across the capacities of the 24 municipalities covered by the project in the three regions, DGG has played a crucial role in raising awareness, changing mindsets about participation, leveraging greater interest in public affairs, and promoting transparency and accountability. Given the results achieved (covered in the effectiveness section of the findings), the evaluation finds that DGG has been bringing value for money, and that the work undertaken is a positive investment into creating enabling conditions for good governance at the local level.

7.2.2. Has it been efficiently managed?

The project is implemented through the NIM modality (National Implementation) by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI). UNDP is providing the quality assurance through the Team Leader and Programme Associate while the UNDP project team is providing the support for the execution of the project activities and provision of inputs. The UNDP team is headed by a Project Manager who oversees a group of experts (one Good Governance Expert, one Capacity Development Expert, one legal expert, one M&E Specialist, one PR & communications specialist, and one administrative/financial/procurement specialist, and one driver). The team has been functioning efficiently in support of the project execution.

The project budget has been efficiently managed and the overall delivery rate is 98% one and half month before the end of the project, showing a good allocation of resources against the respective workplans, despite the challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DGG financial information (Source: UNDP) a) instalments, b) delivery in DKK, c) delivery in USD, and d) GoG contribution delivery rate

Table 4. a) Instalments and exchange rate

Calculation of Weighted Average Exchange Rate				
Installments	Date received	DKK	USD	Weighted average exchange rate
1st	abr-18	8.000.000,00	1.325.600,66	**6,035**
2nd	dic-18	9.000.000,00	1.372.160,39	**6,559**
3rd	jun-20	5.000.000,00	751.540,66	**6,653**
4nd	may-22	2.000.000,00	283.848,99	**7,046**
Total		**24.000.000,00**	**3.733.150,70**	**6,429**

Table 5. c) Delivery rate in USD

Delivery status for Funds Received 2018- 2023 in USD	
Total Planned for Year 1-5	3.733.150,70
Delivered as of 15-November 2023:	3.664.597,94
Delivery rate:	**98%**

Table 6. Delivery rate from GoG contribution

Delivery status for GOG	
Total Planned for Year 2023	84.252,76
Delivered as of 15-November 2023:	81.341,41
Delivery rate:	**97%**

In terms of programme efficiency DGG worked both upstream and downstream, supporting MRDI with policy level, technical assistance and legal assistance inputs, while also providing support to the national and local authorities human resource capacity (through the support to CSB), a major and efficient support to improved municipal service delivery, in large part through the direct grant allocation scheme to municipalities, something which was replicated by other donors, and in terms of participation and accountability through supporting NGOs and municipalities work together in local decision-making (again through grants and other initiatives)[14].

DGG is an ambitious project, and a clearer and more tangible identification of the expected results would have allowed for a better understanding of the project strategy. However, DGG was able to engage at these four levels and provide value addition to all four components of the project, in line with the specifications of the project document.

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[14] Note that the DGG did not provide the grants to municipalities under the project itself, but through the two sister projects: a) FRLD and b) EU4ITD

An additional level of complexity is linked to the fact that DGG initially concurred with another project (FLRD) which was complementarity in some municipalities (in Kvemo Kartli region) and also shares one region (Imereti) with another project executed by UNDP EU4ITD. In both cases there is a sharing of the staff across the projects and reports indicate that because of this there was strong collaboration and coordination between the projects. However, UNDP did not set up a formal coordination mechanism.

7.2.3. How well was the project designed?

The project document was prepared in 2017 at a time when the use of the theory of change was still somewhat unclear and little guidance was available. The theory of change is overly cumbersome and should be a roadmap that shows *how* the project will reach its goal/outcome through its intervention logic. The theory of change of the project document is rightly indicating the causality among the steps towards the fulfilment of the outcome (the *IF* and *THEN* relationship), even including the longer-term desired impact, but it should be more properly developed and include the assumptions (e.g., *provided that…)* and not follow the logical framework approach of input-output-outcome-impact. The focus is on *how* change will take place, and not at which level or with which results. UNDP has received additional guidance on the preparation of the theory of change and will be able to apply an improved Theory of change for an additional phase of the project.

The project contains a results framework with twenty indicators that allow to measure the results both at output and outcome levels. However according to Results Based Management practices the outcome level is where institutional performance and behavioural change takes place, while the output level is gaining capacities and skills to enable the change to take place. The way outputs are worded suggest an institutional and behavioural change which is more properly identified as an outcome. Outputs are more likely intermediate level outcomes or direct outcomes that contribute to the overall goal/outcome statement, rather than simply outputs.

In relation to the indicators, the first two indicators at the goal/outcome level may not be SMART indicators to measure the outcome, they measure more likely the skills acquisition/capacity development, but it does not inform about the qualitative change in government services. Indicators 3 and 4 at the outcome level are better at capturing public perception of local government services and public participation at the local level.

Reporting is focused mostly on completed activities and services (e.g., outputs) but it says little about the actual change process that is expected to take place (outcomes). There is room for improvement, something that was already mentioned in the mid-term evaluation. It is very important in the future to provide reports that address the outcome level, since it is the level at which the project must deliver results at the end of its timeline. Even when looking at the project "output" statements, there should be more information and evidence available in the reports to show progress made on each

specific output to date. A more targeted outcome statement would also contribute to a clearer vision of the expected results.

The project design is overly ambitious given its geographical coverage in three regions, 24 municipalities and compared to its limited budget of less than US$ 1 million per year. It is important that future project designs focus on clear and tangible expected results without leaving any room for interpretation. It is of particular importance to give an operational definition to conceptual terms which must be implemented at the local level, to avoid any misunderstanding and diverging expectations.

Human rights and gender equality (HRGE): the project has been particularly strong in ensuring the application of a rights-based approach in its activities. The mid-term evaluation of 2022 also found that "Gender is central to the project's design".[15] The project worked both at national and local levels, and at all stages focused on inclusiveness, participation from women, youth and ethnic minorities (with disaggregated data for the indicators in the results framework), and the annual reports and mid-term evaluation have identified a number of good practices and positive results in the application of the HRGE principles during the project implementation.

7.3. Effectiveness

7.3.1. What are the key results of the project?

At the central level of the GoG, DGG provided MRDI with capacity development and direct support in preparing and informing the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the two Action Plans for 2020-21 and 2022-23. In addition, the support from a legal expert allowed to review and ensure consistency in the legislation regarding decentralisation[16]. Substantial progress was made on the three focus areas of the project, namely 1) Empowering Local Self-Government, 2) Strengthening material and financial capacities of Local Self-Government, and 3) Fostering Accountable and Transparent Local Self-Government. So many meaningful results have been achieved in these three areas that they are presented as a separate annex in order to keep this report focused on the analysis of the results rather than on their description. Another key result is the linkages made through the support to the CSB between the national and local institutions in human resource management, something that was not taking place before the project. While the entry point was too advanced for the level of preparation regarding the Public Administration Reform- PAR- (e.g., as requested by CSB itself, DGG supported in rolling-out the performance appraisal (PA) system that is being introduced under the PAR), one important result is that it established through the mentorship programme linkages between the central and local levels which didn't exist before.

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[15] Roderick Ackermann, Op. cit., p. 44
[16] Please refer to the enclosed annex on DGG decentralisation results.

At municipal level many changes are taking place, but the key results are: 1) fiscal decentralisation – through the support that DGG gave to enable municipalities to receive direct grants under complementary projects, the project has opened an additional source of funds for municipalities that is no longer exclusively coming from the budget of the central government. This is a critical result and highlighted as such by municipalities interviewed, because it makes a substantial difference in widening its resource base. 2) Municipal capacity development linked to the process of establishing the Municipal Development Documents (MDD) and corresponding support from UNDP and NGOs that were providing assistance to the municipalities. Some municipalities interviewed indicated proudly that they are now able to complete the MDD process on their own without further external support. 3) The combination of direct grants implementation and capacity development has contributed to visible results in many municipalities, showing that these are constructive entry points that are vital for the improved performance of local service delivery. With the support to the unit in Geostat in charge of tracking and collecting local level data, the conditions have strongly improved to allow to generate reliable data of local level achievements[17]. The support was given by the DGG project and the EU. 4) A series of pilot projects were undertaken with civil society organisations testing different models of participatory accountability mechanisms, among which: a) participatory budgeting with EDEC, b) women empowerment and local decision making with Association Imedi, c) youth empowerment and participation with EGI, d) local government index with IDFI, e) capacity development training with 63 municipalities by PMCG.

Because different municipalities have different interests and different capacities, the pilots were tested with different target municipalities. For the future of the good governance efforts in Georgia it may be useful to develop an analytic and comparative report on the results from the different types of participatory mechanisms tested to see if some model could emerge, that could also be used for donor coordination.

Having MRDI as project implementer and with UNDP providing the support to DGG allowed the pilots to obtain the support and participation from the target municipalities.

In relationship to the project Results Framework (RF), DGG has almost consistently exceeded the indicators at the output level. To provide a visual appraisal of the project results, the RF has been using the traffic light signal, where green = achieved or exceeded, yellow = partially achieved, and red = not achieved. As shown in the table hereunder, 15 out of 16 output indicators are green, and one is yellow.

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[17] See www.geostat.ge/en

Table 7. Progress Against the Project Output Indicator Targets – November 2023 (source: UNDP)

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022
Output 1. Improved policy and institutional framework to foster decentralization and promote accountable, transparent and participatory local self-government practices				
1.1	% of initiatives implemented from the Decentralization Strategy[18] and action plan	0	60%	**2020-2021 Action Plan** **85%:** 85% of activities (22 out of 26) indicated in the Action Plan were completed and 15% (4 out of 26) were partly completed. The project provided support for implementation of 61.5% (16 out of 26) activities. **2022-2023 Action Plan** **80%:** 80% of activities (20 out of 25) indicated in the Action Plan were completed and 20% (5 out of 25) were ongoing (partly completed). The project provided support for implementation of 56% (14 out of 25) activities.
1.2	Number of laws and policies adopted or initiated to fulfil GoG's commitment with regard to decentralization	0	100	**187 laws/policies adopted or initiated**: 179 (2021 result); 4 (2022 result), 4 (2023 result): 1. Amendment to the Code of Administrative Offenses (envisages the introduction of fines by municipalities on foreign trade, similar to Tbilisi). 2. Amendment to the Self-Government Code (determines the basis for adoption of the rule of calculation of delegated authority for the Government of Georgia). 3. Amendment to the Budget Code (increasing the percentage share of revenues received from the disposal of state property (land, buildings and other main assets) (sale, as well as property leasing or transfer to management) to be transferred to local budgets). 4. GoG decree N264 of 15 February 2022, the "Municipality Development Planning Guide" was approved. 5. Law of Georgia on Water Resource Management adopted on 30 June 2023. 6. Amendment to the Law of Georgia Budget Code increasing the share of state income to be redistributed to LSGs adopted on 2 May 2023. 7. Amendment to the Law of Georgia Budget Code allowing LSGs to open additional accounts in commercial banks to receive additional income adopted on 22 February 2023. 8. GoG decree N327 of 25 August 2023 establishing the rules to allocate sufficient material and financial resources to LSGs to fulfil delegated responsibilities/competences.
1.3	Number of municipalities with Gender Equality	24	50	**64**: Gender Equality Councils were formed in all 64 municipalities in 2022.

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[18] Due to the official changes made to the title of the strategic document, the wording 'Good Governance Strategy" was replaced by 'Decentrization Strategy" in related project materials.

