Georgia Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Activity Quarterly Report # 03

QUARTER 4 FY21 (JULY 1, 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2021)

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ACRONYMS

AAPOR  American Association for Public Opinion Research
ADS   Automated Directives System
BPM   Business Process Manual
CLA   Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CBLD  Capacity Building Indicator
CDCS  Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CoE   Center of Excellence
CSB   Civil Service Bureau
CSO   Civil Service Organization
DAI   Development Alternatives Incorporated
DCFTA Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas Agreement
DEPA  Development Evaluation and Progress Assessment Consulting
EECMD Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy
EPP   Elections and Political Processes
ERT   Executive Roundtables
EU    European Union
EV    Exchange Visitors
GAPOR Georgian Association for Public Opinion and Research
GEC   GEC JSC
GIP   Georgian Institute of Politics
GLA   Georgian Logistics Association
GNCA  Georgian National Competition Agency
GoG   Government of Georgia
GYLA  Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association
HAC   Health and Accident Coverage
HICD  Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HR    Human Resources
HRM   Human Resources Management
IQS   Indefinite Quantity Subcontract
IP    Intellectual Property
ISFED International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
ISO   International Organization for Standardization
ISU   Ilia State University
Kaizen The Kaizen Company
LEPL  Legal Entity of Public Law
LLC   Limited Liability Company
LM HICD Last-Mile HICD
LT HICD Long-Term HICD
LTO   Long-term Observer
MAG   Mediators’ Association of Georgia
MEL   Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEPA Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>MoESD</td>
<td>Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia</td>
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<td>MRDC</td>
<td>Mountain Resorts Development Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVP</td>
<td>Minimum Viable Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAEC</td>
<td>National Assessment and Examination Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASP</td>
<td>The National Agency of State Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUPAS</td>
<td>Non-U.S. Organization Pre-Award Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCA</td>
<td>Organizational Capacity Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDO</td>
<td>Public Defender of Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMC</td>
<td>Personnel Management Center</td>
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<td>PMCG</td>
<td>Policy Management and Consulting Group</td>
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<td>PMMG</td>
<td>Public Movement “Multinational Georgia”</td>
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<td>PMO</td>
<td>PMO Business Consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>Project Monitoring Plan</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>PSP</td>
<td>Performance Solutions Package</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Question and Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>QMH</td>
<td>Quality Management Handbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Rural Development Agency</td>
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<td>RFTOP</td>
<td>Request for Task Order Proposals</td>
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<td>RSO</td>
<td>Regional Security Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Service Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>SoW</td>
<td>Scope of Work</td>
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<td>SRFI</td>
<td>Security Risk and Fraud Inquiry</td>
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<td>ST HICD</td>
<td>Short-Term HICD</td>
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<tr>
<td>STO</td>
<td>Short-term Observer</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBSC</td>
<td>TBSC Consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEAMS</td>
<td>Training and Exchange Automated Management System</td>
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<td>TIG</td>
<td>Transparency International Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>US Government</td>
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<td>WAPOR</td>
<td>The World Association for Public Opinion Research</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administrative notice: Due to the global outbreak of COVID-19, the World Health Organization and the Government of Georgia (GoG) recommend maintaining social distance. To eliminate close contact with our partners, service providers, and other counterparts, we conduct daily project activities through virtual means of communications.

This is the third quarterly report for the USAID/Georgia Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Activity, covering the period of July 1 to September 30, 2021. The HICD Activity is implemented by The Kaizen Company (Kaizen) in conjunction with its local subcontractors, Policy Management and Consulting Group (PMCG), GEC JSC (GEC), GEpra, TBSC Consulting (TBSC), PMO Business Consulting (PMO), Development Evaluation and Progress Assessment Consulting (DEPA), GeoWel Research, and Personnel Management Center (PMC). The objective of the HICD Activity is to achieve lasting results in the human and institutional capacity development of key strategic partner institutions in Georgia that play an important role in fulfilling the country’s development objectives. The HICD Activity will increase the organizational integrity, operational effectiveness, and long-term viability of key partner organizations, which, in turn, anchor the country’s reform efforts across all development sectors. It also operates a Center of Excellence (CoE) that supports Georgian organizations pursuing HICD initiatives independent of direct donor assistance.

This quarter, the HICD Activity has successfully continued implementation of the Short-Term HICD (ST HICD) activities with 1) the Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”, 2) Public Defender of Georgia (PDO), 3) Georgian Association for Public Opinion and Research (GAPOR), 4) Elections and Political Processes (EPP) Implementing Partners, 5) Mediators’ Association of Georgia (MAG), 6) Georgian National Competition Agency (GNCA), and 7) Sakpatenti, the National Intellectual Property Center. In addition, we started several new ST HICD activities with: 1) the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD) and its agencies: the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA) and the Mountain Resorts Development Company (MRDC), 2) the National Agency of State Property (NASP), 3) the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC), and 4) Rural Development Agency (RDA). For the last two (NAEC and RDA), we are finalizing the service provider procurement process and will start program implementation process from early October 2021. From July 1, we also started a Long-Term HICD (LT HICD) program with the Civil Service Bureau (CSB).

Main Accomplishments for this Quarter

- Continued the Short-Term (ST) HICD programs with the Fund “Sukhumi”, Public Defender of Georgia (PDO), Georgian Association for Public Opinion and Research (GAPOR), Elections and Political Processes (EPP) Implementing Partners, Mediators’ Association of Georgia (MAG), Georgian National Competition Agency (GNCA), and Sakpatenti, the National Intellectual Property Center;
- Started new ST HICD programs with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD) and its agencies: the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA) and the Mountain Resorts Development Company (MRDC), the National Agency of State Property (NASP); the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC), and Rural Development Agency (RDA);
- Started new Long-Term (LT) HICD programs with the Civil Service Bureau (CSB);
- As of September 30, the HICD CoE has 72 new members;
- Conducted two online brownbag sessions for the CoE members;
- Developed freemium and premium membership packages for CoE members;
- Developed individualized development plans for each Indefinite Quantity Subcontract (IQS) holder;
- Started working on expert scopes of work for IQS holders’ capacity development;
- Developed one page Activity Monitoring Spreadsheets for each ongoing HICD program.
Furthermore, on July 20 and July 29 we conducted two online brownbag sessions for the CoE members whose number increased from 32 to 72 new members as of September 30. The HICD CoE Manager has also developed a membership matrix and member services and benefits matrix for the CoE. The services will be offered under both the freemium and premium membership packages. In addition, the HICD Activity conducted the CoE members needs assessment sessions. The data was collected through member focus group discussions and the follow up survey. 35% of the CoE members representing government, NGOs and private sector organizations, participated in the focus group discussions.

During this quarter, the HICD Activity developed recommendations for the IQS holders based on the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) results. We also developed individualized plan for each IQS holder and drafted an approach for each development topic and subtopic. There is a total of 35 topics and 122 subtopics with 47 working groups. Moreover, the HICD Activity has also started working on expert scopes of work (SoWs) which will be finalized in October 2021 and will include online courses and personalized guidance by the HICD Activity team, including Kaizen’s Home Office team and contracted consultants, as necessary.

