

“Strengthening Regional and Local Governance in Kvemo Kartli, Georgia”

on behalf of UNDP Georgia

Final Evaluation Report

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Abbreviations

AVH	Accion contra el Hambre
CEGSTAR	Center for Effective Governance System and Territorial Arrangement Reform
CiDA	Civil Development Agency NGO
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DEX	Direct Implementation Modality
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
IDP	Internally Displaced People
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
MYFF	Multi Year Funding Framework of UNDP
NALA	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SIDA	Swedish Development Agency
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	United States dollars
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

The UNDP project “Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli” was a timely and very relevant intervention in the context of the newly established local self-governance system in Georgia. Its capacity development assistance contributed to establishing basis for improved effectiveness of both regional and local governments in Kvemo Kartli. The overall impact of capacity development and the sustainability of its investments are stronger at the local than at the regional level, mainly due to a lack of a basic institutional framework for regional governance in Georgia.

At the regional level the project yielded positive results on building awareness for institutional capacity gaps and major constrains to advancing regional governance in Georgia, improving individual capacities of government officials, narrowing the gap between regional and local government officials. The project has launched the process of participatory regional development planning and the dialogue on improving institutional set up in support of regional development. The decision not to push for the finalization of the Regional Development Strategy and the establishment of the Regional Development Agency (initially planned project outputs) was justifiable in the context of upcoming changes in strategic and regulatory frameworks related to regional development.

At the local level, a key success factor for improving capacities of municipal governments was a comprehensive capacity assessment on which project responses built. Due to a lengthy capacity assessment process and a short-term time frame of the project, only immediate capacity development measures could be addressed. On the background of vast organizational development needs of municipal authorities these measures were important for laying the basis for more effective municipal governance and management system. The functional analysis conducted in two municipalities followed by assistance with designing packages related to organizational structure, human resources management, accountability arrangements, records keeping and the documentation management system are of greater interest to other municipalities and have high potential for replication.

One of the major results of UNDP assistance at the municipal level are the local strategic development plans elaborated and adopted by all municipalities of the region, the further success of which will depend on the ability of municipalities to translate them into annual plans and budgets. Although this ability is already being demonstrated by financially stronger municipalities, it is seriously limited by the poor local revenue raising base and a still vertical pattern of decision making.

Implementation of small scale projects yielded tangible results and allowed municipal authorities to practice learned skills, reinforce the sense of achievements, produce practical benefits to the population and improve the municipal authorities’ image vis-à-vis the citizens. Among the most successful initiatives were the citizen service bureaus in Rustavi, Marneuli and Dmanisi, the project on address registration system in Bolnisi and improving working conditions of the village administration in Koda village.

The issues of national minorities and gender inclusion (quite important in the context of Georgia in general and Kvemo Kartli in particular) could have been better mainstreamed into the project should there were clear strategies in this regard.

At the policy level, project experience, assessment results and methodological tools were documented and promoted through conferences, presentations and the UNDP website. Findings on regional development fed into the work of the Regional Development Task Force established at the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure. However, due to short project cycle, the lack of national counterpart at the central government level prior to the establishment of the Ministry in 2009, under-conceptualized synergies between different UNDP interventions and weak linkages between the project and national level stakeholders the project had very limited impact on the policy level.

At the project management level, flexibility in responding to the needs of partner municipality was the main managerial advantage, especially in the context of a very turbulent political environment in Georgia (which was among the reasons contributing to implementation delays). The main general project shortcomings were a mismatch between the capacity building nature of the project and a relatively short time period available for its implementation and a lack of impact oriented monitoring system that would allow measuring success of capacity building inputs.

The evaluation came to the **conclusion** that the UNDP project has established a fertile ground for advancing good governance and effective municipal management practices in Kvemo Kartli that can benefit the general local governance system in Georgia but its sustainability needs to be consolidated and project continuation should be planned.

To build on the lessons of the previous project and to maximize future impact the evaluation **recommended** in the future project:

- Strategically concentrate on strengthening the local self-governance system by linking work at the municipal level with national level policy dialogue on local governance reforms, whereby application of a programmatic approach to UNDP local governance interventions in Georgia could be instrumental.
- De-emphasize direct engagement with the regional government since this level of government lacks institutional basis. As national policies and visions with regards to regional development evolve invest into finalizing and legitimizing the initialized regional development planning process in Kvemo Kartli, ensuring synergies between regional and local development planning.
- At the local government level, invest into introduction of new approaches in local governance (Kvemo Kartli as “demonstration plot” for good governance and municipal management innovations) with a focus on the following areas with upscaling potential: organizational development, economic development and service provision, including self-organization and engagement of citizens.
- Strengthen UNDP policy level work in the following areas: upscaling the piloted practices through extensive exchange and partnership with key national stakeholders; maintaining policy dialogue on key level of UNDP intervention at the local level (organizational development of local self-government and strengthening their role in local economic development and service provision), supporting advocacy from below and building of alliances with potential “change agents”. Provision of technical assistance to relevant national actors, including potential service providers to municipal authorities, would be important elements of the work at this level.
- In strengthening project management the following elements will be beneficial: sound monitoring system, strategy towards mainstreaming the inclusion of minorities and women, longer term partnership arrangements as apposed to short-term contracts with service providers to municipalities, cost-sharing in provision of training and consultancy services to municipalities, better utilization of coaching and peer education principles, as well as better training opportunities to project staff.

1 Introduction

1.1 Brief Project Background

Since 2006 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has implemented a number of initiatives in support of decentralisation reform and local self-government capacity development in Georgia at both national and local levels. Following the establishment of a new local self-government system in Georgia (the Organic Law was adopted in 2005 and enacted in 2006) and the local elections of 2006, the organisation assisted the government in restructuring its local government system¹, elaborating key legislation on local self-government and the draft Decentralization Strategy. The latter is still being discussed by national stakeholders.

To lead and coordinate the regional and local governance reforms in Georgia, in 2008 the Government of Georgia established the office of the State Minister on Regional Governance that in February 2009 was transferred into a full-fledged Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI). *At the national level*, in the framework of UNDP's local governance project launched in 2009 and in the partnership with the Ministry the organisation invests into strengthening institutional and individual capacities of central and local government bodies to guide and implement effectively the local governance reform, as well as to develop an efficient local civil service.

At the local level, the UNDP project "Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli" (2007-10) has been the major international intervention in the governance domain in Georgia in recent years. Through a combination of various capacity development tools, the project aims "to enhance the ability of the region and its seven municipalities to become both better governed and to deliver services to the full spectrum of local citizens, thus counteracting poverty and disadvantage in the region".²

The project became a pure capacity development assistance intervention which pursues the following outcomes:

- Improved regional governance: Capacity of regional government in the Kvemo Kartli region is strengthened to coordinate and facilitate the formulation and implementation of the regional development strategy and plans;
- Improved local governance: Capacity of local government (municipalities) officials improved and administrative procedures and systems for efficient delivery of public services are streamlined;
- Secure policy mainstreaming of the project's experience: Policy experiences of the project are documented and attempts taken in ensuring its use horizontally (by other municipalities in the country) and vertically (by policy-makers at the national level).

The project has been operationally completed by April 1, 2010. This report is the result of the external project evaluation commissioned by UNDP and conducted by an international consultant in March 2010.

1.2 Evaluation Goals and Methodology

The current evaluation had a dual goal of (ToR of the evaluation are attached in *Annex 1*):

- reviewing the project success with regards to its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability,
- recommending approaches and directions for future UNDP interventions in the area of local governance in Georgia that would built on the present project achievements.

The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner and included the following data collection and analysis methods:

- desk review of all documents, reports and written records produced in the framework of the project, as well as laws, publications and reports of other organisations active in local governance area in Georgia,
- field visits (meetings, site visits and observation) to six out of seven municipalities³ involved into the project,

¹ Linked to the decision to downsize the number of local self-government units from 1000 to 69 (64 municipalities and 5 cities) made by the government of Georgia in 2006

² Project Document "Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli", UNDP: Tbilisi, 2007

³ City of Rustavi, Municipalities of Gardabani, Marneuli, Tetritskaro, Bolnisi, and Dmanisi. The municipality of Tsalka was not included into the field visits program due to its remoteness and evaluation time constrains. However, an interview was organized with the Gamgebeli of Tsalka at the UNDP project office in Rustavi.

- semi-structured and unstructured interviews with key informants, partners and stakeholders: namely UNDP management and projects staff, project partners and collaborators at different levels (including regional and local authorities, civil society organisations and representatives of business sector, MRDI, the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia – NALA, trainers and service providers involved in the project implementation, relevant donor organisations),
- a concluding focus group discussion with the representatives of all partner municipalities during which evaluation findings were presented, discussed and key recommendations for future UNDP support jointly formulated.

A detailed program of evaluation is attached in *Annex 2*. In total 54 people took part in the project evaluation of the project, among whom were 35 men and 20 women.

The evaluation comprised of two days of desk review, twelve days of field work and eight days of report writing and supporting UNDP in formulation of the new Project Document. In all field visits the evaluator was accompanied by a project staff member, which should not be seen as a factor limiting the independence of the evaluation. Rather, this provided a good opportunity to the evaluator to critically reflect and exchange ideas with the project staff on various findings and issues of concern. Critical thinking and openness in sharing of ideas by the participants of the meetings was encouraged by both project staff and the evaluator.

2 Evaluation Findings

2.1 Relevance

UNDAF and UNDP

The project is very relevant from the perspective of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Georgia and the UNDP Country Program 2006-10 as it contributes to strengthening efficiency and accountability of governance structures at local level towards an inclusive and participatory decision making (UNDAF Outcome 2) and to fostering democratic governance practices (MYFF Goal 2).