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022
	Councils and Gender Equality strategy/action plan in place			49 municipalities have already adopted Gender Equality Action Plans, the rest of municipalities are on the final stage of development and approval of the document.
1.4	Number of municipalities engaged in OGP initiative	1 (Tbilisi)	5	**Cumulative 7 (including Tbilisi)** engaged in OGP initiative: in addition to Tbilisi (baseline), five municipalities (Bolnisi, Dusheti, Tskaltubo, Rustavi, and Khoni) engaged in OGP initiative with the project support (2021 result); 3 municipalities (Khoni, Kutaisi and Rustavi) joined OGP Local program independently. Kutaisi and Rustavi drafted their first action plans, while Khoni municipality has developed its second OGP Local Action Plan after successfully completing the first one.
Output 2. Enhanced institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities				
2.1	National training system operational	No	Yes	**Yes:** The rules and procedures for conducting professional development needs assessment and establishing professional developments standards for civil servants at central and local levels are in place and operational (adopted by the GoG on 22 May 2018, Decree #242). Quality assurance mechanisms for the basic training programs are operational. In 2021, a review of professional development system was conducted and an action plan of CSB and MRDI is drafted to improve the training system operation at the local level. In 2022, a strategic concept for the CSB was developed to improve professional development system at the local level. In 2023, based on the strategic concept, CSB developed, piloted, and approved the updated methodologies for identification of professional development needs and implementing professional development plans.
2.2	Number of municipalities with effective human resources management systems	0	15	**45 municipalities with effective HR Management system:** (a) Performance appraisal system established and operational in 44 municipalities of Georgia (including Akhalgori Municipality Administration) of Imereti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo Svaneti, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti Regions in partnership with CSB (2019-2023)[19]. **(b) 45 municipalities (including Tbilisi and Akhalgori Municipality Administration) covered through trainings** (organized during 2019-2023) in HR Management, performance appraisal, administrative process management, effective management skills, psychology in HR, mentoring program.
2.3	Number of municipalities with integrity strengthening systems established	0	15	**6 accomplished (2019-2020):** 5 municipalities (Rustavi, Tskaltubo, Dusheti, Bolnisi, Khoni) and capital (Tbilisi) with elaborated Local Anti-Corruption Strategies and Action Plans and Monitoring frameworks as of December 2020. **In 2023, 10 municipalities** (Zestaponi, Samtredia, Vani, Baghdati, Mtskheta, Kharagauli, Akhmeta, Kvareli, Lanchkhuti and Ambrolauri) **are developing Corruption Risk Assessment reports** and subsequent Action Plans, according to the national methodology approved by the Ministry of Justice.

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[19] The initiative was replicated by the project's partner GIZ in remaining 20 municipalities. Thus, the system is currently implemented in all 64 municipalities.

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022
				All 64 municipalities were provided with external comprehensive integrity systems assessment through LSG Index 2023 report under LVG with IDFI through project support.
2.4	Number of municipalities which apply gender budgeting and strategic planning guidelines including localizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	0	15	**47 municipalities in 8 regions:** Cumulative for 2019-2023: 56 Municipalities with increased capacity in MDDs 8 municipalities with increased capacity in implementing and monitoring SDGs at the local level according to the SDG Localization Action Plan 2 municipalities with increased capacity in Gender Budgeting & SDG linkage
2.5	Number of public officials qualified, including central and local government officials and municipal leadership desegregated by sex	0	300 (at least 30% female)	**2,038 public officials trained**[20] (2018-2022) 1261 (62%) female, 776 (38%) male 1,655 local / 383 national officials

Output 3. Municipal service delivery improved

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022
3.1	Number of municipalities with performance management systems for selected services established through project support	0	6	**8 municipalities:** PMS system piloted in 8 municipalities and trainings organized for representatives of municipalities and municipal agencies responsible for waste management and cleaning of public areas.
3.2	Number of municipalities replicating performance management systems through the knowledge sharing platform	0	10	**15 municipalities:** PMS system capacity building trainings replicated in 15 municipalities with representatives of municipalities and municipal agencies responsible for waste management and cleaning of public areas.
3.3	Number of municipalities with effective E-governance systems	47	64	**Accomplished in 63 municipalities:** e-platform for managing municipal services developed by the Municipal Service Development Agency (MSDA) is introduced in 63 municipalities (Tbilisi municipality has a separate platform).

Output 4. Right holders empowered to engage in local policy making and claim their rights

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022	
4.1	The level of public awareness about the LSG reform, participation tools and mechanisms (%). Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities	22.6% (general): 19.8% (women) 22.9% (youth) 17.2% (ethnic minorities)		40 % (general): 39% (women) 40 % (youth) 36 % (ethnic minorities)	**32% (general)[21]:** 31.4% (women) 33.5% (youth) 25.4% (ethnic minorities)
4.2	Number of local CSOs with strengthened capacities. Sub-targets for CSOs led by women, youth and ethnic	0	20 (general): 3 (women) 2 (youth) 2 (ethnic minorities)	**91 local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with strengthened capacities**: (i) 23 local CSOs with strengthened capacities through UNDP granting mechanism (including, 6 led by/working on empowering women, 10 led by/working on empowering youth, 2 led by/working on empowering ethnic minorities); ii) 8 local CSOs with strengthened capacities in designing and	

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[20] The beneficiary numbers provided in the table correspond to the unique beneficiaries, without multiple counting of the public officials participating in two or more trainings facilitated/supported by the project.

[21] Source: 2021 Survey on Citizens Satisfaction administered by UNDP Georgia (FRLD 2 project)

N	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Targets 2023	Progress 2022
	minorities or working on empowering women, youth and ethnic minorities			managing citizen participation projects and supported through low value grants (including, 3 led by/working on empowering women, 1 led by/working on empowering youth, 1 led by/working on empowering ethnic minorities); (iii) 15 local CSOs with strengthened capacities in designing and managing citizen participation projects (including, 8 led by/working on empowering women, 1 led by/working on empowering youth); (iv) 29 local CSOs based and operational in Imereti region with strengthened capacities in citizen participation mechanisms through the grant with Local Democracy Agency Georgia (LDA); (v) 16 local CSOs based and operational in Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo Svaneti and Kvemo Kartli regions with increased capacities in civic engagement through the mentorship programme conducted by the grant recipient "Association of Young Economists of Georgia" (AYEG).
4.3	Number of citizen participation initiatives implemented by CSOs. Sub-targets for initiatives led by women, youth and ethnic minorities or targeted at engagement of women, youth and ethnic minorities	0	15 (general): 3 (women) 2 (youth) 2 (ethnic minorities)	**20 implemented:** (i) 1 initiative implemented in 2019 (by AGORA CE); (ii) 11 citizen participation and social accountability initiatives implemented by grant recipient CSOs in 2020-2022 (5 targeted at/led by women, 5 targeted at/led by youth, 2 targeted at/led by ethnic minorities); (iii) 8 citizen participation initiatives implemented by grant recipient CSOs in 2022-2023 (1 targeted at/led by ethnic minority women, 1 targeted at/led by women, 3 targeted at/led by youth, 3-general).
4.4	Number of communities with mobilization schemes developed with active engagement of youth, women or ethnic minorities	0	17	**Accomplished for 39 communities:** (i) 2 accomplished in 2019: micro grants scheme launched in Chiatura and Tkibuli communities of Imereti region by local CSO Orbeliani to encourage citizen engagement and volunteer activities in the local communities. (ii) 32 accomplished in 2021: 37 community-led initiatives implemented in 32 communities of 8 municipalities (Rustavi, Marneuli, Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Gardabani, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri) in Kvemo Kartli and Guria regions. iii) 5 accomplished in 2023: 6 community-led initiatives implemented in 5 communities of the three municipalities (Lentekhi, Tsageri, Oni) in Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti region

Based on the DGG RF results achieved are systematically above targets, except for indicator 4.1. which is only partially achieved, but according to data collected in 2021, and may not reflect the current situation.

7.3.2. To what extent are the key outcomes achieved?

Using the DGG RF the outcomes indicators appear as follows:

Table 8. Progress Against the Project Outcome Indicator Targets – November 2023 (source: UNDP)

	Outcome: Decentralization and good governance at the local level advanced, through promoting nation-wide policy reform, strengthening institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities, improving local service delivery and enhancing citizen participation in local policy making			
N	**Indicators**	**Base line 2018**	**Target 2023**	**Progress November 2023**
1	Number of subnational governments /administrations with transparent, accountable and effective planning, budgeting and monitoring systems	0	**20**	**Cumulative number of municipalities (63)** (i) 37 municipalities targeted by DGG and FRLD 2 with MDDs integrating gender budgeting principles and linkages with SDG indicators (2020 result); (ii) 10 municipalities with improved quality of budgeting trough introducing gender budgeting principles and SDG linkages (2021 result); (iii) in 2022 the GoG adopted UNDP-supported methodology (MDD methodology) for participatory local policy planning ensuring transparent, accountable and effective planning, budgeting and monitoring framework as a recommended guideline for all municipalities (2022 result). In 2023, additional 19 municipalities (on top of the 37 mentioned above) were provided technical support to develop MDDs, and 9 municipalities were assisted to update their expiring MDDs (out of those 37), through DGG project support.
2	Local budgets within the consolidated budget (%)	15.2% (initial target 17.6 %)[22]	20%	**22.3%** (including Tbilisi) within the consolidated budget[23].
3	Level of public satisfaction with local governments. Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities	68.5% (general): 66.5% (women) 64.8% (youth 18-29) 70.3% (ethnic minorities)	85% (general): 86% (women) 84% (youth 18-29) 85% (ethnic minorities)	**60.6% (general)[24]:** 61.5% (women) 61% (youth) 61.3% (ethnic minorities)
4	Level of citizen engagement in local decision making. Sub-targets for women, youth and ethnic minorities	6.5% (general): 5.1% (women) 4.9% (youth 18-29) 6.9% (ethnic minorities)	15% (general): 14% (women) 14% (youth 18-29) 15% (ethnic minorities)	6.9% (general)[25]: 6.8% (women) 3.9% (youth) 5.6% (ethnic minorities)

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[22] The initial DED defined the baseline as 17.6 %, however, after careful exploration, we corrected the baseline to 15.2 %, this is a share of LSG expenditure in consolidated budget expenditure.

[23] Source: Ministry of Finance of Georgia, 2022 budget reports.

[24] Source: Survey on Citizens' Satisfaction with Public Services in Georgia administered by UNDP Georgia in 2021.

[25] Source: Survey on Citizens' Satisfaction with Public Services in Georgia administered by UNDP Georgia in 2021.

Based on the RF DGG has achieved or exceeded two targets (green) and in two cases it has not achieved the desired outcome (indicator 3 and 4). This is because many factors affect the level of public satisfaction and citizen engagement in local decision-making, and political challenges as well as COVID-19 also affected the level of participation from the people. Despite not reaching the expected targets, indicator 4 did show some improvement, particularly for women participation, during the project period (+1.7%). Nonetheless considering that many other factors outside of the remit of the project affect the level of public satisfaction, it may be better in future projects to use another type of indicator. In view of the evaluator, indicators 3 and 4 are not providing a reading of the project contribution to citizen public satisfaction or regarding their empowerment, so a more targeted indicator may be used instead.

A qualitative analysis of the results show that UNDP was perceived to perform well and obtained a high satisfaction rating from the different stakeholders interviewed. The 16 KII provided the following ratings regarding 1) the level of satisfaction with UNDP and 2) the results achieved under the DGG project. The rating scale is 1 to 5 where 1=minimum, 2=low, 3=average, 4=high and 5=maximum. In case the respondent could not provide an informed rating, the mention "N/A" for "Not Applicable" was used. These answers are not counted in the overall ratings provided below.