The HICD Activity closely coordinated with the partner organizations to incorporate the agreed upon monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach into the LT and ST HICD process. The HICD Activity conducted a total of 18 introductory meetings with our partner organizations and service providers and developed one page Activity Monitoring Spreadsheets for each ongoing HICD program.

This quarter, the Mission resumed visa processing procedures and the HICD Activity received the first J-1 visa processing request from USAID Implementing Partner, Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI). The activity was planned to take place from October 4 to 15, 2021. The HICD Activity prepared all the required documents and submitted them to USAID. Although the first check/step on participants was completed successfully, the second check/step was not. The Training and Exchange Automated Management System (TEAMS) was backlogged due to COVID-19 and the HICD Activity had to stopped visa processing.

As outlined above, this report describes this quarter’s primary activities for each of the project’s four components and the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) activities. The Results Reporting Table and Financial Report are in Annexes A and B.
SECTION I: PROJECT BACKGROUND

The HICD Activity is implemented by Kaizen and its Georgian subcontractors: GEC, PMCG, GEPR.A, TBSC, PMO, GeoWel, DEPA, and PMC. The purpose of the activity is to achieve lasting results in the human and institutional capacity development of key strategic partner institutions in Georgia that play an important role in achieving the country’s development objectives. These may include governmental, non-governmental, and private sector entities for all types of HICD services. The HICD Activity will increase the organizational integrity, operational effectiveness, and long-term viability of these key partner organizations, which, in turn, anchor the country’s reform efforts across all development sectors.

The HICD Activity does not replace the Mission’s existing technical assistance activities. On the contrary, it complements existing technical knowledge with organizational development expertise and provides advisory services in the areas of skills enhancement and systemic improvements to select organizations while developing the capacity of GoG agencies, local civil society organizations (CSOs), and private sector institutions to provide training and organizational and management services.

The HICD Activity draws on its local subcontractors to carry out performance assessments and implement multiple performance solutions to achieve overall program goals. We will only engage foreign expertise when no qualified Georgian firms and/or individuals are available.

To build and improve local expertise in the field of organizational development, the HICD Activity offers local service providers various means to transfer HICD know-how, including coaching, mentoring, and training to their own organizations.

The project has four components:

1) **HICD Services:**

   - **Long-Term (LT) HICD** services are a USAID model of structured and integrated processes designed to identify fundamental causes of performance gaps in host country partner institutions, address those gaps through a wide array of performance solutions in the context of all human performance factors, and enable cyclical processes of continuous performance improvement through the establishment of performance monitoring systems. These are large, holistic activities that seek to improve the overall performance of the institution.

   - **Short-Term (ST) HICD** services are limited in scope and look at a specific section/role of the partner institution rather than the institution in its entirety. They may or may not be followed by further interventions, subject to Mission review and approval. ST HICD activities are often utilized when a partner institution is not yet ready to absorb an LT HICD intervention or when such an intervention is not necessary. ST HICD services could be a stand-alone performance assessment, targeted performance solution, or a monitoring system that will equip the partner institution with a long-term capability to monitor performance and identify emerging gaps independently.

   - **Last-Mile (LM) HICD** services target leading local institutions that require catalytic efforts to establish their organizations as role models suitable for emulation or replication across their given sectors. Hence, a key distinguishing factor between LM HICD and other types of HICD services is that the former is designed for high-performing entities that have already come a long way in developing HICD systems and are in need of last-mile assistance to establish themselves as leaders in their respective sectors that other institutions can learn from.
2) **Center of Excellence (CoE):** Our CoE will connect those advancing HICD and shared national goals in a vibrant peer network within and across partners, regions, and organizational levels to provide practical support and incentives for local professionals to lead HICD and apply the Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) toolkit. Our online and in-person events incorporate analytics and user feedback models with top resources available on flash drives for off-line uses. The CoE will be sustained by competitively selected local stakeholders from the end of year three.

3) **Local Subcontractor Development:** For Local Subcontractor Development, the HICD Activity uses the Kaizen Accelerator approach, which supports subcontractors to cooperate by sharing experiences learning and installing donor-compliant systems, policies, and procedures in the Georgian context, while also competing to win large donor awards either independently or as a consortium.

4) **Exchange Visitors (EV) Support:** The HICD Activity provides a complete range of EV support services to all USAID/Georgia programs, including language testing, medical certification, health insurance enrollment, security risk inquiry, and J-1 visa processing as per the Automated Directives System (ADS) 253. The project conducts this demand-driven service in response to requests from implementing partners.

As a cross-cutting theme, gender is integrated into all activities of the project by identifying and addressing any gender-related disparities experienced by employees within the partner institutions. As applicable, the project will also integrate gender-related considerations into the HICD cycle to ensure that the policies, procedures, and practices of the partner institutions do not discriminate on the basis of gender identity.
SECTION II: HICD SERVICES

Civil Service Bureau (CSB)

**Background:** CSB is a legal entity of public law (LEPL) under the Prime Minister of Georgia that coordinates implementation of the civil service reform throughout government agencies at central and local levels. It promotes the implementation of centralized policy, as well as the development of a professional, career-based civil service. To achieve this goal, CSB ensures improvement of relevant legislation, establishment of efficient and transparent governance that meets the highest ethical standards and supports the implementation of anti-corruption policy in civil service organizations.

Functional analysis of CSB was carried out by the European Union (EU) Twinning program in 2019. The analysis identified performance gaps and demonstrated the need for further analysis of specific CSB functions and the adaptation of existing legal acts into real practice.

Since then, CSB has broadened its mandate and new functions have been added to it, such as the coordination of civil servants’ professional development system through the accreditation of training programs and the monitoring and evaluation of risks for ethical conduct by civil servants.

In addition, it is essential to analyze CSB’s human resource capacity to address the challenges caused by the pandemic. The EU’s recommendations emphasized need to increase CSB’s staff number (specifically, in the Human Resources (HR) and analytical units) and to establish a hotline service. Considering the scarcity of resources caused by the pandemic, implementation of these recommendations requires further assessment and reevaluation.

**Activities during the reporting period:**

**Performance Assessment** – The HICD Activity’s subcontractor PMCG assembled the performance assessment team to assess CSB’s existing performance, compare it to the optimal model, and identify performance gaps and their root causes. PMCG consultants performed the desk-review of CSB’s performance-related reports and legal documents and facilitated a series of interviews with the CSB managers, key performers, and other stakeholders. Through the interviews with internal stakeholders, the consultants gathered information about CSB’s overall organizational goals and challenges, key business processes and performance gaps. The PMCG team also facilitated interviews with external stakeholders, such as government administration, selected ministries, and international donor-funded programs.
The first draft of the performance assessment report was presented to CSB’s leadership on September 24. Upon receiving feedback from CSB, we will share the final version of the report with the stakeholder group to integrate their insights into the final performance assessment report and consolidated recommendations.

After finalizing the performance assessment report, PMCG will develop a detailed performance solutions package (PSP) for USAID’s further consideration. Should USAID approve, we will continue supporting CSB to implement the proposed solutions.