National Reforms Agenda

The project is also highly appropriate from the point of view of assisting the national government in addressing the challenge of reorganization of the government system and creation of local self-governance under the new Local Governance Organic Law enacted in 2006. UNDP capacity development activities were very important in the context of generally weak capacities of local and regional authorities (which is often referred to by national policy makers as an impediment to development, further decentralization and improvement in service provision).

It is difficult to judge on project relevance in terms of its contribution to a longer-term national local governance policy when these policies are not yet clearly formulated. General lack of strategic vision on local and regional governance reform at the national level represents a serious concern for relevance and sustainability of international and national investments into strengthening the domestic governance system in Georgia. In the framework of its national level work on decentralization UNDP made an attempt to support the Government of Georgia with the elaboration of a decentralization strategy but this Strategy has not been yet agreed upon by relevant stakeholders.

Project Strategy Revision

The project's flexibility to address the needs of regional and local governments was among important preconditions for securing an adequate response. Due to a one-and-half years time lag between the project conceptualization and the launching of the intervention in late 2007 the project strategy had to be revised.

It was decided to build the intervention entirely on the outcomes of the capacity assessment conducted against the existing institutional and regulatory context that took place during the initial project phase. The assessment took longer than expected (also due to the military conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008). It revealed vast organizational and individual capacities development needs at both regional and local level, addressing of which became the main focus of the project. It was decided to treat the "improvement of local government's ability to deliver services to vulnerable communities and to mainstream gender issues" (part of intended outputs 3 in the initial Project Document) not as a separate output but as issues for mainstreaming.

It should be noted that flexibility maintained by the project during the entire implementation process was important on the background of the turbulent political context of intervention (changes in top regional and local leadership, extra-ordinary presidential and parliamentary elections, the military conflict of August 2008, etc.).

2.2 Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability

Regional Governance

For the improvement of regional governance the project has undertaken a number of interlinked activities. It conducted a baseline mapping exercise for identifying capacity gaps of the regional government and supported functional analysis of the regional Governor's office. In order to provide organizational and individual capacity development support at this level, the project elaborated a Capacity Response Strategy and provided technical assistance to regional government through training, study tours and advisory support. A regional web-site was launched with the support of the UNDP project as a main public communication and regional promotion tool.

The project also assisted with the elaboration of the Regional Development Strategy for Kvemo Kartli that is expected to provide the framework for regional development activities and resources inputs. It also initiated discussions facilitated by an array of studies on institutional set up in support of regional development. Along with the Regional Development Strategy, the establishment of Regional Development Agency in Kvemo Kartli was a key outputs initially envisaged by the Project Document.

Strengthening Organizational Basis

At the first glance, the project's effectiveness and efficiency in terms of improvements of regional governance appear to be not very high due to a shortage of outputs produced from the initially intended and changes of concrete organizational practices at this level. The project's functional analysis, the Capacity Response Strategy and studies on the regional institutional set up helped to reveal the existing problems but the ability to utilize these outputs for improving organizational practices of the Governors' Office was hindered significantly by the absence of institutional basis for regional governance in Georgia. This challenge was continuously stressed by different studies commissioned by the project in the attempt to clarify the situation and bring the issue to the attention of national decision makers (including the Review on Regional Development in Georgia (March 2009), the Review of Regional Development Planning in Georgia and the Idea of Establishing Regional Development Agency in Kvemo Kartli (March 2009) and Functional Review of Regional Office of Governor in Kvemo Kartli region (November 2009)).

The above-mentioned studies, together with the Paper on Regional Development in a Globalised World⁴ shared with the project by UNDP Bratislava office, were submitted for consideration of the Regional Development Task Force established under MRDI. They contributed to advancing national thinking in this domain but no progress have been achieved so far on endorsing clear national policies with regards to regional government system in Georgia.

Currently the Task Force is in the process of elaborating the Regional Development State Strategy for Georgia. This work on the Strategy (supported by EC, Polish Aid, GTZ and UNDP) is due to be completed and forwarded for the adoption to the Government of Georgia in the coming months. Yet, the Strategy focuses predominantly on regional socio-economic development concerns and does not address the underlying political and institutional qualms of regional governance system in the country.

The national government still lacks a very concept of a region. The functions of regional administration established in 2007 are stipulated in laws and regulations in very generic terms. The role of the regional government vis-à-vis the municipal one is blurred. The Law on Supervision of Local Self-Government Bodies assigns the regional Governor's office powers to make suggestions and recommendations on local governance matters to municipal authorities in the region, which conflicts with the provision on complete independence of local self-governments granted to municipal authorities by the Local Governance Organic Law. Many experts are of the opinion that in reality the whole governance system in Georgia still builds on strong vertical hierarchical top down approach.

In such a volatile environment characterized by the lack of political vision and the very institutional basis for regional government the sustainability of inputs into regional government organizational capacity development is questionable although basic capacity development interventions still can yield improvements at the individual level.

⁴ Hachemi B. (2009). Regional Development in a Globalised World. UNDP: Bratislava, May 2009

Individual Capacity Building

Positive changes that took place on individual level, including general awareness of good governance principles and challenges, and sharpening development vision among regional leadership in Kvemo Kartli, should not be overlooked. They are clearly attributes of the UNDP project.

Representatives of the Governor's office participated in all study tours and major trainings organized under the project. According to most government representatives interviewed during the evaluation, participation of regional representatives in these events along with officials from municipalities contributed substantively to narrowing the gap between the region and local self-governments. This improvement of relations also help the municipalities to better utilize regular meetings between them and the Governor for raising their concerns openly and seeking solutions to pending municipal problems. Heads of municipalities also see the Governor's office as an effective mediator between them and the MRDI – the role that they would like to see further strengthened.

According to the interviewed officials from the regional Governor's Office, through their involvement into the project they managed to develop ideas related to meeting current regional development challenges but they are extremely uncertain about their powers to act.

Individual capacity development is hurdled by general institutional weaknesses of the regional government. The Governor's office is mainly responsible to implement the regional projects funded from the state budget in the region. The Office consists of several departments but it lacks clear competences and budget (including own revenue sources). For instance, the Regional Development Unit employs several staff members and is in principle mandated to deal with regional development tasks listed in the Presidential Decree on establishing the Units. At the same time the Unit has limited executive power or resources to tackle the issues of regional development; rather it fulfills pure administration duties and gathers information as requested by the Governor's office, the Presidential Chancellery and various Ministries.

Regional Development Strategy

In this context it is not surprising that the elaboration of the Regional Development Strategy (one of intended project outcomes) has been substantially delayed. The Regional Development Strategy of Kvemo Kartli has a long legacy. The process was launched as a result of a EC and OSCE-funded intervention implemented by the Accion contra el Hambre (ACH) prior to the beginning of the UNDP project. During the pre-project assessment the Governor office approached UNDP with the suggestion to take over the process in order to bring it into a qualitatively new level.

At the moment of writing this report the draft Regional Development Strategy for Kvemo Kartli is being finalized. Based on the review of the pre-final draft that was available to the evaluation it can be concluded that the strategy is a comprehensive document reflective of different dimensions of regional development and inclusive of major priorities outlines in the municipal development strategies elaborated with the support of the UNDP project (discussed in the next section).

Despite strong support to the strategy by the regional leadership, municipalities are not aware of the process and the content of the document (except Rustavi municipality that seems to have been more involved into its elaboration as the regional center). This casts doubts on a participatory nature of the strategy development. The fact that the formulation of the strategy is to a large extent lead by the project team under the pressure to deliver might be among factors accountable for the lack of local ownership. Among the reasons for the team to have assumed major responsibility over the strategy formulation are the weak capacities of regional government but also the length of the process during which officials in the Governor's office changed several times.

According to those involved in the regional strategy drafting, development planning in Georgia and implementation of regional development plans is seriously constrained by:

- a) lack of reliable information and statistics at the regional level (*"in the process of strategy development we collected the information from different sources but much of it is not complete and/or not up to date"*),
- b) difficulties with defining investment priorities in the situation of lacking spatial plans and inventory of main resources available, and uncertainties regarding ownership of land and other assets (*"even municipalities in the region do not have a good overview of all assets, infrastructure and resources available on their territories"*, *"it is difficult to imagine a living strategy document without access to well organized information on spatial plans"*),
- c) lack of an approval mechanism for the strategy, as much as institutional set up and financial instruments for its implementation (*"how the strategy will be enacted and what are going to be the sources of its funding remain open questions"*, *"implementation of the strategy will require good*

linkages with national level programs and funds, including close relations with the line ministries which we do not enjoy at present moment”).

Under the pressure from EU to advance regional development in Georgia, the MRDI is currently elaborating a number of proposals to address the above mentioned challenges. These proposals built on the following main ideas:

- The Regional Development State Strategy for Georgia and its Action Plan after their approval are to be translated into regional development strategies;
- A Regional Development Councils consisting of representatives of the Governor's office, municipalities, business and NGO community is to be institutionalized in each region as a mechanism for approval of regional strategies;
- Mandating the Center for Effective Governance System and Territorial Arrangement Reform - CEGSTAR (a former UNDP decentralization project unit and now a public entity under the Ministry) with the task of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Regional Development State Strategy;
- The possible set up of the Regional Development Fund as an instrument of streaming financial resources from national budget to regional development with a perspective of acquiring a legal status that would enable it to attract external non-budgetary funds and investments;
- Funding of regional development initiatives through a EUR 17 million EC grant the government of Georgia in the form of direct budgetary support.

In the context of still existing uncertainties with regards to content and institutional basis for regional development in Georgia it was probably wise for the project not to push for delivering such outputs as the Regional Development Strategy or the RDA (another project result initially envisaged by the project document). The legitimacy of both would be difficult to ensure if they were brought into life before the coming changes in regional development framework.