Table 9. 16 KII ratings regarding satisfaction with UNDP and DGG results (Source: evaluator's notes)

Topic	Ratings provided on a scale of 1= minimum to 5= maximum from 16 KII																average
Satisfaction	4	4,5	4,5	5	5	4,5	3,5	N/A	5	5	5	5	5	5	3,5	4	**4,57**
Results	3,5	5	4	3,5	4	4,5	N/A	N/A	3	4	5	5	N/A	5	3	4	**4,12**

The **overall average is a high 4,57** out of 5 **regarding the satisfaction with UNDP**, and an **overall level of results also high** with an overall average of **4,12**.

In terms of satisfaction, 86,7% of respondents provided a rating of high (4.0) or above, while 13,3% provided a higher-than-average rating of 3,5, as shown in the table hereunder:

Table 10. % of satisfaction with UNDP (Source: evaluator's notes)

	Satisfaction with UNDP					
Rating	5	4,5	4	3,5	total	N/A
Responses	8	3	2	2	15	1
%	53,3%	20,0%	13,3%	13,3%	100,0%	

In terms of the results obtained, the overall average of 4,12 stems from the following ratings:

Table 11. rating % regarding the results obtained (Source: evaluator's notes)

Rating	Results achieved under DGG						N/A
	5	4,5	4	3,5	3	total	
Responses	4	1	4	2	2	13	3
%	30,8%	7,7%	30,8%	15,4%	15,4%	100,0%	

In terms of results, 69,2% provided a rating of high (4.0) or above, 15,4% provided a higher-than-average rating of 3,5, and 15,4% gave of an average rating of 3.0. For this last category, one respondent indicated its own institutional limitations as the reason behind the average 3.0 rating provided, while the other respondent indicated that the rating was more a reflection of the expected results, and that expectations were still high, so the rating provided was only average now.

From the justification provided along with the ratings, a strengths and weakness summary is included in the following box:

In relation to the satisfaction with the UNDP, the following characteristics were repeatedly mentioned to provide the satisfaction rating:

➢ Responsiveness, good collaboration, the door is open, ease of communication, good convening role and capacity to engage with multiple partners, trusted partner, facilitates coordination and inclusiveness of municipalities and NGOs, capacity development, staff quality, commitment, provision of technical assistance, international experience, genuine willingness to support partners, preparation of legal instruments, long-term partnerships.

In relations to its weakness and areas of improvement:

➢ Rigid procedures, limited resources, partnerships limited by funding availability

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7.3.3. To what extent is the project goal achieved?

The project goal is the same as the outcome statement "*Decentralization and good governance at the local level advanced, through promoting nation-wide policy reform, strengthening institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities, improving local service delivery and enhancing citizen participation in local policy making*"[26].

In lines with the findings under point 7.3.2. above, the project has significantly contribution to the project goal/outcome statement. Decentralization has been

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[26] See table 2

advanced and supported from the central level and UNDP actively participated in the process and provided legal assistance as well.

At the local level municipalities interviewed have recognised their own capacity development and how DGG has made many improvements in the strengthening of their human and institutional capacities. The single most important learning mechanism was the management of the grants that were directly allocated to the municipalities, a new opportunity when municipalities traditionally depended on central government funding. In addition, for those municipalities that could not leverage financial resources locally, the grant scheme was the main way to improve its capacity through a learning by doing approach.

NGOs and CSOs were key partners in piloting transparency, accountability, and participatory mechanisms. As indicated in the RF under indicator 4.2. no less than 91 NGOs had their capacities developed through implementation of a range of different projects, many of which were in direct collaboration with the municipalities, and therefore also contributed to their capacity development. The approach used by these pilots included enhanced citizen participation in local decision making, and it allowed in some municipalities closer and better interaction with civil society organisations. Many of the pilot approaches have a potential for replication, but there should be an analytical report produced by UNDP to showcase the approaches and mechanisms that could be used as a model for further strengthening decentralisation and good governance at the local level.

In view of the evaluator, DGG has strongly contributed to the project goal/outcome statement, based on the available evidence and the KII held during the evaluation data collection mission.

7.3.4. What are examples of good practice?

DGG has shown various examples of good practice during the implementation of the project.

- At the central level, it was responsive to the needs of the MRDI and contributed to the drafting of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the two Action Plans, while providing capacity development and targeted support, namely with legal assistance.
- At the local level, DGG used various mechanisms that allowed municipalities directly and indirectly to improve their capacity as well as service provision to the citizenry.
- Bottom-up approaches for the grants given directly to the municipalities and the grants to the NGOs contributed to the high level of ownership as the projects were addressing the local needs of the municipalities.
- Finding synergies and venues for complementary collaboration between municipalities and NGOs. Not all municipalities are the same and some did not

have the initial trust towards NGOs. In some cases, this changed as a results of the facilitation and involvement of UNDP under the DGG.

- UNDP has a good reputation in Georgia. It is seen as impartial and non-political, and therefore has played an important role in bringing together different actors around a common objective, using a win/win approach.

7.3.5. What capacities have been developed as a result of the project?

Capacities have been developed at various levels through DGG. As mentioned at the central level it enabled the establishment of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the two Action Plans. It also supported the Public Administration Reform through a direct support to the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) that is responsible for the State Administration Human Capital Management. In this support a mentoring approach was used which placed the central level mentors working directly with the municipal level. This was a novelty as there was peer learning – the central level understanding better the constraints of the municipalities, while municipalities benefitted from the mentorship of their central level government colleagues.

In the municipalities, capacity development was high on all accounts of the DGG support. On the one hand, there were formal training sessions on specific aspects that included participatory budgeting, gender-responsive budgeting, preparation of the Municipal Development Documents (MDD) which set the five-year plan and enables the preparation of the yearly budget with its corresponding priorities. Some capacity development was related to the use of software and availability of new data. For example, through DGG, Geostat has now a team that focuses on the collection, analysis, and validation of local level data (regional and municipal statistics portal)[27]. The same data can be used by the municipalities for their planning and budgeting needs.

Through the piloting of various mechanisms of accountability, transparency and participation, undertaken by the NGOs under DGG grants, changes of mindset and attitude have taken place and led to closer cooperation between municipalities and NGOs. At the same time, the piloting of these projects also counted with the direct assistance and support of the UNDP. While NGOs remain necessarily tributary of their funding source to continue their operations, anecdotal evidence suggests that in some cases there is a wider space for collaboration directly involving the municipality and the NGO.

Anecdotal evidence (i.e., which cannot be generalised to all 24 municipalities but illustrates a specific point) shows that capacity development has been very important in terms of producing the MDD (one municipality interviewed is reportedly able to develop

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[27] www.geostat.ge/en

it on their own without external support), and better human resource administration in the field.[28]

7.3.6. What were the key challenges and shortfalls experienced during project implementation?

The main challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic declared on 15th March 2020. Given lockdown and mobility restrictions DGG had to adapt and move all possible activities to web-based applications and solutions. However, some activities had to be changed or were delayed, and UNDP had to show adaptive management in a complex context. Despite COVID-19 DGG is now showing a delivery rate of 98% of its budget in USD.

Other challenges were linked to the political situation in the country, particularly the tensions around the 2020 elections, something that was captured in Denmark's Technical Review of January 2020, but also the pressures from the withdrawal of the "foreign agents" bill in 2022 which sparked demonstrations and controversy. Despite an uncertain political climate, decentralisation is reported to continue its advance with MRDI having indicated that five additional competencies were allocated to the local level in 2022 (education, child protection, social protection, natural resources management, and environmental protection). Furthermore, property transfer preparations are reported to have been completed and some 600 land plots are ready to be transferred to the municipalities.

Other challenges are linked to the global geopolitical situation, with the wars in Ukraine and in Gaza requiring large support from the international community, and the negative inflationary consequences of these conflicts. One positive note is that at the time of writing the evaluation report the EU Council has recommended to grant candidate status to Georgia, something that should also contribute to enhancing the pace of the decentralisation process.

7.3.7. Has the project incorporated the UN programming principles in its implementation (Human Rights, Gender Equality, Social Inclusion through LNOB) and if so, have they leveraged specific results?

Human rights and gender equality (HRGE): the project has been particularly strong in ensuring the application of a rights-based approach in its activities. The mid-term evaluation of 2022 also found that "Gender is central to the project's design". Examples of outputs and expected results included:

- Establishment of gender institutional mechanisms at the local level
- Strengthening the capacity of women councillors and local women managers

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[28] While DGG is not responsible for human resource management of the state administration, the support provided to CSB which is responsible for implementing HR policy at local level includes new introduced tools such as the "performance appraisal" (PA), which did not exist before and should facilitate career development of civil service staff.

- Supporting municipalities to apply gender budgeting principles and make services gender response
- Providing special assistance to formulate gender sensitive indicators in the context of the municipal performance management systems
- Paying special attention to initiatives that engage women, youth and ethnic minorities in decision making in the context of local participatory CSO initiatives.

Women empowerment and gender equality

Gender equality and women empowerment were closely knitted into the project implementation. From the Mid-term evaluation in 2022 one key finding was that "empowerment of women from vulnerable groups has focused on economic empowerment through training on agriculture-related topics and the provision of inputs and equipment for agricultural production. These activities have covered 7 regions of Georgia and have involved up to 480 vulnerable households. … Women accounted for 97% of training feedback responses"[29].

The project worked both at national and local levels, and at all stages focused on inclusiveness, participation from women, youth and ethnic minorities (with disaggregated data for the indicators in the results framework), and the annual reports and mid-term evaluation have identified several good practices and positive results in the application of the HRGE principles during the project implementation.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion was embedded through the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle which was also a strong programming principle applied in the implementation of DGG. All efforts at the local level are based on inclusive participation, and therefore the project Results Framework (RF) can provide full data disaggregation not only regarding gender, but also regarding youth and ethnic minorities.

7.4. Impact (outcome level change)

7.4.1. How have people's lives been affected by the project?

Impact can only be appraised over the long-term. However, the most visible outcomes (e.g., change in institutional performance or behaviour) are linked to the increased capacity of the municipalities that participated in DGG. Although different municipalities participated in different projects, many of which were pilots, municipalities are now able to manage donor grants directly and have developed their capacity in service delivery. While it may be too early to obtain quantifiable evidence of such a change, the enhanced

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[29] Roderick Ackerman, Op. Cit., p. 42

capacity in municipalities and civil society at the local level will eventually lead to improving people's lives through both better service delivery and participation in local decision making by the citizenry. This is a major change from the traditional vertical way of operating of the GoG and public administration. Before DGG all funding was coming from the central budget (except for those municipalities that could leverage local revenues) and the amount was largely decided at the central level. The development of local participatory planning mechanisms (MDD, participatory budgeting, gender-based budgeting) and other participation and accountability mechanism such as the index of LSG are driving a change in the way the population engages with its local authorities and civil society. The progress is important and uneven according to the specific context of each municipality. In some cases, however, there is evidence of a largely positive change and the development of further partnerships between municipalities and civil society organisations.

7.4.2. To what extent has the project changed the way municipalities operate?

Not all municipalities have the same conditions or attitudes. But DGG has certainly influenced the way municipalities operate, at least in provoking a change in mindsets and at times a change in attitudes. In other cases, DGG has already obtained the buy-in from local actors to develop more collaborative mechanisms with civil society in a more participatory and inclusive manner. This has in some cases led to win/win situations where both municipalities and civil society organisations have jointly contributed to achieving the local priorities. One actor that remains on the sidelines in this process is the private sector, but this was covered under a different "sister" project of UNDP (FRLD) which focused on local economic development, while DGG put the focus on good governance in decentralisation.