The initial period of performance for this activity was July 1—September 30, 2021. The program will be extended through mid-October 2021.

Public Defender of Georgia (PDO)

**Background:** PDO is an independent constitutional body which plays a critical role in safeguarding human rights and freedoms in Georgia. It employs 149 individuals, including 105 public servants and 44 contract employees in its head office and nine regional branches, and operates 17 structural units as part of its current organizational structure. Following the reorganization carried out over the period of October to December 2020, certain functional and structural changes were introduced which resulted in organizational restructuring.

HICD 2020, a predecessor to the HICD Activity, carried out the Human Resource Management (HRM) system improvement program with PDO in 2020. The program assisted the organization in developing the 2020-2022 HR strategy and action plan, HRM procedures, and an employee performance appraisal framework, which PDO subsequently adopted and currently applies in its day-to-day operations. Given PDO’s commitment to institutionalizing HRM best practices and to building on prior assistance and successes, the HICD Activity will provide additional support through consultancy and capacity building efforts. The areas of requested assistance directly respond to the newly adopted HR strategy and action plan, and resonate with expert findings and recommendations developed during HICD 2020.

The program consists of two components. Component I focuses on the institutionalization of HRM best practices across PDO, while Component II aims to improve PDO’s IT infrastructure and IT security capabilities.

**Activities during the reporting period:**

**Component I: Institutionalizing HRM Best Practices**

The HICD Activity’s HRM consultant continued coaching and training PDO (a total of 26 individuals including the HR department and structural unit managers) on a broad array of the HRM topics such as talent identification; recruitment and selection; employee motivation and satisfaction; mentoring and internship; performance appraisal; managing and monitoring employee performance; and HR partnering. The consultant developed the first drafts of talent identification and employee motivation methodologies and planned four additional focus groups with managers and staff members to finalize the drafts. On September 20, the consultant also shared with the PDO’s HRM department the draft mentoring concept, mentoring guidelines, and internship concept (youth talent program), and is awaiting feedback to incorporate into these documents.
In August, PDO administered the quantitative employee satisfaction survey, which was designed in close consultation with the HRM consultant. 58 respondents filled in the electronic questionnaires, and the data was collected and analyzed. The survey revealed employee perceptions and attitudes towards employment at PDO; their alignment with the agency's mission and values; engagement and motivation levels; esprit de corps; effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up communication; professional development opportunities; organizational culture, ethics, and integrity. PDO intends to use survey results to improve its leadership and management style, and its overall institutional performance. The presentation of survey results to PDO’s deputies is scheduled for October 7. The HRM consultant will integrate survey findings into the final draft of the employee motivation methodology, as well as into her training/coaching curriculum for department goal setting, strategic planning, and monitoring performance of department- and division-level strategies, which she will deliver in October. The consultant also scheduled trainings and coaching sessions with department and division managers on interviewing techniques for early October.

The initial period of performance for this component is May 10 – October 15, 2021. The program may extend through November 2021.

**Component II: Improving IT Infrastructure and IT Security Capabilities**

Following the scoping meeting held with PDO’s Deputy Head and the IT team on July 6, the HICD Activity drafted the scope of work (SoW) to assess PDO’s IT infrastructure needs and produce respective recommendations for the improvement of its IT capabilities and systems. After PDO reviewed and validated the SoW in mid-July, the program was approved by USAID on August 25, and the HICD Activity subcontracted PMCG with its team of two IT consultants to perform the assessment.

The HICD Activity organized a kick-off meeting with PDO and USAID on August 25 to present the technical approach, planned activities, and the timeline. The consultants started off with the desk study by reviewing all documents and web resources they received from PDO. On September 9, the HICD Activity organized a follow-up meeting between the consultants and PDO’s First Deputy Head, two IT specialists, and an Administrative and Finance Department Head to delve deeper into PDO’s IT needs and align them with program requirements; understand how the agency’s IT systems operate under its current organizational structure; what its expectations are; where the gaps and bottlenecks lie; what should be done to close these gaps; and what additional information was necessary for the assessment.

The consultants reviewed and analyzed additional data shared by PDO, including types and functions of its structural units and remote offices; business processes and personnel distribution; types of software applications in use, and how the electronic resources are administered. They distributed a written questionnaire among all structural unit employees to identify what technical impediments they face in terms of the existing software usage, and how fast these
impediments are handled; whether there is a need to deploy new software applications in their structural unit, and across the entire agency to help them to exchange, process and store information; whether there is a need to deploy new communication channels, information exchange methods or new software applications to interface with remote offices; and whether PDO should introduce new IT services and applications to improve communication with the public and other institutions. Survey results were collected on September 27, and the consultants started analyzing them. Parallel to this, they scheduled interviews with the department and division managers to understand their expectations for improving information flow across the agency.

The period of performance for this component is September 1, 2021 to January 1, 2022.

Georgian Association for Public Opinion and Research (GAPOR)

Background: HICD 2020, a predecessor to the HICD Activity, joined efforts with the Ilia State University (ISU) to form a professional community of practice for promoting independent and impartial opinion polling through establishing GAPOR.

GAPOR was registered on March 2, 2021, with the mission to:

- Champion high scientific and ethical standards in public opinion polling and survey research;
- Assist researchers in building their knowledge in research methods and analyses;
- Foster development of professional research standards;
- Promote the use of public opinion polling and survey research in democratic policy and decision making;
- Communicate the value and limitations of public opinion polling and survey research to the media and the public;
- Foster partnerships and professional alliances among pollsters and researchers in academia, government, civil society, and the media.

GAPOR has requested the HICD Activity’s support for developing its core strategic documents to serve as a roadmap for its institutional development and effective service provision. The program will ensure that GAPOR has a robust system in place for the successful fulfillment of its mission.

Activities during the reporting period:

Institutional Development and Effective Service Provision

The HICD Activity’s organizational development consultants completed GAPOR’s environmental scanning and finalized the context analysis report based on the desk study, semi-structured interviews with GAPOR’s 13 board members, and key stakeholders. In developing report findings, the consultants also incorporated input from two international polling experts, and their advice around best practices from the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR).

The consultants presented findings to GAPOR’s General Secretary, President, Vice President, and the Board on July 29 and 30. The findings centered on the rationale behind the establishment of GAPOR; key challenges in the professional practice of pollsters and researchers; socio-political factors of significance to the professional practice; GAPOR’s immediate priorities; medium-term vision; advocacy and pollster educational activities; membership policies; potential membership attraction strategies; establishment and enforcement of professional and ethical standards; potential services to members, constituencies and external customers; members’ readiness to commit their intellectual and time resources to GAPOR; management structure; segregation of
strategic and operational management roles and responsibilities; and alignment of GAPOR’s management structure with its strategic and operating plans.

Following presentation of findings, the consultants began drafting GAPOR’s vision, mission, organizational values, and strategic priorities. They performed several iterations and applied highly participatory approach through engaging all board members in the process, incorporating their input until the final draft was formulated. Alongside the agreed upon vision and mission statements, the document outlines five strategic priorities that will become cornerstones of GAPOR’s strategic plan:

1. Institutional development;
2. Membership policies establishment and enforcement;
3. Education and professional development of researchers;
4. Public awareness raising;
5. Professional and ethical standards development and enforcement.