Regional Development Agency

The establishment of RDA under the UNDP project in Kvemo Kartly has been a sensitive issue due to a number of reasons. *Firstly*, although both the regional government and the municipal are very keen about the idea of establishing an RDA (the latter even considered a possibility to support its functioning partly from local budgets) they do not seem to have a shared vision on the role and the purpose of the Agency. All agree that RDA could be instrumental for attracting investments into the region. Yet, regional government officials expect the RDA to fill in the institutional gap for funding regional development at the Governors level, while the municipalities see the Agency more as a structure accountable to them and representing their interests at the regional and national level, supporting them in identifying joint problems and seeking joint solutions, defining common policies on certain development issues, attracting private investors, assisting to both municipalities and private actors in elaboration and implementation of complex development projects and even providing professional support services to small municipalities. To which extent the future RDA can combine these aspirations of different stakeholders remain to be seen. It is expected that the recent joint study trip of regional and municipal officials to the Czech Republic that focuses on exploring experience of work of similar agencies may contribute to better informed dialogue and consensus building in this area.

Secondly, the inter-institutional relations between the would-be RDA and already existing/planned structures, like the Regional Development Unit, the Central Municipal Development Fund or the future Regional Development Fund, are far from clear. There is a lack of vision and guidance in this regards at the national level.

Thirdly, RDAs in Georgia do not seem to have successful records. RDA in Kvemo Kartli existed some years ago but was closed down due to misuse of powers by its leaders. RDAs established with support of UNDP in Kaheti and with support of EC-CARE International in Samtskhe Javakheti are not yet sustainable organizations that can rely on own resources after completion of donors support.

Local Governance

Following the local elections of 2006 and the restructuring of governance system, establishment of the democratic institutions of local *self*-governance in Georgia started virtually from a scratch. The project launched its activities with an institutional baseline mapping organized in 2007 whereby along with the regional administration capacities of all seven municipalities of the region were assessed. Along with establishing baseline data the goal of the mapping exercise was to define current strength and

weaknesses of the municipal governments in order to propose an adequate capacity development response.

In accordance with the elaborated Capacity Response Strategy the municipalities were provided *technical assistance* in the form of training, study tours, experience exchange, advisory support and basic technical means with the aim to meet their basic capacity needs and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of their work. Further, the project facilitated functional analysis in two municipalities of the region that followed by provision of legal advisory support on adjusting local level regulation and organizational set up for increased effectiveness of work. It commissioned a review of the current practice of data collection, storing and analysis and piloted formulation of communication strategies in two municipalities. Both data management and communication turned out to be among main weaknesses of municipal management.

All partner municipalities in the region were assisted with the participatory elaboration of their Strategic Development Plans as basis for local planning, budgeting and investments. Finally, the UNDP project on comparative basis co-funded small scale projects in 6 municipalities that aimed at improvement of local development management, municipal administration and service provision to the population.

The issue of inclusion was meant to be an important aspect of the project activities at the local level reflected in the overall goal of the project. Inclusion of national minorities and women is among major concerns in Kvemo Kartli region.

Capacity Assessment and Response Strategy

The mapping exercise was conducted in a participatory way (based on open interviews and focus group discussions) and revealed that the very basics for effective functioning of local government are missing: the organizational structure of municipalities is not clear (including the distinction between the local legislative and executive bodies), a system of human resources management is nonexistent, the technical base is very poor, planning is done on short-term basis, internal coordination mechanisms are deficient, budgeting/ financial management and procurement practices are inadequate, accountability instruments are absent, communication with population is insufficient, monitoring of performance and service delivery is lacking. The mapping exercise was the first systematic attempt to assess local government capacities and its results are quite reflective of main problems faced by local government throughout Georgia.

For the first time in CIS, UNDP applied its own capacity assessment methodology for the analysis of capacities of regional and local government units in Georgia. The assessment methodology is quite comprehensive and systematic as it allows analysis of capacity gaps at different levels – individual, organizational and enabling environment – and is further sub-divided into core, sub-core issues and functional capacities. The project managers admit that it took them some effort to develop ownership for the methodology and to convince the local partners about its advantages.

The application of the methodology was supported by the UNDP experts from the Regional office in Bratislava. The assessment resulted into the Capacity Development Response Strategy for the Kvemo Kartli region. The strategy outlined measures for addressing four clusters of priority areas – *human resources management, accountability, strategic planning and organizational development* - under which all further capacity development interventions were devised.

The capacity assessment and elaboration of the response strategy due to their innovative and participatory nature took longer than expected. According to the project team it was worth investing time into producing a comprehensive analysis that served as solid grounds for future assistance in the framework of the project, as well as suggested a credible methodology that can be applied in other municipalities by national, regional, local or international stakeholders interested in bridging local government capacity gaps in a systematic manner. One of the project shortcomings was the little time left till the completion of the project that allowed implementation of short-term capacity development measures only.

Strategic Planning

Supporting municipalities with elaboration of their strategic development plan was an important initial step for shaping municipal vision, setting up development directions and raising their awareness with regards to existing development challenges. Strategic planning was very beneficial for establishing longer-term framework for planning (*“earlier municipalities used to plan only annually”*) and for promoting collaborative and participatory mode of work (*“the strategy has involved so many people that it cannot just end up in a drawer”*). The work on the plans was facilitated by specially established Working Groups in each municipality which along with local government representatives included representatives of the private sector and civil society.

Tetritskalo and Rustavi municipalities had their first strategies elaborated in 2002 but these documents were never implemented (*“the Rustavi strategy was developed by the Tbilisi Institute of Economics and*

was never owned by local government”, “the Tetrtskalo municipality used to have a strategic plan but it was neither widely known nor realistic”). Representatives of these municipalities are confident that the new strategies have much more chances to become “living” documents.

Participatory strategic planning process supported in the framework of the UNDP project revealed a whole array of challenges that local governments still have to resolve in order to make the plans operational and to use the instrument of strategic planning effective in future:

- There is no well elaborated national methodology and procedures for conducting development planning (the project suggested the methodology elaborated by a team of external and local consultants).
- Local self-governments face serious constrains with data collection. There is no system of information collection and analysis at the municipal level. It is difficult to build such a system in the situation of unclear functions, limited competencies and lack of established linkages with the departments of line ministries present at the regional/ local level (“when the ministry structures need information they ask municipalities, but they never share the information with the municipality”, “during strategic planning we had to mobilize village administrators to collect information by going physically from household to household”, “information collected in such sporadic way cannot be reliable”, “there is only one person working at the department of statistics responsible for Bolnisi and Dmanisi, he also calls village administrators when information needs to be collected for central government”). Data collection challenges and government’s inability to act explain the lack of indicators and benchmarks in the municipal strategic plans (“we need complete analysis of the situation against which we can make prognoses for future”, “not all the sectors included into the strategy we have competencies to act upon”).

It should be noted that the UNDP project made an attempt to review the current practice of data collection, storing and analysis at national (ministries), regional and municipal levels. The review provided recommendation mainly with regards to long-term changes required at the national level and did not generate practical guidance with regards to improvements that can be undertaken on short and mid-term at the local and regional level. Thus, it could not be well utilized by the UNDP project.

- Like on the regional level, planning municipal development is a rather ambiguous exercise in the situation when many uncertainties exist regarding availability and ownership of assets and resources (including land, infrastructure and natural resources) (“we do not have clear idea what we own and what resources we can use at our discretion”, “a spatial plan, which we do not yet have, is a precondition for advancing economic development part of the strategic plan”). On the occasion, spatial plans were included in several municipalities as one of projects under the strategic development plan. Rustavi municipality has already begun the process of spatial planning with its own resources. High expectations are levied on the special commission established at the Governor’s office for clarifying the situation with regional and municipal assets.
- According to municipal authorities participation of the business community and civil society was not very strong as both are weakly organized in most of municipalities of Kvemo Kartli. There is a number of NGOs in large municipalities as Rustavi but most are not functional. The active ones mainly represent groups of urban professionals implementing internationally funded projects (“they may be well aware of local development problems but they are not grass-roots based and have their organizational interests”, “we were invited as NGO representative to attend some working group meetings but were not actively involved throughout the process”). The private sector is also poorly structured which makes its involvement difficult (“major income comes from small agriculture but small farmers are not well organized and are difficult to reach”, “there is no business organizations in our municipalities, we invited just an active businessmen to take part in the process”).

This shortcoming was observed by some international organizations: e.g. support now is being provided by the Austrian Development Fund through the NGO Civil Development Agency NGO to development of existing and establishment of new rural organizations for enhancing economic activities in the region. According to business representative of business community in Rustavi, demand exists among business people for creating an association in support of their interests.

All municipalities are very proud of their strategic development plans as one of the major results of the UNDP project support but most admit that they do not yet sufficient capacities to elaborate strategic plans on their own in the future. Along with intensive technical assistance from the project team support was provided by external consultants and facilitators during the elaboration of the plans. One external local facilitator who guided the work of the Working Groups thinks that coaching was a very important part of

the skills development process in addition to training (“... *but coaching was underutilized probably due to the time pressure*”). Many interviewed agree that more time could allow building stronger ownership of strategic plans among the municipalities (“*there was certain confusion between the working group, the external facilitator and the project team with regards to who is at the end responsible for producing the final strategic planning document*”). Some observers note that stronger ownership could have resulted into a broader diversity in strategic plans formats and content (“*current plans are very standardized and have a number of chapters used as blueprints for all municipalities*”).

All partners interviewed agree that a key indicator of success of the strategic development process is the approval of the strategies and the extent to which the strategies are implemented and reflected in annual plans and budgets. Currently, all strategies are approved by the local legislative bodies (Sacrebulos) and now need to receive a registration code at the Ministry of Justice (just a technical procedure). Linkages between the strategies and the 2010 municipal budget are still weak but they already exist in larger municipalities that have better revenue raising capacities. Representatives from municipalities with weaker budget potential talk about a need to advocate for better equalization transfers system.⁵

Local budget revenue sources are very scarce and comprise mainly of property tax, privatization and property (buildings) selling proceeds. Municipalities are not yet completely independent in budget distribution decision (as mentioned earlier the government system still relies on vertical accountability lines) which hinders their abilities to spent public funds at their discretion in line with strategic priorities. Linkages between the implementation of the municipal development strategies and the investments from the Municipal Development Fund, the Village Support Program or on-going presidential programs launched at central government level are not yet established.