Some municipalities now have the MDD (five-year priority plans), and annual budgets developed through participatory mechanisms. Local level data is gradually being generated in a transparent manner (GeoStat public website under DGG and EU support). Some municipalities have already received additional grants from donor organisations, e.g., from the EU, as a spin-off of DGG. This is a very important opportunity for municipalities because previously access to funding was limited to the budgetary allocation from the central government.

There is also better understanding and collaboration between central and local authorities through the mentoring process developed by CSB in support of the public administration reform and particularly in the rolling out of performance appraisals for human resource management, something that requires further efforts to be consolidated.

Civil society organisations are naturally dependent on funding to operate, but with a facilitated collaborative approach there are more opportunities and venues for collaboration. By participating in the different grant schemes, NGOs and CBOs have also

tested and developed their capacity to implement pilot approaches and mechanisms supporting good governance principles.

7.4.3. What has changed as a result of the project?

At central level decentralization has been advanced and a Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 has been developed and is being implemented. As part of the process DGG also provided support to CSB for the reform of the human resource management and the introduction of the performance appraisal. While this remains work in progress and the process is not yet completed, the change brought about by the project was a closer collaboration and understanding between the central and local authorities, through the mentoring approach used to introduce the performance appraisal system. That said, a substantial effort was made in skills and capacity development with 2,038 public officials trained at least once during DGG implementation (See the RF above for details).

Municipalities have clearly been empowered through the grant scheme which they have managed themselves. Both the eligibility for the grant and the implementation of the grant were part of a capacity development process which has empowered the municipalities and facilitated a more professional participatory planning process for local development. The introduction of E-government systems also contribute to the improved service delivery (for example with MSDA).

Civil society organisations have been also supported and in many cases were able to find venues for supportive and joint collaboration from the municipalities. DGG facilitated the process and opened space a greater public participation and accountability mechanisms through the testing of various pilots.

The citizenry has been able to participate in open fora, public debates and discussions on the local priorities and local development challenges. There is a higher level of awareness and the availability through public platforms of transparent information is also contributing to having a more informed and interested population on local development aspects and challenges.

7.5. Sustainability

7.5.1. How strong is the national ownership of the project at national and local level?

At the central level the adoption of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the implementation of the first two Action Plans for 2020-21 and 2022-23 show a certain level of national ownership. While the decentralization process is far from complete, the adoption and enactment of the strategy is a crucial step in the right direction.

At local level the possibility that municipalities now have to directly access donor funding opens up many opportunities, particularly for those municipalities that are unable to generate any local revenues. Provided development aid continues to be

provided in support of the decentralization process, the allocation of direct grants to municipalities is a good manner to consolidate the capacity development undertaken by DGG and contributes to enhanced service delivery and participatory approaches inclusive of civil society and of rights holders.

7.5.2. What are the threats and opportunities affecting project sustainability?

At local level, obviously, the know-how has been developed but it is still early, for some municipalities, to consider they can autonomously pursue their capacity development process towards good governance and improved local service delivery. Institutional capacity development is a long-term process, and now municipalities require a consolidation phase after a trial phase in which various pilots have been tested. Therefore, end of funding may negatively affect the good results that were obtained during these five years. It would be useful to support these municipalities into a second phase to ensure consolidation and sustainability of the results obtained, primarily through the provision of other direct grants and technical support. The lack of future funding for decentralised good governance is a threat to ensure the consolidation of the results. This applies to both improved service delivery and rights' holders' participation in local decision-making. The major threat is therefore a shift in the funding of development assistance away from decentralised good governance and local development.

Another risk to sustainability is the potentially reduced budget of development assistance which may affect financial allocations to Georgia, given the persistence and recurrence of conflicts that have both an inflationary effect on the global economy and contribute to shrinking development assistance in favour of humanitarian aid.

Another threat would be a shift in the GoG commitment to pursue the decentralisation efforts, something that joint advocacy of the United Nations and development partners could influence in the future to ensure the process is pursued.

At the same time and considering the largely positive results obtained at the local level, there is an opportunity to create a model for local good governance taking into consideration the learning and experiences of the various pilots undertaken under DGG. It may be of interest to the GoG, and in particular to the MRDI, to prepare an analytical report with UNDP on the results of the pilots and identify which of the various mechanisms that were tested under DGG would be suited to be used as a model for local good governance, which could be replicated to other municipalities and applied eventually to other countries.

There are sufficiently positive results, but they require additional analysis and discussions. Some aspects are also linked to the objective of other projects, such as local economic development and the inclusion of private sector partners, undertaken by FLRD and other initiatives, that are directly complementing the work of DGG.

8. Conclusions

DGG has provided valuable support and obtained concrete results regarding its support to improved decentralisation and good governance at the local level. DGG largely exceeded the targets of its results framework and went in many cases beyond the initially planned expected results. By working both upstream with the central level and downstream at the municipal level, in an inclusive manner in which venues were opened for collaboration between municipalities and NGOs, DGG contributed to a shift in mindset and attitudes among local actors. If at the national level the single most important result could be the elaboration and implementation of the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the technical assistance provided, at the municipal level the key results were, for the municipalities, to obtain direct grants from donors and improve their capacity to manage grants on a learning by doing basis. This was further supported by capacity development through both trainings and joint pilot implementation of innovative projects that contribute to increased transparency, partnership development with civil society organisations, increase citizen awareness and better accountability. Certainly not all 24 municipalities of the three target regions benefitted from the same level of capacity development, as the approach was not a uniform approach particularly regarding the testing of innovative pilots, which targeted only some of the municipalities on trial basis.

Nonetheless, the project was able to achieve a good network of partners working for local good governance and has laid a strong foundation for the application of good governance at local level, building on sound programming principles and practices and on the assisted capacity development of the municipal actors. Despite a project design that was overly ambitious and did not sufficiently describe the expected results from the intervention, DGG has been instrumental in a strong improvement of local good governance efforts. There are other partners that also support the decentralisation process, and it is not always clear how the municipalities for the pilots have been selected or targeted, as the rationale for the choice is not provided. Because DGG also worked in synergies with other UNDP executed projects such as FRLD or EU4ITD, there would be a clear advantage in setting up a formal coordination structure, to provide evidence of how the different projects complement each other in some municipalities, and the rationale for the choice of the municipalities. This is one area where greater transparency is warranted. The high number of development partners requires a clearer strategy between like-minded projects to avoid overlap and ensure that responsibilities are defined adequately and attributed to the respective projects. More concrete information on the sharing of the activities across projects is deserved.

The project effectiveness has been high as shown in the achievements of the results framework and according to the high overall average rating of 4,12 given by the KII respondents. UNDP's role has been further recognized and highly rated with an overall average rating of 4,57 regarding the respondents' satisfaction with UNDP under DGG.

Since decentralisation and good governance at the local level are objectives that require a long timeframe, it would be of interest to ensure a consolidation phase of the efforts undertaken by ensuring another phased support over another project period.

9. Recommendations

1/ Consider a consolidation phase for the results obtained to ensure their sustainability

2/ Continue direct funding through grants to municipalities and NGOs as part of the capacity building process and consolidation phase

3/ Prepare an analytic report on the various pilots on transparency, participation, and accountability, and identify a potential model to be tested for replication about what constitutes local good governance in Georgia. This could be shared and discussed with MRDI and donors to have a blueprint of local good governance in Georgia and avoid different concepts being implemented at the same time.

4/ Create a formal coordination structure and information reporting when multiple projects complement each other (e.g., FRLD, DGG, EU4ITD)

5/ Justify the choice of the municipalities that are targeted for the pilots and other innovative approaches, when not all municipalities benefit from a given intervention.

10. Lessons learned

- Strengthening capacity development at the local level is a critical benchmark for improved local good governance.
- Using direct grants managed by municipalities, with the support of the UNDP and of the NGOs, is a proven learning-by-doing methodology that directly contributes to institutional capacity development
- Ensuring linkages between the central and the local level authorities, such as through the mentoring method used by CSB to roll out performance appraisal of human resources, provides an added value by improving knowledge on the challenges of state administration
- UNDP has a good reputation and is seen as a valuable facilitator that is able to create and open collaborative venues and partnerships between municipalities and civil society organisations
- Piloting and testing innovative approaches implemented through the NGOs with the municipalities should only be part of a wider process: defining what are the mechanisms and tools that are relevant to the context and bring the desired

results, so that a model can be identified as roadmap towards local good governance in the country.

- It is important to operationalise the conceptual terms in project documents, so there is no misunderstanding on what the expected results will be. If good governance is defined in DGG by the contents of its results framework, there needs to be a higher-level analysis of what local good governance means in concrete terms. One of the challenges of the other project that DGG cooperated with, FRLD, was to use a term that is not used in Georgia, not even by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development: Local Economic Development. The use of conceptual terms needs requires an operational framework that allows to streamline the efforts of the different actors and ensures a common understanding and a shared approach, in this case, towards what constitutes local good governance in Georgia, being mindful of the current context and after Georgia has been recommended to be granted the candidate status by the EU.

Services/Work Description: The purpose of this assignment is to conduct external final evaluation of the project

Project/Programme Title: UNDP project Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia

Consultancy Title: International Consultant for Final External Evaluation of the Project

Duty Station: Home based with one field visit to Georgia

Duration: Up to 22 working days within a three-month period (August - October 2023)

Expected start date: 1 August 2023

1. BACKGROUND

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project Title	Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia
Atlas ID	00109456 (Output 00108806)
Corporate Outcome and Output	**UNPSD 2016-2020: OUTCOME 1: By 2020 expectations of citizens of Georgia for voice, rule of law, public sector reforms, and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance at all levels** **CPD 2016-2020 Output 1.4: By 2020, effective decentralization of government competencies and financial resources respond better to needs of local communities** **UNSDCF 2021-2025-CPD 2021-2025 Outcome 1/ By 2025, all people in Georgia enjoy improved good governance, more open, resilient and accountable institutions, rule of law, equal access to justice, human rights, and increased representation and participation of women in decision making** **CPD 2021-2025 Output 1.1. Inclusive national and local governance systems have greater resilience and capacities to mainstream gender, ensure evidence-based and participatory policymaking, map and address inequalities and deliver quality services to all.** **UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-21: Outcome 1.** Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions/ Output 1.2.1 Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive

	local economic development and deliver basic services including HIV and related services **UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Output: 2.3 Responsive governance systems and local governance strengthened for socio economic opportunity, inclusive basic service delivery, community security, and peacebuilding**	
Country	Georgia	
Region	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	
Project Dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	23 March 2018	31 December 2023
Project Budget	**USD 4,075,519.45**	
Funding Source	Government of Denmark Government of Georgia	
Implementing Party	The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia	

Georgia has made significant progress in terms of political, economic, and social development over the last decade. The country has advanced its governance system and achieved significant progress in terms of enhancing legislative and institutional framework for local self-government reform and decentralization. The key achievements in these areas include the adoption of the new code of Local Self-Government, further amendments concerning citizen participation as well as the enhancement of decentralization.

However, despite impressive progress, Georgia faces an unfinished development agenda and the need for continuation of decentralization and local self-governance reform.

Since 2018 the Government of Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark - DANIDA) has been supporting the project "Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia" (DGG), which is being implemented by the UNDP.

The overarching goal of the project is to advance decentralization and good governance at the local level through promoting nation-wide policy reform, enhancing the capacities of the duty bearers at national and local levels and empowering right holders to engage in political process, hold duty bearers accountable and claim their rights accordingly.