Each strategic priority contains reference to illustrative activities that can be implemented over the next 12 to 36 months. These will be discussed and elaborated in more detail during the operational planning phase, when the strategic objectives and priorities will be broken down into operational objectives and their respective activities or projects will be translated into the strategic plan and an action plan. The operational objectives and activities will be agreed with GAPOR’s finance, education, standards, and publications committees. The initial iterations with the education, standards, and publications committees are completed, and will continue all through October.

The initial period of performance for the program is May 24, 2021 to November 19, 2021. The program may extend through December.

Elections and Political Processes (EPP) Implementing Partners

Background: The HICD Activity supports USAID’s selected EPP Implementing Partners: International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA), Transparency International Georgia (TIG), Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy (EECMD), Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP), and Public Movement Multinational Georgia (PMMG). All six organizations play an important role in shaping policymaking, and the electoral and political landscape in Georgia through reporting on a broad range of issues contributing to Georgia’s democratic development.

The program consists of two components:

- Component I focuses on improving the EPP Implementing Partners’ report writing capacities. It will help each partner to apply rigorous reporting standards and follow international best practices in reporting electoral and political developments in Georgia.
- Component II focuses on increasing their engagement with the public through more targeted and cogent messaging, using various platforms and communication vehicles to achieve higher efficacy in communications.

Both components aim to maximize the analytical impact of the implementing partners’ activities across a diverse set of stakeholders.
All selected partners acknowledge the importance of strengthening their skills in reporting and communicating issues, which are central to improving Georgia’s political and electoral environment, as well as upholding its democratic freedoms and consolidating democratic gains. They expressed commitment and sincere appreciation of the HICD Activity’s support in implementing this program.

Activities during the reporting period:

**Component I: Improving Report Writing Capacities**

Having completed the first round of trainings and consultations with EPP Implementing Partners, the International Reporting consultant began his second round of coaching sessions aimed at identifying and addressing the partners’ specific report-writing needs for the upcoming municipal elections. In July, a session on streamlining long- and short-term election observers’ reporting workflow was held for ISFED’s eight election program coordinators and monitoring team members, and two trainings were delivered to their regional election observers for East and West Georgia on the types of election reporting; when and how to report on alleged violations; streamlining long-term observer (LTO) and short-term observer (STO) reporting; and election reporting workflow. A total of 70 regional observers were trained.

The consultant also continued examining and commenting on the partners’ existing donor reports. He shared his feedback with GYLA on their 2020 final observation mission report, as well as brief guidelines for structuring other observation-focused documents. He provided similar guidance to GIP, EECMD and TIG on their quarterly and annual reports, and shared with them a quarterly reporting template which included general directions on how to devise an executive summary, and sections on political context, notable activities, objectives, results, success stories, analysis, and cooperation with other organizations – all consistent with donor standards and best reporting practices.

On July 19, the consultant trained PMMG on donor reporting practices, and the application and usage of KoBoCollect (election reporting software) to facilitate the online reporting of election results. PMMG’s observer database specialist took KoBoCollect, which PMMG was initially only going to trial this election, and began rolling it out to all long-term observers, and is planning on full implementation on election day. Feedback from within the organization is almost unanimously positive (95-97% out of 145 observers who tested it). They are in the process of finalizing the election day forms and are waiting on the confirmation of their final number of STOs.

In September, the consultant finalized and shared with EPP partners and the HICD Activity all his training, coaching, and reporting templates which he transformed into single modules that could be mixed and matched in the future. These templates include a general quarterly reporting and public reporting templates, as well as modules on donor reporting style and structure; election reporting workflow; formulation of neutral statements; identification and engagement of audience; public reporting style and structure; alleged concerns; and streamlining LTO and STO reporting. The consultant also transformed his
election reporting training materials into an easy-to-use full deck with notes and comments, enabling subsequent trainers to use the slides without deciphering them. The HICD Activity shared these materials (election reporting basics and public reporting basics) with all partners for reference, which will serve them as a useful resource for reporting during the upcoming elections.

Since the beginning of the program, around 130 Tbilisi and field-based staff have been consulted and trained. The partners have expressed enthusiasm and commitment to follow best reporting guidelines and the consultant’s advice on election reporting. The consultant will continue advising the partners and help them in producing election and post-election reports consistent with donor standards and international reporting practices.

The period of performance for Component I is May 12 to November 31, 2021.

**Component II: Strengthening Strategic Communications Capabilities**

The HICD Activity selected TBSC Consulting and its subcontractor Publicity Group to implement the program with EPP Implementing Partners. On August 3, the TBSC’s consulting team presented their technical approach and the implementation plan at the kick-off meeting, and listened to partner expectations and perspectives for the improvement of their strategic communications. Three lead and three junior consultants were assigned to six partner organizations, each lead and a junior consultant responsible for two partners.

During the reporting period, the consultant sub-teams completed fact-finding activities with all six organizations. This process included organizing meetings and interviews with both supervisors and specialists responsible for strategic communications. The consultants used special questionnaires to obtain needed information, and analyzed the documents obtained from each partner. As a result, they developed key findings on the opportunities for improvement for each, as well as cross-cutting opportunities for all. The following challenges were identified as shared among all organizations:

- Absence of the long-term communication strategies and action plans;
- Faulty and unplanned internal communication systems;
- Too general and not well customized messages for each target group;
- Weak campaign planning and management approaches;
- Absence of creative approaches to communication and new communication technologies.
Most of the ways of solving problems are common for all partners as challenges relate to communication processes, although there are differences in the specifics and methods of performing activities and delivering to the audience, as well as in communication messages. Based on these key findings, the consultants drafted recommendations to solve the root causes of communication challenges, and are currently developing the training syllabus, and strategic and action plans for each partner. The consultants already held nine coaching sessions to inform the communication strategies and action plans, and are setting the stage for a three-day joint training to be held in October.

On September 20, the HICD Activity organized a meeting with senior managers of all partners to present recommendations, emphasize the value of strategic communications, and further influence them to treat strategic communications as a very serious matter for their organizations. The meeting was attended by the HICD Activity, USAID, TBSC, and EPP Implementing Partner leadership.

The HICD Activity ensures close alignment between Component I and Component II of this program. On August 17, the HICD Activity organized a meeting with the International Reporting consultant and the TBSC consultants to reconcile their activities. The meeting allowed all consultants to better understand complementarities between Component I and Component II, and the distribution of tasks among all consultants involved. The International Reporting consultant and TBSC team continue to interface to exchange any information and advice around the program on a regular basis.

The period of performance for Component II is August 5 to January 15, 2021.

Mediators’ Association of Georgia (MAG)

Background: MAG was established in 2019 with 55 founding members. It regulates professional qualifications and ethical standards of mediators and facilitates the development of both in-court and out-of-court mediation. Mediation is an alternative mechanism for dispute resolution that enables disputing parties to settle conflicts by finding mutually beneficial solutions with the help of a neutral third party – the mediator. It offers a less costly and less time-consuming alternative to court.