One of the major handicaps of municipal governments in advancing implementation of development plans is a lack of mechanisms for attracting investments and generating local economic growth. Local authorities have limited fiscal leverages to make their municipalities appealing for investors. They also lack knowledge and skills for supporting economic activities in the liberal market environment.

Agriculture and to a less extent tourism and industry⁶ are the main economic potentials in the region. Lack of progress in local economic development is linked not only to organizational issues but also to the state policy of radical liberalization that extremely limits abilities of the government to invest into economic development beyond basic facilitating public infrastructure and services (water, irrigation, roads, etc.). In this direction the government has launched the State Rural Development Program 2009 but it is managed in a highly centralized manner.

The agricultural potential in Kvemo Kartli is impressive (“*the land in at least half of municipalities is very fertile and can yield several times a year*”) but the agricultural sector is very segmented and relies on small farming. Farmers associations are not well functioning and water users associations established by a WB project constantly face problems with maintaining the outdated irrigation infrastructure and fee collection.

In several municipalities local authorities gained some experience in agricultural development through internationally funded projects: e.g. a project funded by Japan in Marneuli provided the Gamgeoba office with three tractors that are managed on non-profit basis and can be used by farmers against small fees, or a project of internally displaced people (IDP) support in Koda village where the village administration facilitates agricultural activities of IDP families that received access to arable land.

Capacities of local authorities to set strategies into practice will also depend on their skills for elaborating and implementing concrete projects, which are still underdeveloped. So far only Rustavi municipality managed to mobilize external funds for funding the implementation of its plan (a landfill project that won funding from WB).

Municipal officials are disappointed with limited competencies assigned to them. They tell multiple examples of anecdotal inefficiencies of service delivery from the center (“*maintenance of the sewage system in Bolnisi town is our responsibility but water distribution system is not*”, “*it does not make sense to support so many schools that are half empty and lack teachers – we could as well cut their number and organize bussing for children for much less costs*”, “*it took us three weeks to negotiate with the Ministry the repair of the school roof in Dmanisi after it was damaged by the wind*”, “*social service agencies identify on their own most vulnerable who are eligible for social assistance, they never ask local authorities*”, “*although irrigation canals are on the balance sheets of the Ministry of Agriculture we allocate local budgetary funds for their cleaning and rehabilitation as local farmers come to demand services to municipal authorities and not to the Ministry*”).

⁵ Experts agreed that the current formula is not effective due to ambivalent nature of some of its components.

⁶ Industrial potential exists in the municipalities of Rustavi and Gardabani

Such critical thinking and managerial approach to organizing local governance affairs and service delivery is to a large degree a result of the UNDP capacity development investment.

Training, study tours and exchange

Trainings and study tours⁷ were instrumental for building the basic understanding of the essence of local self-governance, for providing access to good standards and innovation in municipal management. As a result the degree of visioning and understanding of good governance and municipal management challenges is relatively high among municipal officials in Kvemo Kartli. Representatives of training providing organizations as well as MRDI officials confirm that Kvemo Kartli municipalities are more advanced compared to municipalities in other regions.

The participants found the following training topics as most useful: basics of democratic governance, team work and communication, public relations and work with media, strategic planning and project cycle management. In total the project provided training opportunities to 110 people.

Due to the short term nature of the project and lack of practical monitoring tools it is difficult to judge on the extent to which the knowledge received by the participants through training translated into skills and attitudes. Examples of improvements stated by some interviewed officials included: *“we start understanding that we here to serve the people”, “more democratic relations among staff”, “we began seeking for information, especially on new approaches in municipal management”, “through trainings we developed corporate spirit and now work as a team”, “we are better aware of what to be done and what to start from”*).

The project has also contributed to the intensification of exchange between municipalities through their joint participation in trainings, study tours, workshops and project related working meetings. Municipal authorities also realize potential for establishing inter-municipal cooperation in a number of areas: like waste collection (*“we can do it more efficiently for the settlements of the neighboring municipality that are closer to our municipal center than to their”*), bussing services (*“we have one bus route that connects several municipalities but different bus fees applied”*) or spatial planning and economic development (*“we cannot make tourism attractive in our municipality only with the ancient monuments we have without cooperating with the neighboring that has other infrastructure: such cooperation requires joint panning”*). Cross-border and cross-municipal cooperation is being supported by a number of international organizations in Georgia, but there is still a deficit of good models, regulatory base and procedures for such cooperation, especially in service provision domain.

Small scale projects and service delivery

Beyond the small scale initiative, the UNDP project did not have sufficient funds to support implementation of larger-scale local development projects with tangible impact on infrastructure and service improvement that could allow the partners to better utilize their project formulation and management skills. However, small scale projects launched with local co-funding and on comparative basis in 6 out of 7 municipalities managed to yield certain tangible results:

- Improving administrative service provision and communication between the citizens and the authorities through establishment of citizen service bureau (the format of the “one-stop-shop”) in Rustavi, Dmanisi and Marneuli;
- Improving working conditions of Rtsmunebuli in Koda village (Tetrtskalo municipality);
- Improving the system of address registration in Bolnisi;
- Development of municipal websites in Tetrtskalo, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Bolnisi and Marneuli;
- Creating pre-conditions to initiate spatial planning process by elaboration the action plan and budget for the initiation of spatial planning process in Dmanisi, Bolnisi and Rustavi;
- Introducing local authorities in Rustavi, Gardabani, Dmanisi, Bolnisi and Marneuli to citizen report cards method as a tool for receiving feedback on public services from population.

Although it is preliminary to assess the impact of these very recently completed small projects on service provision and relations between citizens and authorities, they already exhibit encouraging results:

- The feedback from the first month of functioning of the citizen service bureaus is very positive (*“local officials have more time for work, they are less disturbed by citizens coming directly to them on each occasion, communication process is systematized and meetings are organized as needed”, “if earlier it could take up to two weeks on average to get an answer to citizens appeals*

⁷ The focus of study tours included: municipal strategic planning, municipal data collection and management, human resources management, budgeting, internal and external communication, regional development.

now it can be done on spot”, “this is a two way learning process: we as local authorities are learning to serve better to our citizens and the citizens learn to communicate constructively with us”);

- Local governments introduced to the spatial planning concept are very eager to launch it in their municipalities, some consider funding it from own budget;
- Street numbering in Bolnisi helped to assist some 300 households that did not have proper address and thus had problems with civil registry, construction permits, privatization, visa applications, etc.

At this point success is less obvious in case of municipal websites (*“it is not yet clear if municipal authorities can update and maintain them on their own, and how frequently they will be used and by which audience”*) and in case of report cards method. Despite the training provided to municipal authorities for maintaining their websites, their abilities to do so are still weak. For the latter to become a useful tool for monitoring service quality abilities of municipalities to invest in service improvement is a precondition.

On the general note, regional and all municipal authorities univocally agree that supporting such initiatives that yielded tangible results in the framework of the UNDP capacity building project was very important for reinforcing the feeling of achievement among local governments and for demonstrating improvements in municipal management to citizens. They regret that funds and time available for implantation of such initiatives was limited.

Municipal Communication Strategies

The project supported elaboration of municipal communication strategies in Bolnisi and Dmanisi. The aim of the strategies was to improve internal and external flow of information.

The communication strategies are rather comprehensive documents that foresee practical measures for improving communication inside the municipal authorities and between municipalities and citizens. In both municipalities the strategies have been approved and interviewed officials are well aware of it. The project team members seem to be confident about the local governments’ abilities to implement the strategies, but the fact that both documents were recently developed by an external local consultant within two weeks period may effect the success of setting them into practice.

Functional Analysis

Along with the strategic development plans and the positive outcomes of the sub-projects another major achievement of the project is the functional analysis conducted in two municipalities (Dmanisi and Bolnisi) followed by legal assistance with reorganization of work of the executive office. The analysis was done by a team of national consultants against the existing legal and institutional background. It touched upon four areas that proved to be most problematic during the capacity assessment exercise: organizational structure, human resources management, accountability arrangements, records and documentation management.

Officials from targeted municipalities see the analysis as a very useful exercise for improving functioning of municipalities. The methodology for functional analysis received approval of the specialists from the MRDI and is of great interest to NALA as it has a great replication potential.

The recommendations of the analysis were well taken by municipalities. Based on recommendations, an experienced local lawyer with public administration experience was hired to provide legal and technical consultancy and to prepare legislative basis for starting implementation of the functional analysis recommendations. This included drafting comprehensive packages of regulations, procedures and templates for reorganization of work of the two municipalities. At the time of the evaluation the lawyer was completing his work.

The lawyer’s assignment turned to be very short (four weeks) which limits his abilities to involve to a larger extent specialists from the targeted municipalities and thus may effect the level of responsibility and ownership. Some of the regulatory amendments proposed by the expert have been already introduced in Dmanisi (e.g. Decree N 3-10 amending the Statute of the Gamgeoba, dated 23rd February, 2010) but to which extent municipal authorities will further implement the recommended measures will depend entirely on their political will and availability of resources⁸. The former is currently in place (the project team hopes it will be maintained after the local elections of May 2009) but the latter is more difficult to secure.

⁸ Resources are required mainly for introduction of structural changes, like expending the number of village administrations in order to reach all villages. This recommendation will be possible to implement from June 1 after

Inclusion Issues

The projects' technical focus on local governance and municipal management matters limited its ability to put a stronger stress on national minorities and gender inclusion.