This is to be achieved through the following four outputs: 1) Improved policy and institutional framework to foster decentralization and promote good governance principles at the local level; 2) Enhanced institutional and human capacities of national and local authorities; 3) Municipal service delivery improved; 4) Right holders empowered to engage in local policy making and claim their rights.

With the support of the project, in 2019 the Government of Georgia approved the Decentralization Strategy for 2020-2025 with three key directions: (1) Strengthen the role of the local self-governments in managing a substantial share of public affairs; (2) Ensure adequate material and financial resources

for the self-governing units for the execution of their powers and responsibilities; (3) Develop reliable, accountable, transparent and results oriented local self-governance. The project provides overall assistance to the implementation of all three directions of the strategy.

In addition to national level activities, the project operates in three regions (Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Imereti) chosen to supplement other donor funded projects in remaining regions. The DGG project approaches the advancement of decentralization and good governance at the local level as a means for safeguarding the basic rights of rights-holders (women, men, youth, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups) and enabling proper satisfaction of their fundamental rights, needs and interests. Therefore, special attention is paid to ensure that the needs and priorities of women, youth and ethnic minorities are mainstreamed into the national and local policy making and service delivery.

The overall Theory of Change of the project is summarized in the table below.

Level	Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level
Input	If targeted support is provided to: 1) national institutions to implement decentralization strategy and action plan, fulfil international obligations in the area of regional development and local self-governance, fine tune the National Training System (NTS), enhance human resource management framework at the local level; 2) municipalities to establish effective human resource management systems, provide continuous education to local civil servants, join Open Government Partnership Initiative, establish Gender Institutional Mechanisms and incorporate gender considerations into local programming, establish performance management systems for selected services and share the best practices with their peers; 3) Civil Society Organizations and citizens, including women, youth, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups, to equip them with knowledge, skills and resources to engage in local decision making and claim their rights
Output	Then policy and institutional framework for decentralization and good governance will be enhanced, capacities of both, duty bearers and right holders will be strengthened at national and local level, municipal service provision will be improved, and the right holders will be empowered to engage in local policy making and claim their rights
Outcome	Leading to advanced decentralization level and good local self-governance featuring greater competences of municipalities, responsive, transparent, and accountable governance and participatory decision making reflecting the views of women, men, youth and ethnic minorities
Impact	Eventually contributing to greater democracy and better quality of life of localities as well as reduction of inequalities and urban-rural disparities, and more inclusive and sustainable economic development

Additionally, DGG operated in cooperation with two other UNDP projects related to the regional and

local governance. UNDP's project – Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia (Phase II) (FRLD2) was considered as a "sister project". While DGG's focus was maintained on policy reform and capacity building activities, FRLD2 was focusing on the local economic development (LED) aspects of regional development. The two projects had similarities, complementarities, and synergies in general though they mostly operated in different regions of the country. Both projects were covering six regions of Georgia (Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi - Kvemo Svaneti). Within these two UNDP projects, one region was common - Kvemo-Kartli. FRLD2 project ended in March 2023.

Since 2021, DGG is also closely cooperating with UNDP's project EU4ITD: Advancing Decentralized, Effective and Inclusive Governance in Georgia. The EU4ITD project aims to support Integrated Territorial Development in Georgia and advance effective, responsive and accountable national and sub-national governance through promoting decentralization, inclusive and evidence-based policy making, citizen engagement and better service delivery at the local level. The intervention strategies of both projects focused on promoting participatory policy making and enhancement of capacities at the local level are complementary, thus planning and implementation of respective activities are coordinated on a regular bases. EU4ITD project operates in four regions of Georgia: Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, Imereti and Kakheti (having one common region with DGG - Imereti) and is estimated to end in Dec-2025.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK

2.1/ Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives

The main objective of the final external evaluation is to assess the project implementation, with a focus on the key achievements and challenges, relevance of the project outcomes and outputs, specific contributions and impact, efficiency and effectiveness of assistance, and sustainability of interventions, taking full account of the political context and environment. The evaluation is expected to document lessons learned and identify the strategies for replicating and up-scaling the project's best practices. The evaluation must include an analysis of how DGG interventions addressed Human Rights and Gender Equality (HR and GE) principles[1].

The Project Document agreed among UNDP, the project donor, and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) as the key implementing partner, stipulated that an independent external final evaluation was to be conducted by the end of the project in 2023.

The international consultant will be tasked to perform the final evaluation of all four outputs of the project throughout 2018-2023, as set out in the Results Framework of the project.

The specific objectives of this final evaluation are to:

- Evaluate the achievements against the project's objectives and expected outcomes;
- Identify strengths and weaknesses and assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project implementation;

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[1] UNEG, 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations', August 2014. The guidance outlines practical steps on how to prepare, conduct and use HR & GE responsive evaluations. Available at: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616

- Identify and document lessons learned and good practices;
- Identify and document challenges faced during the implementation period;
- Identify the strategies for replicating and up-scaling the project's best practices;
- Based on the evaluation results, provide practical, actionable and feasible recommendations for follow-up phase of the project;
- Provide actionable recommendations, both operational and strategic, on how to reinforce the project achievements and address potential challenges in view of the existing political context, while considering the overall logic and strategic orientation of the program;
- Provide recommendations for scaling up of achieved results and/or development of a new phase of the project.

The evaluation should aim to inform decision-making on the continuation and designing of the subsequent phase of the project focusing on promoting decentralization and good governance in regions of Georgia. The evaluation should aim to provide recommendations for future interventions based on the sound, credible, impartial and independent assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of the current project.

Main evaluation users will be UNDP, DANIDA, Embassy of Denmark to Georgia and MRDI. All key stakeholders will be closely involved in the evaluation process to increase ownership of findings, draw lessons learned and make a greater use of the evaluation results.

The final evaluation of the DGG project is to be conducted in the period of 1 August to 31 October 2023.

The scope of work for consultancy will include, but may not be limited to:

- Complete a desk review of all project-related documents including the project document, budgetary documents, reports, and mid-term external evaluation;
- Assess the quality and effectiveness of project coordination with the key partners, including other UNDP projects: FRLD2 and EU4ITD, and synergies and complementarity between the projects;
- Elaborate an evaluation matrix using evaluation criteria/questions provided below as a basis to develop the evaluation questions (and, where needed, sub-questions), the data sources required to answer the questions, the data collection and data analysis methods;
- Conduct meetings/interviews with current team members, along with the counterparts at the Government of Georgia, local authorities, donors and key partners, and the UNDP Country Office;
- Collect quantitative data, including retrieving public information from government agencies (if needed), necessary for the evaluation;
- Analyze data in accordance with the evaluation objectives per component, and in a broader context: against the project's objectives and project's impact;
- Analyze the project's contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions;
- Develop recommendations based on project experience for future interventions likely to lead to improvements and adjustments of the current implementation approach to be considered when planning scaling up of achieved results and/or designing new phase of the project;
- Prepare a draft evaluation report providing descriptive overviews, laying out the evidence, analyzing project's contribution based on evaluation criteria and SDGs, providing conclusions and recommendations;
- Finalize the evaluation report based on solicited feedback from UNDP team and the key project stakeholders;

- Present the document to the national partners, project donors and the other key stakeholders, as needed through a dissemination workshop.

2.2/ Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The consultant will be tasked to conduct the final evaluation as per UNDP Evaluation Policy[2], as well as OECD/DAC criteria and assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of DGG efforts in all four outputs of the project. The final evaluation should consider using participatory approach and use HR and GE lenses during data collection, data analysis and evaluation process. The following are guiding questions within the framework of the evaluation criteria to be used as a basis and further elaborated by the consultant in the evaluation inception phase, corresponding to project scope, goals and objectives defined in the Project Document.

Relevance:

- To what extent was the project, under its mandate, in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes (including Covid-19 health crisis and the respective changes amid pandemic) in the country?

Effectiveness:

- To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent were the project outcomes achieved? What has been the projects' contribution to the observed change?
- To what extent has the DGG Project partnership strategy been appropriate and effective, including during the times of the health crisis of Covid-19?
- To what extent has been project coordination with the key partners, FRLD 2 and EU4ITD effective, specifically synergies and complementarity between the projects? To what extent has been project coordination effective with other UNDP projects, such as UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia (UNJP) and Human Rights for All – Phase 2?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project scale-up or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?
- Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses in terms of project management, implementation and monitoring?

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[2] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2019/DP_2019_29_E.pdf

Efficiency:

- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

Sustainability:

- Are there any risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent, within the project scope, will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?

Impact:

- To what extent did the project generate broad impact? To what extent did the project made the specific contribution on transforming the context?
- What sustainable change has the project made in the lives of men and women, vulnerable groups, and targeted communities at large?
- Has the project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, institutional changes for individuals, local communities and institutions targeted by the project?
- Did a specific part/activity of the project achieve greater impact than others? Which? How?

Gender Equality, Human Rights and Social Inclusion:

- To what extent and how, under its mandate, has the project contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women, and social inclusion/human rights been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? What are potential opportunities to strengthen contribution to gender equality and human rights-based approach in future?
- To what extent, under its mandate, has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women, and social inclusion? Were there any unintended effects?

The evaluation questions shall be further refined by the consultant, tailoring them to the project scope, goals and objectives defined in the Project Document, as well as project implementation context, in agreement with the UNDP and the key evaluation stakeholders.

2.3/ Methodology

The consultant will work together with the project team in the preparation of a methodology to answer the key research questions outlined above, as well as any other pertinent questions that may arise to adequately assess the picture. The consultant must take into account UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, revised edition: June 2021 (http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/) and relevant programmatic documents, which will be supplied to the consultant at the beginning of the assignment. As a result of this exercise the consultant will propose an evaluation methodology and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as part of the evaluation inception report. The final methodology should be approved by the UNDP.

Evaluation should employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and male and female direct beneficiaries. The methodology should be robust enough to ensure high quality, triangulation of data sources, and verifiability of information.

It is expected that the evaluation methodology will comprise of the following elements:

a) Secondary research:

   a. Document Review of all relevant project documentation: Project Document, Results Frameworks, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Theory of Change, Annual Reports, mid-term evaluation report, project technical review report and other relevant knowledge products;

   b. Collect quantitative data, including retrieving public information from government agencies (if needed), necessary for the evaluation.

b) Primary research – aimed at forming new knowledge by collecting information through:

   a. Key informant interviews (KIIs), semi-structured interviews, stakeholder consultations, field visits and other participatory methods;

   b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and workshops with different Government and non-government institutions, donors and external stakeholders;

Other quantitative data collection methods as required. Data and evidence will be triangulated with multiple sources to address evaluation questions. The final methodological approach including interview schedule and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed with the UNDP's commissioning unit (Democratic Governance Team Leader and M&E specialist). .

Gender and Human Rights-based Approach

As part of the requirement, evaluation must include an assessment of the extent to which the design, implementation, and results of the project have incorporated gender equality perspective and rights-based approach. The evaluators are requested to review *UNEG's Guidance in Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation* during the inception phase[1].

In addition, the methodology used in the final evaluation, including data collection and analysis methods should be human rights and gender-sensitive to the greatest extent possible, with evaluation data and findings disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, etc. Detailed analysis on disaggregated data will be undertaken as part of final evaluation from which findings are consolidated to make recommendations and identify lessons learned for enhanced gender-responsive and rights-based approach of the project.

These evaluation approach and methodology should consider different types of groups in project intervention – women, youth, minorities, and vulnerable groups.