MAG’s prime objectives are to:

- Regulate mediators’ activities and make mediation generally available;
- Develop a profession of mediation and determine issues related to mediator qualifications;
- Determine the common standard of the professional ethics for mediators and ensure its execution through disciplinary proceedings;
- Ensure an effective private and judicial mediation process;
- Make mediation a frequently used instrument for alternative dispute resolutions;
- Raise mediation awareness and increase public confidence level;
- Protect the rights of mediators;
- Introduce and develop best practices of mediation in Georgia.
The MAG leadership is open to changes and strives to strengthen organizational effectiveness and institutionalize modern management and public outreach functions. Specifically, the HICD Activity will support MAG to:

- Develop HRM systems, including HR strategy (policy and procedures), motivation system, functional job descriptions, training needs assessment, etc. (completed);
- Develop procurement and material-technical database management manual; and
- Draft PR and marketing strategy and its corresponding action plan.

Activities during the reporting period:

Component I: Develop the Human Resource Management (HRM) System

This quarter, our subcontractor GEC, in close cooperation with MAG’s leadership, developed a tailored HRM policy and guidebook that will assist MAG’s management in streamlining its HRM processes. In addition, the GEC consultants delivered intensive coaching sessions to the responsible managers on implementing effective HRM practices and provided them with relevant forms and templates. Rules and procedures introduced to the association include: detailed guidelines regulating recruitment, workforce planning, job analysis, retention, internship, employee performance management, and professional development systems.

As a result of this component, MAG is now fully equipped with the knowledge and sustainable practices to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of human resource and general management processes. MAG’s senior leadership is committed to incorporate new HRM practices into the association’s daily activities and dedicate priority effort for their proper implementation.

The HICD Activity completed implementation of this component in late July 2021.

Component II: Improving PR/Communication Practices

The HICD Activity and GEC reviewed MAG’s PR/Communications and Branding Strategy and identified specific areas of assistance to increase MAG’s presence in society. We drafted the SoW to develop a one-year communication action plan for the association. In addition, our consultants will provide coaching to MAG’s PR and other relevant managers to implement the action plan successfully.

Following the HICD Activity’s request, GEC assembled the team of consultants and developed a technical approach for improving MAG’s communication with the public. We were planning to present the technical approach to the leadership of MAG and start the program at the beginning of July, however, MAG requested to postpone the program implementation until early October 2021.

According to our recent communication, MAG is committed to start implementation of this component from October 12, 2021.

Component II: Improving Procurement Practices

The HICD Activity developed a SoW to enhance transparency and effectiveness of procurement processes at the association and submitted it to MAG for their inputs and comments.

Under this component, we plan to provide operational guidance on procurement policies and procedures to managers and staff involved in MAG’s procurement processes.
The HICD Activity plans to start this component in mid-October 2021.

**Georgian National Competition Agency (GNCA)**

*Background:* GNCA is an independent LEPL that is accountable to the Prime Minister of Georgia and society. GNCA was established based on the Law of Georgia on Competition in 2014. The main tasks of the Agency are to strengthen the competition policy in Georgia, to create and protect the conditions conducive to the development of market competition, and to detect and prevent all types of anti-competitive agreements and actions. Based on the recommendations developed under the EU-supported project, critical amendments to the Competition Law entered into force on November 4, 2020. These amendments are fully in line with European best practices and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA) Agreement requirements and reflect basic principles of the EU Competition Law. Moreover, in 2020, additional functions were added to the Competition Agency, including enforcement of the anti-dumping laws and consumer protection laws, as well as oversight of the Public Procurement Dispute Council.

The leadership of the agency is committed to organizational improvements to ensure delivery of diverse quality services to various stakeholders and beneficiaries of the agency. The HICD Activity assisted GNCA to strengthen its planning, performance, and monitoring capabilities (completed), and will improve its PR and communication functions.

*Activities during the reporting period:*

**Component I: Strengthening the Agency’s Planning, Performance and Monitoring Capabilities**

The HICD Activity and its subcontractor GEC continued working with GNCA to enhance and institutionalize its long- and medium-term planning, evaluation, and monitoring systems. Specifically, during this reporting period, the GEC consultants facilitated workshops with the representatives of specific departments to identify sectoral goals, and priorities and explore new perspectives.

The GEC consultants held a series of individual meetings with all senior and mid-level managers of the agency, internal and external stakeholders, analyzed and consolidated the obtained information, and formulated the agency’s new vision. The first draft of the document, which included GNCA’s goals, objectives, and priorities was presented to the agency’s leadership on July 20. GEC finalized the draft following the participatory workshops with representatives of specific departments, and later – with the agency’s senior leadership.

On September 20, the GEC consultants presented and facilitated detailed discussion over the final strategy document and implementation action plan. With this activity, we successfully handed over the instrument for effectively planning, implementing, and monitoring GNCA’s mission and long-term goals, and completed this component.

**Component II: Strengthening Communication with the Public**

On September 24, we facilitated meeting with the agency’s leadership to identify GNCA’s challenges and needs in communication with the public. Based on the received information, we developed a SoW and submitted it to GNCA for the feedback. As soon as we agree on the SoW, our subcontractor GEC will start working on their technical approach.
The HICD Activity plans to start this component in mid-October 2021.

Sakpatenti, the National Intellectual Property Center of Georgian

*Background:* Founded in 1992, Sakpatenti is a key public institution under the Prime Minister’s Office responsible for protecting intellectual property (IP) in Georgia through devising and enforcing IP-related policies. The IP protection covers inventions, designs, trademarks, geographical indications, copyrights, new varieties, and breeds.

Sakpatenti was a recipient of assistance from HICD 2020, a predecessor to the HICD Activity. HICD 2020 carried out Sakpatenti’s performance assessment to identify gaps hindering its performance, and recommended solutions to close those gaps. Based on the assessment findings, HICD 2020 helped Sakpatenti to improve its core processes and set up a comprehensive quality management system. As a result, Sakpatenti is now equipped with a Business Process Manual (BPM) for its core management, and support processes, a Quality Management Handbook (QMH), and a Staff Training and Capacity Development System. In May 2019, Sakpatenti approved the QMH and the BPM, and deployed all redesigned processes across the agency. Sakpatenti intends to use the processes streamlined with the help of HICD 2020 as the basis for internal and external audits to get International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 certified.

The communication audit performed in 2020 revealed that Sakpatenti’s importance is poorly communicated to the public, resulting in low levels of awareness of the IP-related issues and lack of information about Sakpatenti and the crucial role it plays in protecting and promoting IP nationwide. The need to enhance effectiveness of Sakpatenti’s public outreach practices, and strengthen its communication function in general, was noted as a top priority by Sakpatenti representatives, emphasizing the importance of increasing engagement with all relevant stakeholders in Georgia to foster IP protection and enhance its impact on Georgia’s business development, economic recovery, and social progress.

Sakpatenti has therefore requested the HICD Activity’s support for improving its communication practices.