Kvemo Kartli region is known by a large concentration of national minorities in the border municipalities (Armenians and Azeri) where inclusion of minorities is a serious concern. In many cases minority representatives are disintegrated as they live among their own community and do not always speak the Georgian language.

The project did not have an explicit strategy towards inclusion of minorities but it touched upon the issues of minorities on a number of occasions:

- involvement of some minority representatives from the municipal staff into project's trainings,
- assistance provided to minorities with feeling in appeals and documents in Georgia at the citizen service bureau, and
- certain measures for reaching minorities foreseen in the communication strategy of Dmanisi municipality.

The Sakrebulo chairperson from Marneuli who was actively participating in trainings is also a representative of national minority community but as his colleagues wittingly noted "involvement of one minority representative, even though a Sakrebulo chairperson, does not replace minorities' involvement".

The problem of gender inclusion in the project seems to be critical. Women empowerment was not an explicit focus on the intervention although Kvemo Kartli region suggests a number of entry points for this type of activities.

In general women represent around 11% of local council members in Georgia. Partners in Kvemo Kartli claim that this percentage is smaller in the region due to very weak minority women participation in public sphere. Yet, the only two women heads of Sakrebulo in Georgia represent the municipalities of Kvemo Kartli (Tsalka and Tetrtskalo). Both municipalities are considered to be weak due to their remoteness and highly subsidized budgets. The three citizen service bureaus established under the sub-projects are lead by women. There are also several women among village administrators (e.g. in Dmanisi municipality) and municipal officials say: *"This is rather difficult work for women as it is time demanding and requires constant mobility"*.

Women are more deprived from formal and informal education opportunities, access to info, income and credits, organizations and governance structures. Rural women are predominately working in agriculture but the percentage of officially known women farmers is negligible. The Parliament of Georgia has recently adopted Gender Equality Law and granted a permanent status to the Gender Equality Council established at the chair of the parliament in 2006 but the practical implications of this for the local government system are not clear.

UNDP made an attempt to establish linkages between its project in Kvemo Kartli and the national project "Gender and Politics" (both funded by Swedish Development Agency - SIDA) by involving two women-councilors from Rustavi into 1,5 day gender sensitive budgeting training with people involved from Rustavi and piloting application of gender sensitive budgeting in the municipality. The impact of this exercise does not seem to be far reaching as the interviewed partners from Rustavi were not well aware of it.

Policy Mainstreaming

To secure links between the project work at the municipal and regional levels and the national policy dialogue on regional and local governance, the project draw mainly on such tools as dissemination of its experiences through presentations, workshops and conferences, and sharing of studies and assessment conducted at local and regional level with the National Regional Development Task Force established at MRDI.

Policy Level Impact

The most visible effect of the project at the national level was the use of the project studies and analysis discussed in the chapter of regional governance by the National Regional Development Task Force. Yet,

enactment of the adjustments to the Local Governance Organic Law that aim at bring self-governments closer to people and increasing their downward accountability.

all national level stakeholders interviewed think that the project had a greater potential to influence national level dialogue on local governance issues.

The evaluation tends to link generally limited direct impact of the project on policy mainstreaming to:

- short project life cycle (sufficient only for addressing some short-term capacity building priorities and insufficient time left for bringing the experience into the policy dialogue) and delivery rush in the last project year,
- underconceptualized synergies between the project on regional and local governance in Kvemo Kartli and UNDP interventions at national level, and
- lack of national counterpart at the central government level prior to the establishment of the MRDI in 2009.

In general the project managed to promote its experience through conferences and printed publications (e.g. capacity assessment and capacity response strategy, municipal development plans and functional analysis results) but it did not go as far as more actively suggesting know-how and tools generated in Kvemo Kartli for wider replication. Neither, it had time to enter the policy dialogue on issues of mid-term and long-term local governance reform agenda. The MRDI and NALA are not well equipped to judge on replication potential of the project's achievements.

Connections between the project in Kvemo Kartli and the local governance project at the national level relied mainly on individual experts that used to work in the framework of both. They were involved in conducting functional analysis of the two municipalities the results of which then also contributed to elaboration of recommendations for the national system of training for local government officials (is the major focus on the on-going UNDP national level local governance project).

The feeling that the experience of the project in Kvemo Kartli has a potential to feed rich information, and know-how to the improvement of local governance system in Georgia was shared by most project partners in the region. Representatives of some national level organizations interviewed regret that the project did not stake on closer cooperation with potential change agents (e.g. NALA or other national NGOs concerned with local governance issues – like Civitas Georgia or the National Service Providers Association). According to them, such cooperation could have allowed consolidation of advocacy forces for local governance reform at the national level.

In general, municipalities think that their rights are poorly represented at the national level, and they are not well aware of NALA's activities (although they keep paying annual membership fee to the association from their budgets).⁹

Project Management

The UNDP project in Kvemo Kartli was implemented by UNDP under Direct Implementation Modality (DEX). It had a total budget of some 1'400'000 USD and was mainly funded by SIDA¹⁰.

The project funds were spent in efficient manner. Relatively high administration costs were linked to the need to involve qualified external expertise (including one full time international capacity development advisor during full 1,5 years), a broad geographic coverage (the whole region including most remote municipalities), an individual approach and diverse capacity building instruments applied in different municipalities (i.e. the room for increasing efficiency through standardization of certain tools and applying economies of scale was not large). However, the project managed to increase its efficiency by tapping to additional resources for funding study tours of government officials to Hungary, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

The use of existing municipal procurement procedures for procurement of services and goods under the sub-projects implemented in each municipality and appointment of local assistants as well as sub-project coordinators in each municipalities from capable local residents was among a good managerial solution. Moreover, in three municipalities persons employed as local coordinators by the project were later integrated into local government structures.

⁹ The central government is supposed to consult with the association when taking decisions on local governance related matters. However, some raise concerns about NALA's abilities to be a true advocate of municipal interests from below and an opponent to the ruling powers on the issues of local governance reform (where necessary) as its Board of Directors is dominated by the party in power.

¹⁰ SIDA contribution was around 1'350'000 USD with the rest financial resources coming from UNDP core funds

All interviewed partners have expressed their general satisfaction with the way the project was managed. The flexibility and ability of project to respond to local needs (already mentioned earlier in the report) was clearly one of the key factors accountable for partner's appreciation.

Yet, all partners confirmed that the time frame envisaged for the project was too short to deliver sustainable capacity development outcomes. They highly appreciated the capacity assessment but find the time reserved for the assessment disproportionately long compared to the capacity development phase that followed. The management of the project also agrees that two years was rather an ambitiously short period for implementing such complex and open-ended capacity development intervention.

Another shortcoming of the project was a deficit of a monitoring system accompanied by qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring success of project inputs in the area of capacity development. The project results framework that is an integrative part of the Project Document was focusing on outputs as opposed to outcomes¹¹ (the same was observed in the Capacity Response Strategy). A better monitoring system could help to avoid inefficiencies in the project. For instance, if "budget funding allocation for implementing structural changes recommended to municipalities by functional analysis" was one of the indicators of success, the project could have better matched its plans on conducting functional analysis and the followed legal assistance with the municipal budget cycle. The fact that the lawyers' recommendations were submitted to municipalities only in the beginning of 2010 seriously limits their implementation potential during this year (it cannot be included any longer into the 2010 budget).

The project was implemented by a team of local professionals that along with admin and support staff included three project officers and a national project manager, in its first one-and-half years was supported by an international capacity development advisor. The team applied a good distribution of geographic and thematic competencies among its project officers that allowed cross-fertilization and exchange. This turned to be beneficial when one of the national project officers left for her maternity leave towards the end of the project and her work load was shared between the two other officers and without extra load on the budget.

The fact that the national program officers had to learn skills needed for the management of such complex intervention "by doing" and had limited training opportunities apart from the basic UNDP PRINCE 2 training on program and project management and participation in workshops and trainings organized for project partners was clearly a shortcoming. Extra investments into skills of core project staff could have been beneficiary in the context of high delivery pressure the staff was undergoing in the second part of the project.

Focus on delivery also explains the prevalence of short-term contractual arrangements with multiple service providers (training, coaching, individual experts consultancy) as opposed to more stable partnership relations with key local government actors and training/consultancy service providers that could have been beneficial for municipalities on a long run.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

General Project Relevance

The UNDP project "Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli" was a timely and very relevant intervention. Capacity development assistance provided under the project to both regional and local governments was highly appreciated by partners as it contributed to the establishing effective basis of the reformed local self-governance system in the country. This assistance was especially needed following local elections and profound reorganization of local government system in 2006. The deficit of clear national level policies on local governance/ decentralization in the country makes it somewhat problematic to extrapolate on the relevance of the UNDP intervention in the context of national reform agenda, although UNDP capacity development activities were very important for laying the ground for more effective functioning of local and regional government in Kvemo Kartli.

Due to more than a year delay in project launching its strategy was reviewed and its focus was shifted mainly to capacity assessment and development of regional and local government structures with less explicit stress on the improvement of local government's ability to deliver services to vulnerable communities and to mainstream gender. This switch of focus was justified by overwhelming basic organizational and individual development needs of local governments, lack of national vision on decentralization and scarcity of time resource at the project disposal to invest into both building essential organizational capacities of self-governments and investing into service improvement.

¹¹ In a sense of changes in capacities, behavior, practices

Regional Governance

The project's investments into governance capacity were more successful at local than at the regional level, mainly due to a lack of basic institutional framework for developing regional governance in Georgia and vague positioning of regional governments vis-à-vis local self-governments. In such volatile environment sustainability of regional government organizational capacity development inputs is questionable.