3. Expected Outputs and deliverables

Deliverables:

- **Inception Report** (10-15 pages). The inception report should be developed following and based on the preliminary discussions with the UNDP after the desk review and should be produced prior to any formal evaluation interviews and field/country visit. The inception report shall include a detailed methodology for data collection, showing how each evaluation question will be answered, proposing the methods to be applied with respective data sources and data collection procedures, defining a detailed work plan and a timeline. The draft inception report shall be discussed with the UNDP and finalized based on the feedback (see suggested outline in Annex 1)).

  Evaluation Matrix (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with key stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

  Table 1. Sample Evaluation Matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data-collection methods/tools	Indicators/ success standard	Methods for data analysis

- **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following the evaluation, the evaluator shall organize a preliminary debriefing on the main findings. As a minimum, the consultant will have inception meeting with the project team and debriefing meeting with the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) in Georgia, Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), Democratic Governance (DG) Team Leader, UNDP M&E specialist, project donor and MRDI leadership.

- **Draft Evaluation Report** (40 to 60 pages including the executive summary). The draft evaluation report shall incorporate a detailed description of the methodology and methods applied during the planning phase, field work, data collection and analysis; challenges faced in the process of conducting the assignment and recommendations for improved planning of relevant missions in the future; preliminary findings focusing on the major achievements, emerging/potential issues

and recommendations per project outcome, as well as budget expenditures, management and staffing; summary conclusions for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the intervention; lessons learned and recommendations on how to scale up the project achievement, design new phase of the intervention and address the potential challenges due to the political context, while considering the overall logic and strategic orientation of the program. The draft evaluation report will be discussed and finalized in agreement with the UNDP and other relevant stakeholders (see suggested format in Annex 2)**Evaluation Report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained to show how they have been addressed.

- **Final Evaluation Report.** The final report shall be developed based on the feedback received from the UNDP and other key stakeholders on the draft report. The final report shall fully address the evaluation objectives set forth in the ToR, providing clear and concise answers to the evaluation questions. Summary of the evaluation findings (in PowerPoint presentation format) will also be submitted along with the final report. The findings of the Final Evaluation Report shall be presented on the dissemination workshop for UNDP project team and Country Office, national partners, project donor, and other relevant stakeholders.

The project materials and other relevant information will be made available by UNDP to the consultant upon signing the contract agreement as well as upon request. UNDP reserves the right to request additional information under each deliverable in relation to the evaluation objectives.

4. Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

4.1/ Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on the data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

4.2/ Conflict of interest:

To ensure impartiality and objectivity of the evaluation, as well as to avoid the conflict of interest, UNDP will not consider the applications from the candidates that have had prior involvement in the design, formulation, implementation or evaluation of the above-indicated project.

4.3/ Implementation arrangements

The consultant will work under the overall oversight of UNDP's commissioning unit (Democratic Governance Team Leader and M&E specialist). DGG Project Manager will provide necessary information for the evaluation and will be the primary point of contact for the evaluator. The DGG

project team will be responsible to share relevant documents, contact details and other necessary information with the evaluator.

The consultant will report to the Democratic Governance Team Leader. UNDP M&E specialist will be assigned to oversee and support the overall evaluation process. The CO Senior Management will take responsibility for the approval of the evaluation report.

During the final evaluation, the evaluator is expected to interact with/interview the implementing partners of the project, including: Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI), National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), Civil Service Bureau (CSB); Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG), municipalities and other public agencies, donor agencies, consultants, civil society organizations and all other relevant stakeholders whose list and contact details will be provided to the consultant by the commencement of the contract.

4.4/ Timeframe for the evaluation process

The tentative timeframe for the Consultancy is 22 working days during the period of 1 August – 31 October 2023 including an estimated 7-day mission to Tbilisi and project target regions (estimated 3 days in the regions).

Expected deliverables/outputs with respective timeframe is captured in the proposed schedule below. A detailed timeframe with specific dates corresponding to the timing indicated in the table below will be developed by the evaluator upon signing the contract agreement.

Working day allocation and schedule for an evaluation

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Briefing with UNDP	-	Upon signing the contract August 2023	Remote/via Zoom	UNDP Evaluator
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluator	-	Upon signing the contract December 2021	Via email	UNDP
Desk review, evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	4 days	Within 12 days of contract signing August 2021	Home-based	Evaluator
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	1 day	Within 12 days of contract signing August 2023	Via email	Evaluator

Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report August 2023	Via email	UNDP, donors
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits	7 days	September 2023	In country with field visits	Evaluator with logistical support from UNDP
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (40-60 pages including annexes and executive summary [5 pages]) Draft report submission	7 days	Within two weeks of the completion of the field mission September 2023	Home-based Via email	Evaluator
Consolidated UNDP and key stakeholder's comments to the draft report	-	Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report October 2023	Via email	UNDP Donors
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by UNDP and donors Submission of the final evaluation report and a summary of the evaluation findings in PPT format to UNDP and conducting of final debriefing presentation for UNDP and key project stakeholders.	2 days 1 day	Within one week of receiving consolidated UNDP and key stakeholders' comments October 2023	Home-based	Evaluator
Estimated total days for the evaluation	**22**			
The timeline of the activities will be detailed in the inception report.				

5. **Evaluation team composition and required Competences**

The evaluation team will be comprised of an international consultant.

Required Qualifications and competencies for International Consultant envisage the following: **I.**   **Academic Qualifications:**

- At least Master's degree in Local Self-Government, Public Administration, Public Policy, Political Science, Development, Management or related Social Science fields (minimum requirement).

II.   Years of experience:

- At least 5 years of professional experience in Projects' Monitoring and Evaluation, preferably in governance (minimum requirement);
- Demonstrated knowledge (at least 5 relevant projects/engagements) of the good local governance, local self-government and decentralization reforms/fields (minimum requirement);
- At least 10 projects on conducting baseline, mid-term and final evaluations, out of which at least 3 are in international setting (minimum requirement);
- Solid understanding of the political context, developmental challenges, needs, and directions in the given region is an asset;
- Familiarity with the region (particularly Georgia), its overall governance features, particularly local self-governance system is an asset;
- Hands-on knowledge of evaluation methodologies and data collection methods;
- Hands-on knowledge on online collaboration platforms to be used for remote workshops and interviews and online data collection methods;
- Experience with the UN organization is an asset.

III.   Language:

- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

IV.   Competencies:

Corporate competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Understanding of the mandate and the role of UNDP would be an asset;
- Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.

Functional competencies:

- Strong communication and analytical skills;
- Demonstrated skills in drafting reports;
- Ability to work under pressure with several tasks and various deadlines;
- Actively generates creative, practical approaches and solutions to overcome challenging situations;
- Excellent writing, presentation/public speaking skills;
- A pro-active approach to problem-solving;
- Computer literacy.

Leadership and Self-Management skills:

- Builds strong relationships with the working group and with the project partners; focuses on impact and results for the project partners and responds positively to feedback;
- Cooperates with the working group effectively and demonstrates strong conflict resolution skills;
- Consistently approaches work with energy, positivity and a constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates strong influencing and facilitation skills;
- Remains calm, in control and good humored under pressure;
- Demonstrates openness to change, new ideas, and ability to manage ambiguity;
- Demonstrates strong oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrates ability to transfer knowledge and competencies;
- Is able to work independently and manage competing priorities.

6. **Payment Modality**

Payment to the individual contractor will be made based on the actual number of days worked, deliverables accepted and upon certification of satisfactory completion by the manager.

The contract price will be a fixed output-based price. Payments will be made through bank transfer according to the following schedule upon satisfactory submission of each deliverable and invoice and acceptance thereof by UNDP.

#	Deliverables	%	Timing
1	Deliverable 1. Inception Report	30%	Within a week after approval of the Inception Report by UNDP
2	Deliverable 2. Draft Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report	70%	Within a week after approval of the Final Evaluation Report by UNDP

Inception report
(Suggested content)

1. Background and context illustrating the understanding of the project/outcome to be evaluated.
2. Evaluation objective, purpose and scope. A clear statement of the objectives of the evaluation and the main aspects or elements of the initiative to be examined.
3. Evaluation criteria and questions. The criteria the evaluation will use to assess performance and rationale. The stakeholders to be met and interview questions should be included and agreed as well as a proposed schedule for field site visits.
4. Evaluability analysis. Illustrate the evaluability analysis based on formal (clear outputs, indicators, baselines, data) and substantive (identification of problem addressed, theory of change, results framework) and the implication on the proposed methodology.
5. Cross-cutting issues. Provide details of how cross-cutting issues will be evaluated, considered and analyzed throughout the evaluation. The description should specify how methods for data collection and analysis will integrate gender considerations, ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories, and employ a diverse range of data sources and processes to ensure inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including the most vulnerable where appropriate.
6. Evaluation approach and methodology, highlighting the conceptual models adopted with a description of data-collection methods, sources and analytical approaches to be employed, including the rationale for their selection (how they will inform the evaluation) and their limitations; data-collection tools, instruments and protocols; and discussion of reliability and validity for the evaluation and the sampling plan, including the rationale and limitations.
7. Evaluation matrix. This identifies the key evaluation questions and how they will be answered via the methods selected.
8. A revised schedule of key milestones, deliverables and responsibilities including the evaluation phases (data collection, data analysis and reporting).
9. Detailed resource requirements tied to evaluation activities and deliverables detailed in the workplan. Include specific assistance required from UNDP such as providing arrangements for visiting particular field offices or sites or scheduling online meetings, interviews and workshops.
10. Outline of the draft/final report as detailed in UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019) and ensuring quality and usability. The agreed report outline should meet the quality goals outlined in these guidelines and also meet the quality assessment requirements outlined in Annex 3.

Evaluation Report Template

This **evaluation report template** is intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports that meet quality standards. It does not prescribe a definitive section-by-section format that all evaluation reports should follow. Rather, it suggests the content that should be included in a quality evaluation report.

The evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and be understandable to the intended audience. In a country context, the report should be translated into local languages whenever possible. The report should also include the following:

1. **Title and opening pages** should provide the following basic information:

   - Name of the evaluation intervention.
   - Time frame of the evaluation and date of the report.
   - Countries of the evaluation intervention.
   - Names and organizations of evaluators.
   - Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation.
   - Acknowledgements.

2. **Project and evaluation information details** to be included in all final versions of evaluation reports on second page (as one page):

Project/outcome Information		
Project/outcome title		
Atlas ID		
Corporate outcome and output		
Country		
Region		
Date project document signed		
Project dates	Start	Planned end
Project budget		
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation		
Funding source		
Implementing party[3]		

Evaluation Information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)		
Final/midterm review/other		

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[3] It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan

Period under evaluation		Start	End
Evaluators			
Evaluator email address			
Evaluation dates		Start	Completion

3. **Table of contents,** including boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references.
4. **List of acronyms and abbreviations.**
5. **Executive summary (four-page maximum).** A stand-alone section of two to three pages that should:

- Briefly describe the intervention of the evaluation (the project(s), programme(s), policies or other intervention) that was evaluated.
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.
- Describe key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods.
- Summarize principle findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Include the evaluators' quality standards and assurance ratings.

6. **Introduction**

- Explain why the evaluation was conducted (the purpose), why the intervention is being evaluated at this point in time, and why it addressed the questions it did.
- Identify the primary audience or users of the evaluation, what they wanted to learn from the evaluation and why, and how they are expected to use the evaluation results.
- Identify the intervention of the evaluation (the project(s) programme(s) policies or other intervention—see upcoming section on intervention).
- Acquaint the reader with the structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users.