*Activities during the reporting period:*

**Improving Effectiveness of Communication Practices**

The HICD Activity’s communications consultants completed the survey of Sakpatenti’s current communications practices based on the past communications audit performed in 2020; interviews with the agency’s 11 senior and mid-level managers (Acting Chairwoman, the Deputy, and department heads); and 17 external stakeholders (the media, public and private sectors, educational institutions, and patent attorneys). The survey was conducted using a communications audit questionnaire, and a brand audit questionnaire.

The survey revealed Sakpatenti’s strong commitment to improving its communications practices but pointed to the lack of a unified vision and divergent perspectives on how these improvements should be made, maintained, and measured. It identified target areas for communications; 18 audience groups to be targeted; key messages centering around the value, importance, and benefits of intellectual property; necessity to incorporate international best practices in communication and best-case scenarios in the agency’s operations; the lack of

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28 people were surveyed to identify their perceptions and attitudes towards Sakpatenti’s communications practices.

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proactive communication tactics; and the need to accurately frame messages for enhancing the agency’s visibility and reputation. The survey also pointed to the need for strengthening internal communication capabilities through institutionalizing continuous staff training and capacity building activities.

The brand audit identified areas, which are critical to establishing long-lasting emotional linkages between the audience and the agency, appealing to a broad spectrum of existing and potential users, and further reinforcing the significance of Sakpatenti’s brand – the key guardian of intellectual property in Georgia. The survey shed light on the challenges to effective brand building, and the importance of generating awareness and promoting the agency’s services; organizational values that make Sakpatenti stand out, such as professionalism, integrity, innovation-driven culture, and long-established knowledge in the field of intellectual property. Apart from challenges, the survey explored potential activities that would fill the gaps in communication and make it smoother and more effective. Based on the stakeholder expectations expressed in the survey, the consultants arrived at preliminary recommendations for improving communication effectiveness such as increasing the number and quality of communication campaigns; focusing more on community-driven topics; introducing a system of intellectual property ambassadors; holding competitions to promote innovative ideas; organizing media trainings, and other targeted activities, campaigns, and projects. The survey findings and recommendations will inform the agency’s three-year communications plan and a brand book, and will assist the consultants to accurately formulate public awareness campaigns in close consultation with Sakpatenti.

On September 17, the consultants presented the draft survey findings to Sakpatenti’s senior and mid-level managers and the HICD Activity, and finalized the draft based on their feedback and subsequent written input. In addition, on September 24, the HICD Activity and the consultants met with Sakpatenti’s Acting Chairwoman and the Deputy to discuss the final draft and agree on the subsequent course of action. The strategic planning sessions will take place in early October with full participation of all structural units directly and indirectly involved in communications.

The initial period of performance for the program is June 1 to November 15, 2021. The program may extend through December.

Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD)

Background: This program covers two agencies – the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA) and the Mountain Resorts Development Company (MRDC), responding to the request of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD) to conduct a rapid assessment of advantages and disadvantages of the prospective merger between GNTA and MRDC.

GNTA is a LEPL under MoESD, funded from the state budget (not mandated to derive profit). As the key policymaker in the Georgian tourism sector, GNTA’s mission is to formulate and enforce state tourism development policies in Georgia; support the development of sustainable tourism; promote the generation of export revenues and job creation through tourism; attract foreign visitors to Georgia; facilitate domestic tourism; and promote the development of tourist destinations, infrastructure, and human resources in the tourism industry.
While GNTA is fully in charge of the promotional and marketing efforts for Georgia’s key mountain resorts (including coverage of all associated financial costs), their management (especially of the resorts’ infrastructure and facilities) falls under the purview of MRDC. This management dynamic calls for close alignment between the two entities when it comes to effectively operating, marketing, and promoting these important tourist destinations. MRDC, a limited liability company (LLC) established in 2013 with a current staff size of 630, has been managing the mountain resorts of Gudauri, Bakuriani, Goderdzi, Hatsvali, and Tetnuldi, including their associated infrastructure and facilities since 2017, and has been working alongside GNTA, with a staff size of 104, on operating these locations since then. As an LLC, MRDC generates its own revenue and is not financed from the state budget.

Given the importance of achieving higher operational efficiency and synergy in governance and management of these mountain resorts, MoESD has requested that the HICD Activity conduct an assessment of advantages and disadvantages of a prospective merger between GNTA and MRDC.

Activities during the reporting period:

Assessing Prospective Merger

The HICD Activity held discussions with MoESD in July over launching a program to rapidly assess the advantages and disadvantages of the prospective merger between GNTA and MRDC, and developed SoW in close consultation with the MoESD Deputy Minister and GNTA. We contracted GEC as the service provider for this program and organized a kick-off meeting on July 30 to present the planned activities, timeline, and the team.

The GEC consultants started off with an environmental assessment phase covering the desk study, fact-finding, and interviews with internal and external stakeholders. The desk study involved analyzing the existing documents provided by GNTA, online resources and the website, and researching best-case scenarios on countries such as Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Switzerland, and Austria, among others. On August 18, the consultants, together with the HICD Activity, interviewed the MoESD Deputy Minister to align initial program findings with program expectations, discuss resource usage constraints, and efficiency and effectiveness considerations in light of the prospective merger, and to request additional sets of information for further scrutiny. As part of the desk study, the consultants also diagnosed the financial standing of both agencies, analyzed their organizational structure, delegation of responsibilities among employees, and functional overlaps. The consultants performed initial mapping of the resort governance players in Georgia and developed the resort management model value chain.

Upon completion of the environmental assessment phase, the consultants consolidated the findings and designed the resort governance model alternatives based on international best practices. A total of 12 meetings were held with the representatives of GNTA, MRDC, and several associations and entities which directly interface with them. Preliminary findings indicated that the merger between GNTA and MRDC was not a viable option, and that its disadvantages far outweighed its advantages. The partial merger was not warranted either, as rearranging functions between the two agencies would not improve the resort governance patterns. Overall, the merger would not positively affect budgeting and finance, procurement, human resources management, and sales processes, achieving no optimization of marketing, HR, and institutional efficiencies.

On September 21, the consultants presented preliminary findings to MoESD, GNTA, the HICD Activity, and USAID. The presentation aimed to inform the attendees of the subsequent course of action, implying that the consultants would analyze four optimal scenarios were identified for effectively managing resorts.
resort governance alternatives based on international best practices, examine their adaptability to the Georgian context, and structure the assessment report accordingly. The report would not focus on the merger scenarios, as it was not considered viable based on the environmental assessment. The consultants are currently structuring these best practice alternatives/models and examining their adaptability to the Georgian context.

The period of performance for the program is August 9 to October 8, 2021.

Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”

Background: Fund “Sukhumi” was established in 1997 as a non-profit NGO. Its mission is to promote the social, economic, and political empowerment of women by building their capacities, raising their social and legal awareness, and supporting them to develop as equal partners, active citizens, and decision-makers.

In July 2020, USAID/Georgia conducted a pre-award assessment of Fund “Sukhumi”. The pre-award assessment’s objective was to determine whether the organization has sufficient financial and managerial capacity to manage USAID funds in accordance with the U.S. Government (USG) and USAID requirements.