The project supported the drafting of a Regional Development Strategy but it was not elaborated in a highly participatory way and most municipalities are not aware either of the process or of the content. Potential impact of the strategy on regional development (beyond improvement of the image of the region linked to the mere fact that it has a strategy) is difficult to assess in the context of the absence of the very mechanism for the approval of the strategy (which is still expected to be suggested by the Regional Development State Strategy) and lack of existing funding instruments for its implementation.

The process of strategy elaboration was effective though in building awareness of regional government about its organizational weaknesses: it revealed a whole array of institutional problems, including lack of reliable statistics and deficient information collection and analysis system. Moreover, it is expected that after the endorsement of the Regional Development State Strategy the draft Regional Development Strategy of Kvemo Kartli can be well utilized as basis for the development of full fledged official regional strategy.

One of intended outputs - a set up of the RDA - could not be delivered due to the following factors: still ongoing national level discussions on the institutional set up for regional development; lacking national strategies on the regional governance level and potential status of RDA vis-à-vis existing structures and institutions; as well as differences in the visions of the RDA's future role by regional and municipal government, and, thus, bleak sustainability perspectives.

The evaluation concluded that in the context of still existing uncertainties with regards to content and institutional basis for regional development in Georgia it was probably wise for the project not to push for delivering such outputs as the Regional Development Strategy or the RDA.

Despite the limitations of the institutional context of the intervention, on the individual level UNDP managed to invest into raising awareness of regional government officials on good governance principles and effective local and regional developmental practices. Trainings and study tours contributed to bridging the gap between regional and local government officials.

Local Governance

The project was very successful in building awareness and knowledge of local government officials (both Sacrebulo and Gambeoba) regarding the principles of self-governance and effective municipal management, for which trainings and study tours were also instrumental. Trainings were found most useful when applied on practice and linked to concrete outputs, in particular strategic development plans.

Success of UNDP inputs stems from the fact that its capacity development responses were devised based on comprehensive capacity assessment whereby individual, organizational and environmental aspects were analyzed. The capacity assessment and elaboration of the response strategy due to their innovative and participatory nature took longer than expected and the time left before project completion was sufficient for implementation of short-term capacity development measures only.

One of the major results of UNDP assistance at the municipal level is the local strategic development plans elaborated by all municipalities of the region. The plans provided a general vision for municipal development, demonstrated benefits of collaborative and participatory work, as well as revealed existing information access and information collection gaps.

The chief success indicator of development planning, which is too preliminary to assess, will be the implementation of development plans (including their integration into annual working plans and municipal budget, and mobilization of external funds). There is a consensus among partner municipalities that the development strategies have a potential to serve as a good framework for annual planning and budgeting given availability of resources that can be spent at the discretion of local authorities. Currently, apart from including projects like spatial planning in to 2010 annual plans in Bolnisi and Dmanisi and winning a WG grant for the landfill project by Rustavi municipality, experiences with putting development plans in practice are still very limited.

Development progress in municipalities depends to a large extent on municipalities' abilities in advancing local economic development (in particular in the area of agriculture and small and medium business) and often on inter-municipal cooperation. Municipalities lack know-how and experience in these domains.

The project demonstrated that initiatives yielding tangible and visible results are highly appreciated by municipal partners as they allow practicing learned skills, reinforce the sense of achievements, bring practical benefits to the population and improve municipal authorities' image vis-à-vis the citizens. Among the most successful initiatives were the citizen service bureau in Rustavi, Marneuli and Dmanisi, the project on address registration system in Bolnisi and improving working conditions of Rtsmunebuli in Koda village.

Another important outcome of the project is the functional analysis conducted in the municipalities of Dmanisi and Bolnisi followed by assistance with designing packages of regulation, procedures and templates for improving functioning of local executive. The functional analysis methodology and the elaborated packages related to organizational structure, human resources management, accountability arrangements, records keeping and documentation management system are of greater interest to other municipalities and have high replicable potential.

Inclusion

Although the project addressed indirectly the issues of national minorities on several occasions, the evaluation concluded that issues of national minorities and gender inclusion were overlooked by the intervention. This was due to a lack of clear strategies and guidance on mainstreaming these issues, rather important ones in the context of Georgia in General and Kvemo Kartli in particular.

Policy Mainstreaming

The project's outputs to the date are well documented and are nationally promoted through the work of the Regional Development Task Force, conferences, presentations and UNDP website. However, due to short project cycle, lack of national counterpart at the central government level prior to the establishment of the MRDI in 2009, under-conceptualized synergies between different UNDP interventions and weak linkages between the project and national level stakeholders the project had very limited impact on the policy level.

Indirectly, its capacity assessment and functional analysis processes influenced the elaboration of recommendations for the introduction of national training system for local government in Georgia – the intended output of one of the ongoing UNDP national level projects. This happened through the involvement of same individual experts in both initiatives.

Project management

Funds assigned in the project for program activities were spent in a rather efficient manner. Relatively high administration costs are explained by a need to involve a qualified full-time international capacity development advisor, broad geographic coverage, as well as the individual capacity building approach and the application of diverse capacity building instruments in different municipalities.

Flexibility in responding to the needs of partner municipality was the project's main managerial advantage, especially in the context of rapidly changing political environment in Georgia.

Project effectiveness could have been increased if additional investments were made into capacity building of project core staff.

Apart from short time period planned for this complex capacity building intervention, main project's shortcomings included lack of outcomes oriented monitoring system that would allow measuring success of capacity building inputs, and preference given to short-term contractual arrangements instead of longer-term partnership with possible providers of services to municipalities (which happened partly due to delivery pressure).

3.2 Recommendations

The UNDP regional and local governance project in Kvemo Kartli has established fertile ground for advancing good governance and effective municipal management practices in Georgia. The project has initiated positive changes at the local level and launched important capacity improvement initiatives but to ensure sustainability of its investments the project's achievements need to be consolidated. To discontinue support at this point would be irresponsible. Thus, it is strongly recommended to plan continuation of the UNDP assistance to local governance in Kvemo Kartli.

In order to learn on the lessons of the past intervention and to maximize the impact of the future support the following recommendations can be made:

General approach and strategy

- The project should shift the weight towards support of local self-governance. It can keep an eye on the evolution of national policies with regards to development of regions in Georgia and, as opportunities arise, assist the regional government in securing sustainability of its previous inputs at this level. However, the main focus of the project should be on local self-governance.
- Much more strategic and stronger linkages need to be secured between UNDP work at the local level in Kvemo Kartli and its inputs into promoting policy dialogue and local governance reforms at the national level. Such linkages can be facilitated by application of a programmatic approach to UNDP local governance interventions in Georgia (bringing all local governance projects under a comprehensive program umbrella).

Regional governance

- As long as the institutional basis for regional development in Georgia is not defined UNDP should withdraw from investment at the regional governance level. However, it should closely follow the development of the national policies and visions with this regards to regional development planning and plans implementation in order to finalize the process of regional development planning in Kvemo Kartli. It is recommended to postpone finalization of the strategic development plan for Kvemo Kartli till the mechanism for the plan elaborations and approval is identified by MRDI. As soon as the mechanisms is known, UNDP and the regional government can feed the existing draft regional development plan for consideration and further decision making of a relevant body.
- Synergies between local development planning and regional planning can be one of the areas where coordination and support might be further required.
- UNDP can seek an agreement with MRDI and EC with regards to using Kvemo Kartli as a pilot region for approbation of approaches to regional development in Georgia in the framework of the upcoming National Regional Development Strategy.

Local governance

- Building on the experience of the Kvemo Kartli project UNDP should expend its role in introduction of new approaches in organization of local governance and municipal management. Local governments in Kvemo Kartli are well equipped for becoming a springboard for local governance know-how in Georgia. UNDP can turn its interventions in the region into a “demonstrating plot” for good governance and municipal management innovations.
- Good governance and municipal management know-how with great upscaling potential should be promoted in three main areas: organizational development, economic development and service provision.
- Under general organizational development there is a great need for implementing recommendations of municipal functional analysis and setting good standards in human resource management, strategic planning, monitoring and project cycle management, data collection and management (incl. adequate technical base), internal communication, issues of accountability and citizen involvement, relations between the Gamgeoba office and village administration. Expending organizational development elements to the village administration is another area where improvements are required. Various mechanisms of citizens’ involvement and communication with public also need to be further supported and suggested for replication.
- Under economic development demand is high for support in the implementation of economic part of the municipal strategic development plans. The plans can be taken a step further and translated into practical measures that local government can undertake in order to facilitate local economic development. In the context of liberal economy a delicate balance needs to be found between strengthening local government’s capacities in supporting local economic development and the policy of government’s non-interference/non-distortion into market affairs. This can be done through defining and supporting those government’s services/capacities that lead to reducing transaction costs for local economic players (transactional services like spatial planning, management of land, management of information related to economic development, administrative services, etc.). Further, in the framework of strategic plans UNDP can provide support to local governments and private sector in elaboration of concrete projects in the area of economic development to be funded on competitive basis (e.g. support to schemes where farmers associations manage joint agrotools and machinery, or small communal infrastructure with economic effect). These projects can pursue several objectives: a) enhancing economic activities, b) strengthening demand side of good governance and associational culture, and c) practicing project formulation and project cycle management skills. This process can be facilitated by organizational development support (internal accountability and transparency of supported groups, collective management of assets, etc.), provided to farmers associations and other

collective actors of private sector. Small farmers, women and minorities can be given a special focus.

- Under service provision, along with investing into improvement of administrative services to citizens (like through “one-stop-shop”), potential is high for supporting development of inter-municipal cooperation around provision of services that are in competencies of local governments (e.g. waste collection and utilization). UNDP could pilot patterns of such cooperation accompanied by elaboration of regulatory and contractual arrangements.

Policy

All activities at the local level should be mirrored by the work at the national level either in terms of upscaling the piloted practices or maintaining policy dialogue on certain issues of concern. This will imply much more active facilitation of exchange, as well as policy debate/ policy making process than goes much beyond information sharing. This will also mean stronger partnership arrangements with MRDI, national level stakeholders like NALA or Association of Service Providers and better alliances with other potential “change agents”.