7. **Description of the intervention** provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description needs to provide sufficient detail for the report user to derive meaning from the evaluation. It should:

- Describe **what is being evaluated**, **who seeks to benefit** and the **problem or issue** it seeks to address.
- Explain the **expected results model or results framework**, **implementation strategies** and the key **assumptions** underlying the strategy.
- Link the intervention to **national priorities**, UNDAF priorities, corporate multi-year funding frameworks or Strategic Plan goals, or other **programme or country-specific plans and goals.**

- Identify the **phase** in the implementation of the intervention and any **significant changes** (e.g., plans, strategies, logical frameworks) that have occurred over time, and explain the implications of those changes for the evaluation.
- Identify and describe the **key partners** involved in the implementation and their roles.
- Identify **relevant cross-cutting issues** addressed through the intervention, i.e., gender equality, human rights, marginalized groups and leaving no one behind.
- Describe the **scale of the intervention**, such as the number of components (e.g., phases of a project) and the size of the target population for each component.
- Indicate the **total resources**, including human resources and budgets.
- Describe the context of the **social, political, economic and institutional factors**, and the **geographical landscape** within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.
- Point out **design weaknesses** (e.g., intervention logic) or other **implementation constraints** (e.g., resource limitations).

8. **Evaluation scope and objectives.** The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives and main questions.
- **Evaluation scope.** The report should define the parameters of the evaluation, for example, the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
- **Evaluation objectives.** The report should spell out the types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
- **Evaluation criteria.** The report should define the evaluation criteria or performance standards used.[4] The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation questions** define the information that the evaluation will generate. The report should detail the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and explain how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.

9. **Evaluation approach and methods.**[5] The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the rationale for their selection; and how, within the constraints of time and money, the approaches and methods employed yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and achieved the evaluation purposes. The report should specify how gender equality, vulnerability and social inclusion were addressed in the methodology, including how data-collection and analysis methods integrated gender considerations, use of disaggregated data and outreach to diverse stakeholders' groups. The description should help the report users judge the merits of the methods used in the evaluation and the credibility of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The description on methodology should include discussion of each of the following:

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[4] The evaluation criteria most commonly applied to UNDP evaluations are the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

[5] All aspects of the described methodology need to receive full treatment in the report. Some of the more detailed technical information may be contained in annexes to the report.

- **Evaluation approach.**
- **Data sources:** the sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders) as well as the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.
- **Sample and sampling frame.** If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria (e.g., single women under age 45); the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of sample for generalizing results.
- **Data-collection procedures and instruments:** methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data-collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source, and evidence of their reliability and validity, as well as gender-responsiveness.
- **Performance standards:**[6] the standard or measure that will be used to evaluate performance relative to the evaluation questions (e.g., national or regional indicators, rating scales).
- **Stakeholder participation** in the evaluation and how the level of involvement of both men and women contributed to the credibility of the evaluation and the results.
- **Ethical considerations:** the measures taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants (see UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators' for more information).[7]
- **Background information on evaluators:** the composition of the evaluation team, the background and skills of team members, and the appropriateness of the technical skill mix, gender balance and geographical representation for the evaluation.
- **Major limitations of the methodology** should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.

10. **Data analysis.** The report should describe the procedures used to analyze the data collected to answer the evaluation questions. It should detail the various steps and stages of analysis that were carried out, including the steps to confirm the accuracy of data and the results for different stakeholder groups (men and women, different social groups, etc.). The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analyses to the evaluation questions. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data should be discussed, including their possible influence on the way findings may be interpreted and conclusions drawn.

11. **Findings** should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation questions so that report users can readily make the connection between what was asked and what was found. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results. Assumptions or risks in the project or programme design that subsequently affected implementation should be discussed. Findings should reflect a gender analysis and cross-cutting issue questions.

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[6] A summary matrix displaying for each of evaluation questions, the data sources, the data collection tools or methods for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question was evaluated is a good illustrative tool to simplify the logic of the methodology for the report reader.

[7] UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', June 2008. Available at http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines.

12. **Conclusions** should be comprehensive and balanced and highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to the decision-making of intended users, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.

13. **Recommendations.** The report should provide practical, actionable and feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. Recommendations should be reasonable in number. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. They should address sustainability of the initiative and comment on the adequacy of the project exit strategy, if applicable. Recommendations should also provide specific advice for future or similar projects or programming. Recommendations should also address any gender equality and women's empowerment issues and priorities for action to improve these aspects.

14. **Lessons learned.** As appropriate and/or if requested by the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on specific evidence presented in the report.

15. **Report annexes.** Suggested annexes should include the following to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details that enhance the credibility of the report:

    - TOR for the evaluation.
    - Additional methodology-related documentation, such as the evaluation matrix and data-collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.) as appropriate.
    - List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted, and sites visited. This can be omitted in the interest of confidentiality if agreed by the evaluation team and UNDP.
    - List of supporting documents reviewed.
    - Project or programme results model or results framework.
    - Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets and goals relative to established indicators.
    - Code of conduct signed by evaluators.

Evaluation Report Quality Assessment Requirements

Are the evaluation report's objectives, criteria, methodology and data sources fully described and are they appropriate given the subject being evaluated and the reasons for carrying out the evaluation?

2.1   Is the evaluation report well-balanced and structured?

- With sufficient but not excessive background information?

- Is the report a reasonable length?

- Are required annexes provided?

2.2   Does the evaluation report clearly address the objectives of the evaluation as outlined in the TOR?

METHODOLOGY

2.3   Is the evaluation's methodological approach clearly outlined?

- Any changes from the proposed approach are detailed with reasons why

2.4   Are the nature and extent of the role and involvement of stakeholders in the project/programme explained adequately?

2.5   Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of relevance?

2.6   Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of effectiveness?

2.7   Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of efficiency?

2.8   Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of sustainability?

DATA COLLECTION

2.9   Are data-collection methods and analysis clearly outlined?

- Data sources clearly outlined (including triangulation methods)?

- Data analysis approaches detailed?

Data-collection methods and tools explained?

2.10   Is the data-collection approach and analysis adequate for the scope of the evaluation?

- Comprehensive set of data sources (especially for triangulation) where appropriate?

- Comprehensive set of quantitative and qualitative surveys, and analysis approaches where appropriate?

- Clear presentation of data analysis and citation within the report?

- Documented meetings and surveys with stakeholders and beneficiary groups, where appropriate?

2.11   Are any changes to the evaluation approach or limitations in implementation during the evaluation mission clearly outlined and explained?

- Issues with access to data or verification of data sources?

- Issues in availability of interviewees?

- Outline how these constraints were addressed

REPORT CONTENT

2.12   Does the evaluation draw linkages to the UNDP country programme strategy and/or UNDAF?

2.13   Does the evaluation draw linkages to related national government strategies and plans in the sector/area of support?

- Does the evaluation discuss how capacity development or the strengthening of national

capacities can be addressed?

2.14 Does the evaluation detail project funding and provide funding data (especially for GEF)?

- Variances between planned and actual expenditures assessed and explained?

Observations from financial audits completed for the project considered?

2.15 Does the evaluation include an assessment of the project's M&E design, implementation and overall quality?

2.16 Does the evaluation identify ways in which the programme/project has produced a catalytic role and has demonstrated: (a) the production of a public good; (b) demonstration; (c) replication; and/or (d) scaling up (GEF evaluations)?

2.17 Are indicators in the results framework assessed individually, with final achievements noted?

Does the evaluation report address gender and other key cross-cutting issues?

3.1 Are human rights, disabilities, minorities and vulnerable group issues addressed where relevant?

3.2 Does the report discuss the poverty/environment nexus or sustainable livelihood issues, as relevant?

3.3 Does the report discuss disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation issues where relevant?

3.4 Does the report discuss crisis prevention and recovery issues as relevant?

3.5 Are the principles and policy of gender equality and the empowerment of women integrated in the evaluation's scope and indicators as relevant?

3.6 Do the evaluation's criteria and evaluation questions specifically address how gender equality and the empowerment of women have been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention and the results achieved, as relevant?

3.7 Are a gender-responsive evaluation methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques selected?

3.8 Do the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations take aspects of gender equality and the empowerment of women into consideration?

3.9 Does the evaluation draw linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated?

3.10 Does the terminal evaluation adequately address social and environmental safeguards, as relevant? (GEF evaluations)

Does the report clearly and concisely outline and support its findings, conclusions and recommendations?
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of findings?

4.2 Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of conclusions?

4.3 Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of lessons learned?

4.4 Do the findings and conclusions relate directly to the objectives of the project/programme?

- Are the objectives of the evaluation as outlined in the TOR?

4.5 Are the findings and conclusions supported with data and interview sources?

- Are constraints in access to data and interview sources detailed?

4.6 Do the conclusions build on the findings of the evaluation?

- Do the conclusions go beyond the findings and present a balanced picture of the strengths and limitations of the evaluation's focus?

4.7 Are risks discussed in the evaluation report?

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.8   Are the recommendations clear, concise, realistic and actionable?

-     A number of recommendations are reasonable given the size and scope of the project/ programme

Recommendations link directly to findings and conclusions

4.9   Are recommendations linked to country programme outcomes and strategies and actionable by the country office?

-     Is guidance given for implementation of the recommendations?

Do recommendations identify implementing roles (UNDP, government, programme, stakeholder, other)?

Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP Evaluations

Evaluations of UNDP-supported activities need to be independent, impartial and rigorous. Each evaluation should clearly contribute to learning and accountability.   Hence evaluators must have personal and professional integrity and be guided by propriety in the conduct of their business

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded

2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.

3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants.   They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

4. Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.

5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Annex 2: Bibliography – DDG final project evaluation

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12. UNDP, management response to the mid-term evaluation, 30 May 2022
13. GoG, Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 (DS)
14. GoG, Action Plan 2020-21 for DS
15. GoG, Action Plan 2022-23 for DS
16. UNDP, IEO, updated Evaluation Guidelines, 2021
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18. UNDP Outcome level evaluation, a companion guide to the PME handbook of 2011
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2. UNDP, FRDL2 – Steering Committee Meeting Notes from 2018 until 2021
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4. UNDP, FRLD2 – annual report 2019 and all annexes
5. UNDP, FRLD2 – annual report 2020 and all annexes
6. UNDP, FRLD2 – semi-annual report 2021 and all annexes
7. UNDP and SCO, third party cost-sharing agreement, 11.12.2017
8. UNDP and ADC, third party cost-sharing agreement, 11.12.2017
9. UNDP and ADC, FRLD2 project amendment No 1, 28.06.2021
10. UNDP and SCO, FRLD2 project amendment No 1, 29.11.2018
11. UNDP and SCO, FRLD2 project amendment No 2, 11.06.2021
12. Anthony Costanzo, Mid-term evaluation report of the FRLD2, 6 April 2020
13. David Johnson, Review of the FRLD2 project document logframes, final report, 20 November 2020

14. UNDP-SCD-ADC-MRI provision decisions submitted for FRLD2 Steering Committee endorsement on impact and outcome indicators, undated
15. NALAG, powers of the local self-government, a research report, 2020
16. David Losaberidze, Assessment of the institutional framework and performance of civil advisory councils in the municipalities of Kemo Kartli Region, 2020
17. NALAG, Local economy challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, undated
18. NALAG, Challenges of municipal management during the COVID-19 pandemic, undated
19. UNDP, Budget and updated financial expenditures of the FRLD2 project
20. Swiss Cooperation Office, Swiss cooperation programme South Caucasus region 2022-2025
21. FRLD2, Indicator passport, undated (developed in 2020 and updated in 2021)