The assessment concluded that Fund “Sukhumi” did not have sufficient financial management and accounting systems in place to adequately safeguard USG resources. The Fund’s internal controls, financial management capacity, and accounting practices and procedures must have been improved to sufficiently manage and fully account for USAID funds.

The HICD Activity assisted the Fund to improve their performance in the identified areas.

The program consisted of three components:

- Component I focused on improving Fund “Sukhumi’s” Admin/Finance systems and envisions streamlining their procurement and HR business processes. Component I was implemented by the HICD Activity’s Field Office staff (completed).
- Component II focused on improving the project management skills of Fund “Sukhumi’s” staff. For this component, the HICD Activity competitively hired a project management consultant who worked closely with Fund “Sukhumi” to develop a Project Management Manual and conducted a series of trainings on effective project management techniques (completed).
- Component III has focused on strengthening the grants management capacity of Fund “Sukhumi”. This component was also outsourced and is implemented by a local consultant. The implementation of this component started in late August and will run through mid-October 2021 given that some time will be devoted to its translation from English into Georgian.

The Fund has a headquarters in Kutaisi and another branch office in Tbilisi. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all activities and workshops took place virtually.

Activities during the reporting period:

Component I: Improving Administrative and Financial Management Systems

This component covered activities aimed at improving Fund “Sukhumi’s” administrative and financial management systems.

Specifically, during this reporting period the HICD Activity:
Streamlined Fund “Sukhumi’s” internal controls, procurement, and financial reporting practices;
Improved its general administrative and human resources management systems.

We finalized the Finance, HR and Procurement Manuals and their corresponding forms, translated them into English and shared them with Fund “Sukhumi”. After receiving the Fund’s concurrence with these documents, we send them to USAID. On September 22 we received USAID’s feedback on the Procurement Manual. We reviewed all comments and provided our answers to USAID’s questions on September 27.

As a result of this component, the Fund will have all admin/finance processes and procedures in place, which will help them to become more sustainable and efficient while conducting their day-to-day activities following the newly established standards and guidelines.

Component II: Increase Project Management Capacity

During this quarter, our local consultant conducted a series of webinars in Project Management for Fund “Sukhumi’s” staff. He also completed developing a Project Management Manual together with its corresponding annexes. The Project Management Manual has been translated from English into Georgian and shared with the Fund for their endorsement. Both versions of the manual have been shared with USAID as well.

As a result of this component, the Fund’s staff received relevant knowledge to effectively execute projects and achieve desired outcomes following international project management practices.

Component III: Improving Grants Management Capacity

This component aims at improving the grants management capacity of Fund “Sukhumi” so that they can effectively manage and execute USAID funded grants.

Specifically, during this quarter, we selected and hired a local consultant who assessed the Fund’s grants management practices and delivered series of webinars in grants management. The webinars were attended by Fund’s staff, as well as their counterparts from Abkhazia. Their participation became possible due to the online nature of this program.

By now the consultant completed the first draft of the Grants Management Manual which was shared with the Fund’s management for their feedback. Currently, we are finalizing the document and will share it with USAID at the beginning of October. As in case of all other manuals, we will submit to the Fund the Grants Management Manual both in the English and Georgian languages.

The Fund will share the Grants Management Manual with their counterparts, which will enable the applicants easily get acquainted with the specific requirements and draft their applications following donor and the Fund’s requirements.

National Agency of State Property (NASP)
Background: NASP is a LEPL under the Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development of Georgia. In August 2020, the Agency merged with the Service Agency (SA), another LEPL but under the Ministry of Finance. The prime objectives of the newly reformed agency are:

- Management and administration of state movable and immovable property;
- Transfer of the State property for use;
- Exercising powers of a partner/shareholder in enterprises with state ownership;
- Management of strict accounting forms related to the agreement, registration, preparation, storage, usage and expertise-utilization of state-owned assets;
- Support in managing the property of the physical and legal entities, including, via e-auction webpage www.eaction.ge.

Activities during the reporting period:

Modernization of Business Processes

The HICD Activity, through an open competition process, selected local service provider Georgian Logistics Association (GLA) to improve operational effectiveness of NASP.

On July 23, the HICD Activity facilitated a kick-off meeting with the leadership of NASP and introduced the team of GLA experts and their technical approach. GLA started activities by reviewing NASP’s legal documents and facilitating in-depth interviews with the NASP chairman, managers, and staff of targeted departments: Administration Department; Inventory Management Department; and State Property Privatization Department. These interviews gave GLA an opportunity to analyze NASP’s organizational set up and business processes of above mentioned departments, and identify existing gaps and needs for future improvements.

Based on the collected information, the GLA team started developing comprehensive ‘as-is analysis’ document along with the recommendations for suggested improvements. The document will be presented to NASP’s leadership next quarter.

The HICD Activity plans to complete the program by the end of April 2022.

The National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC)

Background: NAEC is a LEPL under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoESD). It was established in 2002 to manage and administer standardized, high-quality exams for schools, universities and vocational educational entities. In 2005, the very first unified national examinations were conducted that played a crucial role in the development of the Georgian higher education system. Over the last 16 years, NAEC administers a range of testing programs, including school graduation (currently annulled), university and Master’s degree entry exams, vocational education professional programs, students’ grant competitions and teachers’ competency testing. This process includes authoring and assembling tests, administering testing exams, scoring tests, and analyzing data.

The other important area of NAEC’s mandate is educational research. NAEC administers national assessments as well as international educational research - PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS - in Georgia to identify the national performance in literacy, numeracy and sciences, and compares countries’ achievements globally.

The HICD Activity will assist NAEC with enhancing its communication practices with government stakeholders, target groups and the wider public.
Activities during the reporting period:

Enhancing NAEC’s Communication with the Public

The HICD Activity facilitated series of meetings and consultations with NAEC’s leadership to identify specific needs of the center. Based on this information, we developed a SoW and announced the competition amongst our Indefinite Quantity Subcontract (IQS) holders. Following the proposals evaluation process, we selected TBSC Consulting which presented their proposal in partnership with a local PR organization Publicity Group and international subject matter expert from Poland.

On September 22, we facilitated a kick-off meeting with NAEC’s leadership where TBSC introduced their team and technical approach. Currently, we are finalizing contractual details with TBSC and target October 4 as a start date of the program.

The period of performance for the program will be October 2021 to June 2022.

Rural Development Agency (RDA)

Background: RDA is a LEPL under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MoEPA). The organization implements a variety of programs and projects initiated by the MoEPA to promote well-being and prosperity of farmers and rural residents by providing them with the necessary resources. With the head office in Tbilisi, RDA employs 450 staff members in its 54 regional offices throughout the country. For overall operational effectiveness and to respond to post-pandemic emergencies, RDA is committed to improve its organizational effectiveness by the modernization of its operational and management systems, aligned with IPARD/EU requirements.

The HICD Activity will assist the RDA in the modernization of its HRM system.