Activities at the policy level can evolve around the areas in which UNDP is active in the field (organizational development of local self-government, economic development and service provision) and may include:

- Support to MRD and other relevant national level stakeholders in provision of methodological guidance and standardization of good organizational management practices for local governments based on field experiences in Kvemo Kartli and their upscaling to other municipalities (human resource management, strategic planning and monitoring of plans, data collection and management, internal communication, issues of accountability and citizen involvement, work of village administration);
- Developing and promoting good practices/examples of local self-government’s role in enhancing local economic activities. Policy dialogue may be required with relevant central level structures on such issues as ownership of assets, land privatization, management of economic data, fiscal decentralization and delegation of certain functions related to local government abilities to create environment favorable for economic activities and revenue generation. Priority issues are to be defined by municipalities.
- Promoting models of inter-municipal cooperation and supporting organizations that are capable to upscale them (e.g. NALA, Association of Service Providers).
- Supporting policy dialogue with central government on the role of local authorities in enhancing agricultural development. Supporting dialogue between apex organizations that advocate on behalf of farmers with the central government
- Supporting policy dialogue (active exchange platform) and assisting central government in developing vision and strategy with regards to development of local self-government in Georgia.
- Supporting central government in defining existing legal and regulatory inconsistencies related to functioning of local governance in main areas of project concern (local government organizational development, economic development and service provision) and providing technical assistance for resolving them.
- Supporting development of national level organizations that advocate the interests of local self-governments at the national level. Future interventions should be based on partnership approach with different institutions related to local governance development and aim at strengthening their role in the system and facilitating relations between them and municipalities.
- Support capacity building of national/ regional organizations that can be potential service providers to municipalities (training, consultancy) in the future. Facilitate their networks and direct contacts between them and municipalities.
- Facilitate coordination of efforts and exchange of information among international actors involved into local governance domain in Georgia and between international actors and the government.

Summarizing and sharing with decision makers and interested national organizations like NALA already existing products of the UNDP local governance project will be essential (specifically, capacity assessment and functional analysis methodologies, regulatory packages and templates developed to approve functioning of municipalities, communication strategies, municipal development plans).

Management

To address the weaknesses of the past project and to improve the management arrangements the following measures are recommended:

- Develop clear vision on mainstreaming gender and national minorities’ issues into the local governance work of UNDP.

- Consider application of programmatic approach to UNDP local governance interventions at different level to increase the leverage of the experience generated in the field at the national level and improve synergies and learning.
- Secure sound monitoring and evaluation system for future UNDP local governance interventions that is outcomes and impact oriented rather than outputs.
- Bridge from short-term contractual arrangements to longer term partnership with organizations interested in the development of local governance in Georgia.
- Introduce cost-sharing principles in provision of training and consultancy services to municipalities in order to ensure its relevance and support development of local market for this type of services.
- Utilize more coaching and provision of advisory services as a follow up to training activities.
- To the extent possible use the method of peer education and peer exchange.
- Ensure that proper content guidance and training opportunities are available for project staff.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

CONSULTANT: PROJECT EVALUATION & FORMULATION CONSULTANT

Location	Tbilisi with travel to Rustavi, GEORGIA
Application Deadline	12-Jan-10
Type of Contract	SSA
Languages Required	English
Expected Duration of Assignment	20 days

Background

Since 2006 UNDP is closely cooperating with the Georgian government to support development and implementation of the local governance reform. UNDP Georgia has been active at national, sub-national and local levels to promote implementation of the reform from all perspectives. Such a comprehensive approach enables UNDP to align the central and local initiatives along the same purpose, validate the national proposals at the local level and make the local opinion communicated to the national level.

At the national level, UNDP supports decentralization/local governance reform since 2006. During the first stage of the project (2006-2008) UNDP successfully achieved most of its objectives, including support to the new local self-government system comprising 69 newly created municipalities, development of the key legislation on local self-government and the draft Decentralization Strategy, as well as the overall increased awareness of the population on the issues of decentralization.

In 2008-2009 positive institutional changes took place in the Government of Georgia when the office of the State Minister on Regional Governance was introduced in 2008. The State Minister was assigned the task to lead and coordinate the regional and local governance reforms in Georgia. In February 2009 the State Minister's office was restructured into a full-scale Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI).

Since January 2009 UNDP is implementing a new project to support the local governance reform in Georgia in partnership with the newly created Ministry and builds on the achievements of the previous decentralization project. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen institutional and individual capacities of central and local government institutions to effectively lead and implement the local governance reform. The aim of the project will be achieved through the following two outputs:

- Firstly, support to the MRDI will be provided to effectively lead and coordinate the local governance reform.
- Secondly, the project will support the process of development of an efficient local civil service. This will be achieved through development and implementation of a training concept (Training and Development Framework) in support of local self-governments.

At local level, UNDP implements "Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli" initiative since 2007. Through a combination of various capacity development tools, the project aims to enhance the ability of the region and its seven municipalities to become both better governed and deliver services to the full spectrum of local citizens, thus counteracting poverty and disadvantage in the region.

The project is essentially a capacity development assistance, which aims at the following:

- Improved regional governance: Capacity of regional government in the Kvemo Kartli region is strengthened to coordinate and facilitate the formulation and implementation of the regional development strategy and plans.
- Improved local governance: Capacity of local government (municipalities) officials improved and administrative procedures and systems for efficient delivery of public services are streamlined.
- Secure policy mainstreaming of the project's experience: Policy experiences of the project are documented and attempts taken in ensuring its use horizontally (by other municipalities in the country) and vertically (by policy-makers at the national level).

The project applied UNDP's Capacity Assessment/Capacity Development Framework to diagnose capacity assets and needs at three levels: Individual, Organizational and Enabling Environment. As per Capacity Assessment methodology different sources of information were used to collect data and

accordingly capacity gaps and assets were grouped into four clusters for both regional and municipal administration such as:

- Human resources;
- Organizational arrangements;
- External accountability and
- Strategic planning.

The project team in consultation with other stakeholders came up with Capacity Development Response Strategy (CDRS) for each of above described clusters. Elaborated CDRS covers short, medium and long term strategies at three levels: enabling environment, organizational and individual.

The set of activities for implementation by the Kvemo Kartli project in 2008-2009 has been identified in cooperation with local and regional stakeholders. So just some selected short-term and mid – term activities to address capacity gaps in areas of: (i) Human resources; (ii) Organizational arrangements; (iii) External accountability and (iv) Strategic planning are being supported in frame of the project.

For example, the project supported local authorities in elaboration of the municipal development plans in a participatory manner, initiation of functional analysis and study of data management practice, implementation of the good-governance sub-projects, which will enhance municipalities' communication and coordination with the local constituency. One of the key activities of the project is communication of the local lessons, issues and challenges to the broad range of stakeholders at the national level. National workshops are being organized to this aim.

During 2007-2009 the project built a solid foundation for enhancement of the local governance practices in the Kvemo Kartli region.

Duties and Responsibilities

Objective of the consultancy

The objectives of the consultancy are (a) to review the progress on the planned activities and assess the effectiveness of the project “Strengthening local and regional governance in Kvemo Kartli” and (b) to recommend future directions, approaches and actions based on the needs and priorities on the ground and lessons learned during implementation of the project.

Scope of the assignment

The evaluation will first generally gauge the contribution of project activities into strengthening local and regional governance capacities and will define opportunities for a further upscale of capacity development efforts and use of the elaborated practice more broadly at national and local levels. The evaluation will be used for programming purposes by the UNDP Georgia, to expand its local development activities in regions, and will also serve as a policy advocacy tool for UNDP's local and regional partners to propose on means and methods through which Georgia's decentralization and regional development processes can be enhanced.

Therefore, the evaluation exercise must not be thought of merely a stock taking of project performance. It must be contextualized within the broader scope of efforts of Government of Georgia in reforming its local and regional governance systems.

In addition to this broader scope, the evaluation will be a lesson learning and forward looking rather than purely an assessment of past results. It aims to present information about the nature, extent and, where possible, the impact of the project efforts. The emphasis on learning lessons speaks to the concept of understanding of what has and what has not worked as a guide for future planning. The evaluation will assess the overall performance of the project in application of UNDP capacity assessment / capacity development framework as a holistic approach to strengthen local and regional governance structures.

Based on the findings, the consultant has to propose the follow-up interventions that builds best on the achievements of the ongoing project and expands it according to the national and local priorities. Linking the improved governance to the pro-poor economic growth and expansion of opportunities for the poor has to be addressed extensively.

Methodology

The exercise will entail a combination of: comprehensive desk reviews and document analysis; field visits, consultations with key stakeholders, including the government partners, active and potential donors; The project evaluation and concept formulation assignment will be participatory in nature and will make use of focus groups.

The detailed methodology should be elaborated and agreed with UNDP in advance.

Consultancy Criteria:

The key criteria for the evaluation should include the following:

- Efficiency: the results obtained in relation to the invested resources;
- Effectiveness: the extent to which the project planned results was achieved. If not yet achieved, is the project on the right track towards achieving those.
- Relevance: to what extent the project is addressing the underlining courses of the capacity gaps and weakness of the municipal and regional governance using holistic approach
- Sustainability: national ownership and the prospects for further institutionalization of capacity development efforts to strengthen local and regional governance structures
- Management arrangements: the extent to which the management arrangements support the above

Key evaluation questions:

- Have the right things been done? (is the progress so far relevant to country needs and the UNDP mandate?);
- Have things been done right? (were the actions to achieve the output effective and efficient?);
- Are the results sustainable? (will the output lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?);
- How might we do things better in the future? (which findings may have relevance for future programming or for other similar initiatives elsewhere?)