Annex 3 : Evaluation agenda and list of respondents

Nr	Date	Place	Name	Surname	Title	Organisation	Sex	Time (min.)
1	6.11.23	Tbilisi	Lika	Sanikidze	Project M&E specialist	UNDP	F	90
			Nino	Kakubava	Project Manager	UNDP	F	
			Anna	Kebadze	Governance expert	UNDP	F	
			Giorgi	Nasrashvili	Governance expert	UNDP	M	
2	6.11.23	Tbilisi	David	Melua	Director	NALAG	M	60
3	6.11.23	Tbilisi	Anna	Chernyshova	DRR	UNDP	F	75
4	7.11.23	Tbilisi	Anders	Trelborg	Deputy Head of Mission	Danish Embassy	M	50
5	7.11.23	Tbilisi	Lika	Kiladze	Head of the Board	EDEC	F	55
6	7.11.23	Tbilisi	Kristina	Kilanava	Chair	Association Imedi	F	60
7	7.11.23	Tbilisi	Shako	Chkheidze	Director	EGI	M	50
8	8.11.23	Rustavi	Rezo	Barbakadze	Advisor to Mayor	Rustavi municipality	M	55
9	8.11.23	Tbilisi	Tamar	Grigolishvili	Head of Working Group On municipal statistics	Geostat	F	60
			TBC	TBC	Head of international cooperation and translator	Geostat	F	
10	8.11.23	Tbilisi	Tamar	Bezhanishvili	Project Coordinator	PMCG	F	60
			Lizi	Sopromadze	Team leader		F	
11	8.11.23	Tbilisi	Giorgi	Margebadze	Head of Agendy	MSDA	M	35
			Mariam		Donor coordination	MSDA	F	
12	9.11.23	Tbilisi	Teona	Turashvili	Local Government - internet and innovation directions head	IDFI	F	50
13	9.11.23	Khoni	Lado	Jurkhadze	Mayor	Khoni municipality	M	90
			TBC	TBC	Assistant		F	
14	9.11.23	Kutaisi	Shorena	Khukhua	Head of Int. relations	Kutaisi municipality	F	55
15	10.11.23	Tskaltubo	Pati	Gagoshidze	Head of financial Dept.	Tskaltubo municipality	F	60
			Marekh	Kankadze	Head of economic Dept.	Tskaltubo municipality	F	
16	10.11.23	Tbilisi	Douglas	Webb	RR a.i.	UNDP	M	60
			Lia	Sanikidze	Project M&E specialist	UNDP	F	
17	14.11.23	Zoom	Mzia	Giorgobiani	Deputy Minister	MRDI	F	45
			Nikoloz	Rosebashvili	Head of Self-Govt and Policy Dept -	MRDI	M	
18	16.11.23	Zoom	Gvantsa	Besella	Head of Human Capital Development	CSB	F	50
19	17.11.23	Zoom	Dorrit	Skaarup Jensen	Focal Point European Neighbourhood Programme	MFA – Denmark	F	40

Total: 21 Female and 9 Male respondents in 19 interviews. Total interview time: 1,100 minutes or over 18 hours.

In country field mission from 5 to 11th November 2023.

Field data collection on 9 and 10th November 2023.

Annex 4 to the DGG evaluation report: List of Key improvements in Local Self-Government Policy and Institutional Framework as part of Decentralization Reform Process:

1) Empowering Local Self-Government:
- Successfully drafted and adopted an amendment to the Local Self-Government Code in September 2019, which redefined the separation of powers between the state and self-governing units, emphasizing subsidiarity and ensuring the completeness and exclusivity of self-governing unit powers.
- Analyzed and prepared draft amendments to 171 laws to harmonize them with the Local Self-Government Code, which were approved by the Parliament of Georgia in 2020.
- Introduced specific amendments to the Local Self-Government Code to clarify the delegated powers of "displaced municipalities" (Akhalgori, Eredvi, Kurta, Tigva, Azhara) in March 2018.
- Enhanced the powers of Tbilisi Municipality by enabling it to regulate passenger transportation by light vehicles (taxi) in May 2018, thereby increasing municipal authority, generating additional revenue, and ensuring the quality and safety of this vital municipal service.
- Defined the municipality's powers in the area of public-private cooperation, enhancing their responsibilities in May 2018.
- Expanded the role of municipalities in safeguarding children's rights by adopting a draft law in September 2019.
- Granted municipalities the authority to establish legal entities of public law, a move approved in May 2020.
- Rectified the definition of settlement categories through amendments to the Local Self-Government Code in 2020.
- Introduced an amendment to the Law of Georgia "On Public Health," delineating the powers of state authorities and municipalities in the field of public health, which was enacted in 2020.
- Enabled municipalities to modify or cancel property-related conditions for recipients of municipal property due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as approved by the Parliament in 2021.
- Defined the role of municipalities in the restoration, cultivation, maintenance, protection, and supervision of the windbreak strip through a draft amendment to the Local Self-Government Code in 2021.
- Contributed to the development and passage of the "Law on Water Resources Management" in 2023, outlining the municipality's responsibilities in managing local water resources.

2) Strengthening Material and Financial Capacities of Local Self-Government:
- Facilitated the expansion of the list of basic (inalienable) property types transferred from the state to municipalities, approved by the Government of Georgia in 2018.
- Improved procedures for transferring the right to use state-owned property to municipalities through a resolution in 2020.
- Streamlined the process for municipalities to receive grants from international organizations, enhancing opportunities for external funding in 2019.
- Increased the percentage share of revenues from the disposal of state property transferred to local budgets by amending the Budget Code in 2023.
- Authorized municipalities to open current and deposit accounts in commercial banks to boost their own revenues, as sanctioned in 2023.
- Raised local fees for construction permits through an amendment to the Law of Georgia "On Local Fees" in November 2022.

- Initiated measures to establish a clear framework for calculating material and financial resources for municipalities in 2023.
- Defined the authority of municipalities in deciding the placement of bus stations within their territories through draft laws, currently under parliamentary consideration.

3) Fostering Accountable and Transparent Local Self-Government:
- Enhanced gender diversity in local governance by increasing the number of proportionally elected members of Sakrebulos and ensuring a gender-balanced candidate list in June 2021.
- Addressed the issue of conflict of interest for officials of City Councils and Mayors through an amendment to the Local Self-Government Code in December 2022.
- Promoted effective development planning by approving "Guidelines for Planning the Development of the Municipality" by government decree in February 2022

Achievements of Decentralization process

The DGG project supported the MRDI to develop the Decentralisation Strategy 2020-2025 to facilitate the decentralization process. The strategy was approved by the resolution N678 of the Government of Georgia in 2019.

1) In the direction of increasing the powers of local self-government:
• A draft amendment to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, according to which the law defined the separation of powers of the state and self-governing units based on the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring the completeness and exclusivity of the powers of the self-governing unit and ensuring the proportionality of the self-governing unit's legally established powers and transferred financial resources ((the draft law was adopted on 18.2019 September)

• Sectoral legislation was analyzed and draft amendments to 171 laws were prepared in order to harmonize them with the Local Self-Government Code. The package of projects was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in 2020.

• A draft of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, which was related to specifying the delegated powers of so-called "displaced municipalities" (Akhalgori, Eredvi, Kurta, Tigva, Azhara) (these changes were adopted by the Parliament on March 7, 2018).

• A package of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, according to which Tbilisi Municipality was granted the power to regulate the transportation of passengers by light vehicle (taxi) as an additional responsibility (this amendment was adopted by the Parliament on May 4, 2018). This change has increased powers of municipality, provided additional source of income and ensured regulating the quality and safety of crucial municipal service.

• A draft of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, which determined the powers of the municipality in the field of public-private cooperation (this amendment was adopted by the Parliament on May 4, 2018).

• A draft of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, according to which the issues of protection of children's rights were defined as additional powers of the municipality (the draft law was adopted on September 27, 2019).

• Draft amendments to the Local Self-Government Code were prepared, according to which municipalities were granted the power to establish legal entities of public law. The draft law was adopted on May 29, 2020.

• A draft of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, according to which the definition of the categories of settlements was corrected. The draft law was adopted in 2020.

• A draft amendment to the Law of Georgia "On Public Health" was prepared, which ensured clear separation of the powers of the state authorities and municipalities in the field of public health, and the powers delegated to the municipality were defined. The draft law was adopted in 2020.

• Draft amendments to the Local Self-Government Code were prepared, according to which municipalities were given the right to change or cancel the conditions related to the property for recipients of municipal property due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft law was adopted by the Parliament in 2021.

• A project of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code was prepared, according to which the restoration, cultivation, maintenance, protection and supervision of the windbreak strip was defined as an additional authority of the municipalities. The draft law was adopted in 2021.

• The project contributed to the preparation of the Law "On Water Resources Management", according to which the powers of the municipality in the field of water resources management of local importance were determined. The law was adopted in 2023.

2) **In the direction of material and financial strengthening of local self-government,** the DGG project provided assistance to the MRDI to facilitate the decentralization process:

• In the preparation of the draft resolution of the Government of Georgia "On approval of the list of types of basic (inalienable) property to be transferred by the state to municipalities". According to the project, the list of types of basic (inalienable) property to be transferred to municipalities was specified and expanded. The project was adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2018, by Resolution N 527.

• "On approving the procedure for submitting, considering and deciding on the transfer of state-owned property to the state, autonomous republic of Abkhazia or Adjara, local self-government body or legal entity under public law" which improved Procedures for transferring the right to use the property by municipalities. The project was accepted in 2020 on December 24, by resolution N791.

• In the preparation of the draft of the decree of the Government of Georgia, which made it easier for municipalities to receive grants from international organizations. The decree was adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2019. By Decree N1990 of September 20.

• Preparation of the draft law on amendments to the Budget Code, which envisages increasing the percentage share of revenues received from the disposal (sale, as well as leasing or transfer of property to management) of state property (land, buildings and other main assets) to be transferred to local budgets. The bill was adopted in 2023 on May 2.

• In order to promote the growth of local self-government's own revenues in 2023, on February 22, the amendment to the Budget Code of Georgia was prepared according to which municipalities were given the right to open current accounts and/or deposit accounts in commercial banks and micro-banks in order to receive additional income. The bill was adopted in 2023 on February 22.

• Preparation of the draft amendment to the Law of Georgia "On Local Fees", according to which the amount of local fee for construction permit has been increased. The amendment was approved in 2022 on November 2.

• In the preparation of the draft of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code related to the approval of the rules for calculating the amount of appropriate material and financial resources for the implementation of delegated powers for the municipality. The law defines the procedure for calculating the amount of appropriate material and financial resources for the implementation of delegated powers to the municipality. The project was adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2023. It was approved by resolution N327 on August 25.

• In the preparation of draft laws "On Motor Transport", "On Licenses and Permits" and amendments to the Local Self-Government Code. According to these draft laws, the resolution of the issue regarding the selection of a lace for a bus station on the territory of the municipality is defined as its additional authority of the municipality. Bills have been initiated in the Parliament of Georgia.

3) in order to establish a reliable, accountable, transparent and result-oriented local self-government, the project contributed to:

• In 2021, on June 28, an amendment was made to the Election Code of Georgia, according to which the number of proportionally elected members of the Sakrebulo was increased and it was established that at least one of every three candidates in the lists submitted to participate in the elections must be of a different gender. As a result of this change, the number of women members of the Sakrebulo almost doubled. If 2017 The representation of women in the elected city councils was only 13.46%, in 2021 the representation of women in the elected city councils increased to 23.7%.

• In 2022 On December 15, an amendment was made to the Local Self-Government Code, according to which the issue of conflict of interest of the officials of the City Council and the Mayor was improved.

• To ensure development planning of municipalities: "Guidelines for developing the municipality development plans (MDDS)" was approved by the decree N264 of the Government of Georgia on February 15, 2022.