The key criteria for proposing the new initiative should include the following:

- Relevance: to what extent the project is addressing underlining courses of the capacity gaps and weaknesses of the municipal and regional governance and ensure promotion of good governance principles and implementation of the GoG priorities
- Efficiency: the results to be obtained in relation to the invested resources
- Effectiveness: the extent to which the project planned results will be achieved in the timeframe proposed;
- Sustainability: The extent of ensuring local ownership
- Management arrangements: the extent to which the management arrangements will support the above objectives;

Final deliverables:

The evaluation should:

1. Produce the report reflecting the findings as per the above key criteria focusing on specific areas defined above. The report should be prepared in a week time after completion of the country mission. (the outline of the report should be agreed with UNDP)
2. Produce the project document capturing priorities identified through the consultancy

Implementation arrangements

Consultant will work under the guidance and direct supervision of the Governance Team Leader and overall guidance of the Assistant Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative. As a minimum, the consultant will have inception and debriefing meetings with the ARR/DRR.

The UNDP Georgia and the Project will be responsible for liaising with partners, backstopping and assisting the consultant in acquiring relevant documentation, data and evidence. In addition it will provide technical feedback to the evaluation mission.

Timetable for the Consultancy

The consultancy should be undertaken within 20 working days (15 days in the country and 5 days for the work on a distance) including the following:

2 days for the reading of the background documentation and elaboration of the detailed evaluation methodology (on a distance)

12 days for briefing and meetings (in-country mission)

2 days for writing up the initial report (week-end days during in-country mission)

1 day for the debriefing (in-country mission)

3 days for writing up the final report and project concept (on a distance)

Evaluation Criteria:

Experts will be evaluated against combination of technical and financial criteria. Maximum obtainable score is 100, out of which the total score for technical criteria equals to 70 and for financial criteria – to 30. Only the candidates who will pass 70% of maximum obtainable scores of the technical criteria will be requested to submit financial proposals.

- Background and education (5 points);
- Understanding of the CA/CD methods (15 points);
- Understanding of the good-governance and pro-poor economic growth concepts (10 points);
- Understanding of the local and regional governance dynamics (10 points);
- Experience in evaluation of complex donor assistance programmes (15 points);
- Experience in elaboration project proposals (15 points).
- Proposed Price (30 points).

Competencies

- University degree in /Public Administration, or other related area
- Understanding of Capacity Assessment/ Capacity Development approaches, while familiarity with the UNDP methodology will be an asset.
- Understanding of the relations between good-governance and pro-poor economic growth
- Throughout understanding of the local and regional governance
- Understanding of the mandate and the role of the UNDP
- Excellent English speaking/writing skills. Knowledge of Georgian or Russian will be an asset
- Excellent communication skills.
- Understanding and experience in Georgia will be considered as an asset.

Required Skills and Experience

- Experience in evaluation of complex donor assistance programmes
- Experience in elaboration proposal papers

Annex 2 Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the project “Strengthening Regional and Local Governance in Kvemo Kartli Region” UNDP Georgia

P R O G R A M M E

of the field visit of
Mrs. Elena Krylova-Mueller,
Project Evaluation and Formulation Consultant

1-15 March, 2010

Friday, 26 February

11.00-12.30 Initial briefing with Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Georgia

Monday, 1 March

11.00-12.00 Meeting with Ms. Inita Paulovica, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Georgia

14.00-15.00 Meeting with Mr. Irakli Kobakhidze, UNDP Project “Support to the Centre for Effective Governance System and Territorial Arrangement Reform in its Decentralization Efforts”, Manager

16.00-17.30 Meeting with Ms. Sophie Svanadze, former KK national Project Manager

Tuesday, 2 March

10.00-11.00 Discussion with Project team (Rustavi Project office)

11.30-12.15 Meeting with Mr. Zakaria Darchiashvili, First Deputy Governor of Kvemo Kartli Region

12.15-13.00 Meeting with Mr. Kakha Gurgenidze, Head of Sakrebulo, city of Rustavi

13.00-13.20 Visit to the Citizens’ Service Bureau

13.20-14.00 Meeting with Ms. Luiza Gelashvili, Head of Property and Land Use Management Department, self-governing city of Rustavi and Ms. Marina Piroshmanashvili, Head of Citizens’ Service Bureau, self-governing city of Rustavi

14.00-15.00 Lunch time

15.00-16.00 Meeting with Ms. Maia Mosiashvili, Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Increase efficiency of public service delivery in self-governing city Rustavi through strengthening capacity of the mayor’s office”

17.00-17.45 Meeting with Local NGO: Mr. George Tvaliashvili, Former Executive Director, Georgian Association of Educational Initiatives (SIQA)

Wednesday, 3 March

10.00-11.00 Phone interview with Mr. Bikash Dash, KK project Capacity Development Advisor

15.00-16.00 Meeting with Ms. Nino Lagvilava, Gender and Politics, PM (UN House)

16.30-17.30 Meeting with Mr. Giorgi Nanobashvili, Economic Development Team Leader (UN House)

Thursday, 4 March

10.00-11.00 Meeting with Ms. Nato Molodini, and Mr. Gogi Dvali, Regional Development Unit of the Regional Administration

11.00 Depart for Marneuli Municipality

- 11.45-13.00 Meeting with Mr. Zurab Gelashvili, Marneuli Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Establishment of Citizen Service Bureau and enhancement of technical capacities of municipal authorities” and Mr. Giorgi Shukakidze, Focal Point (Head of Device).
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch in Marneuli
- 14.00-15.00 Meeting with Mr. Giorgi Shukakidze, Head of Sakrebulo Device and Mr. Aleko Metreveli, First Deputy Head of Gamgeoba (Executive Body).
- 15.00-16.00 Visit to the Citizens’ Service Unit of Marneuli Municipality and meeting with Ms. Nestan Jorjoliani, Head of the CSU

Friday, 5 March

- 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Mr. Tariel Kirimlishvili, Deputy Head of Sakrebulo and Mr. Davit Samkharadze, Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Enhance the capacity of Rtsmunebuli institute (representation of municipality in administrative unit) in Koda unit of Tetrtskaro Municipality”
- 12.00-13.00 Meeting with Ms. Tamar Dalakishvili, Head of Sakrebulo of Tetrtskaro Municipality
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch time
- 14.00 Depart for the Tetrtskaro Administrative Unit of Koda
- 14.30-15.30 Meeting with the Head of Administrative Unit and staff
- 17.00-18.00 Meeting with Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Georgia

Tuesday, 9 March

- 10.00 – 11.00 Meeting with different specialists of the KK project staff
- 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Mr. Mirian Kululashvili, Public Administration Expert
- 12.00-12.45 Meeting with Ms. Tea Kimeridze, Communication Consultant
- 13.00 – 13.45 Lunch
- 13.45 Depart for Bolnisi Municipality
- 15.00-15.45 Tour in the City of Bolnisi accompanied by Mr. Malkhaz Eradze Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Improving addressing system in Bolnisi City – the first step for initiation of Spatial Plan Development” and Mr. Joni Khetsuriani, Chairman of the Revision and Land Use Commission of Bolnisi Sakrebulo
- 15.45-16.45 Visit to Bolnisi Brewery (Private enterprise), meeting with Mr. Badri Japaridze, owner
- 17.00-17.45 Meeting with Mr. Ioseb Laliashvili, Head of Gamgeoba and Mr. Nodar Sabiashvili Head of Sakrebulo

Wednesday, 10 March

- 08.45 Depart for Rustavi
- 09.30-10.15 Meeting with Mr. Zviad Devdariani, Head of Board, Civil Development Agency
- 10.15 Depart for Gardabani Municipality

- 10.30-11.15 Meeting with Mr. George Peikrishvili, Head of Sakrebulo and Mr. Revaz Egadze, Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Improve efficiency of the self governance in municipality of Gardabani through strengthening apparatus of the Gamgeoba”
- 11.20 Depart for Tbilisi
- 12.00-13.00 Meeting with Mr. Davit Chichinadze, Head of Department for Reforms and Innovations, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Person also in charge of (CEGSTAR) activities
- 13.00 Depart for Dmanisi Municipality
- 15.00-15.45 Visit to the Citizens’ Service Unit of Dmanisi Municipality Accompanied by Ms. Nino Mosiashvili, CSU and Mr. Jondo Aduashvili, Local coordinator of the Sub-Project: “Improve effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery in municipality of Dmanisi”
- 16.00-16.40 Meeting with Mr. Bakur Mgeladze, Head of Gamgeoba
- 17.00-17.45 Meeting with the CiDA NGO in Rustavi

Thursday, 11 March

- 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Mr. Davit Jikia, Kvemo Kartli Project Coordinator on IDP Issues
- 12.00-12.45 Meeting with Mr. George Vashakidze, Local Governance Programme Coordinator, USAID
- 14.00-14.45 Meeting with Ms. Milena Mitagvaria, Deputy Director of the Center for Chnagne and Conflict Management, Partners Georgia (Training Provider)
- 15.00-16.00 Meeting with Mr. Behrnard Phillip, EC Delegation to Georgia
- 16.00-17.00 Meeting with Mr. George Meskhidze, President of Civitas Georgica (Training Provider)
- 17.00-18.00 Meeting with Mr. Davit Melua, Executive Director of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)

Friday, 12 March

- 11.00-13.00 Focus Group discussion with Regional and Local Stakeholders of SRLG KK Project
- 15.30-16.15 Meeting with Mr. Irakli Kobakhidze, UNDP Project “Support to the Centre for Effective Governance System and Territorial Arrangement Reform in its Decentralization Efforts”, Manager
- 17.00-17.45 Meeting with Ms. Nino Danibegashvili, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia

Monday, 15 March

- 16.00-16.45 Meeting with Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Georgia
- 17.00-17.45 Debriefing Meeting with Ms. Inita Paulovica, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Georgia