Activities during the reporting period:

Institutionalizing HRM Best Practices

The HICD Activity, in close consultation with RDA, developed a SoW to introduce modern HRM practices and tools at the agency. In response to the Request for Task Order Proposals (RFTOP) we received five proposals from our IQS holders. We reviewed and evaluated them and identified the strongest one. The presentation of the best technical approach to RDA is planned for October 5 after which we will officially launch the program.

The period of performance for the program will be October 2021 to March 2022.
SECTION III: CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

The HICD CoE represents a dynamic hub providing Georgian partners with HICD knowledge, tools, research, and support. It will facilitate peer-to-peer learning across organizations to empower and motivate reformers and accelerate enduring capacity of the local organizations through the transfer of ideas, experiences, good practices, and expertise.

The HICD CoE has 72 new members as of September 30, representing 57 organizations. During this quarter, the HICD Activity developed the first iteration of the CoE business/operating model, outlining key functions and activities, value proposition and value delivery chain, suppliers and customer segments, cost and revenue streams, and organizational structure. We have also developed a membership matrix and a member services and benefits matrix for the CoE. Services will be offered under both the freemium and premium membership packages. Free services for CoE members include executive round tables (ERTs), Organizational Capacity Self-Assessments (OCAs), member case studies and experience videos, access to a library of tools and templates, and fact briefs on organizational development models and approaches. The premium package includes eight-hour certificate training courses, expert/situation support, the HICD Academy Certification, and resource compilations and recommendations.

To jumpstart the CoE learning series, we conducted two online brownbag sessions for the CoE members. On July 20, the CoE event speaker, Mariam Nozadze, HR Manager at Enterprise Georgia presented the Employee Appraisal System used at her organization. Ms. Nozadze engaged in question and answer (Q&A) session with the CoE members, sharing her experience regarding setting up and institutionalizing performance appraisal systems in government institutions focusing on the useful tools and successful strategies. The second CoE event speaker, Preston Lindler, our expert for EPP IPs program, Component I, discussed reporting styles and structures during the Public Report Writing Webinar conducted on July 29. Mr. Lindler also covered techniques best suited for CSOs to identify and engage target audience, to formulate neutral statements – known as “biased neutrality” - and to report alleged concerns and violations while covering political processes in the country. The webinars were moderated by the CoE Manager.

In September, the HICD Activity conducted the CoE members needs assessment sessions. The data was collected through member focus group discussions and the follow up survey. 35% of the CoE members representing government, NGOs and private sector organizations, participated in the focus group discussions. The CoE Manager presented a list of the CoE services that will be offered to the CoE members from October 2021. The HICD CoE will launch ERTs under the CoE freemium package. The ERTs focus on analysis, case implementation and resource application to address existing problems that the CoE member
organizations face in their respective companies. We will also add three premium services under the CoE learning series: eight-hour certificate training courses, the HICD Virtual Academy and expert situation support. The CoE Manager also presented a wide range of topics of CoE expertise. The focus group participants ranked the topics, and the priority rankings are as follows: 1) performance planning and management (strategy, operations, organization design); 2) business processes (process automation, process analysis, process streamlining); 3) HRM (strategy and culture, workforce planning and talent management, workforce development and motivation, HRM administration; 4) financial management (financial planning/budgeting, fundraising); 5) change management (change planning, communication during change, change management and enforcement); 6) PR/Marketing (communication strategy, campaign planning and management). The needs assessment findings are crucial for tailoring the ERTs and the learning sessions to the CoE member needs. To help predict the demand for the services under the free and premium packages, we also discussed member preferences of the two packages offered.

CoE will focus on service suppliers and service distribution during the next reporting period. We will present supplier application/accreditation process, supplier registration, supplier commitments and benefits, and service provision standards.
SECTION IV: LOCAL SUBCONTRACTOR DEVELOPMENT

USAID/Georgia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) calls for implementers to invest in country-owned models of inclusive development and build sustainable capacity in the countries where USAID works. Through this strategy, USAID/Georgia placed a renewed emphasis on local capacity building, so that US assistance strengthens the actors and institutions responsible for transforming their countries. The HICD Activity is committed to USAID's goal of strengthening local capacity and incorporates this vision into the project. Specifically, the HICD Activity works toward the goal of integrating HICD approaches into the operations and institutional culture of the selected local institutions and organizations. The HICD Activity aims to further the transfer of knowledge of HICD methodologies to key actors in Georgia.

In June 2021, the HICD Activity employed the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool to evaluate Georgian subcontractors’ capacity. The assessment tool was adapted in conjunction with the Non-U.S. Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) tool to include open-ended questions, a self-assessment questionnaire, and a file upload section. The results were analyzed and scored by the HICD Activity team using the following scoring system: 1 - low capacity, 2 - basic capacity, 3 - moderate capacity, and 4 - strong capacity. 87.5% of the HICD Activity’s IQS holders (PMCG, GEC, GEPR, PMO, TBSC, DEPA and PMC) completed the OCA. The HICD Activity evaluation team assigned scores for the OCA open-ended questions, the IQS holder organizations self-assessment scores were provided for each subsection of the OCA tool. The final individual score for each organization was calculated by averaging sub-section scores. The baseline score for the above seven service provider organizations reported for the PMP indicator 3.1.2, subcontractors’ average performance evaluation score, is 2.43 (the maximum OCA score is 4.00). The HICD Activity will do next evaluation process by the end of the current IQS period to assess the development of each organization.

During this quarter, the HICD Activity developed recommendations for the IQS holders based on the survey results. The HICD team also held needs assessment sessions to develop an individualized approach/plan for each IQS holder. Total of four working sessions have been held with each IQS holders (3+ hours of working group meetings). The first meetings were used to present the action plan and recommendations, the second and the third meetings were used to discuss, review, adopt and tailor the plan for each IQS holder, and the fourth working group meetings were used to summarize and finalize a 1.5-2-year tailored draft individual development approach for each subcontractor.

The HICD Activity, based on the individual development plan, drafted an approach for each development topic and subtopic. There is a total of 35 topics and 122 subtopics with 47 working groups. The approach for developing each topic and subtopic is divided into three different approaches: 1) knowledge sharing sessions for all IQS holders, which will include experts sharing best practices and approaches, templates with details and later guide the organizations in adopting and tailoring those systems; 2) Group works, which will include knowledge sharing sessions to start and later divide companies into different working grouping to transfer existing knowledge between organizations, discuss and review the real case scenarios and collaboratively develop better systems for each organization and finished with individual experts’ guidance to tailor the systems for their organizations. The groupings are created based on the needs assessment for the organizations with similar needs;
and 3) Individual work with experts, which will start with knowledge sharing sessions and later individual sessions will be held for each IQS holder to develop better systems and tailor them to their needs.

The HICD Activity has also started working on expert SoWs which will be finalized in October 2021 and will include online courses and personalized guidance by the HICD Activity team, including Kaizen’s Home Office team and contracted consultants, as necessary.

At the same time, the HICD Activity will offer participation in the HICD Academy to its local subcontractors, which will include start-to-end individual coaching, online courses, and access to necessary materials for organizational development. The HICD Academy will be led by Mr. Klaus Wittkuhn from Performance Design Partners. Upon completion of the Academy, the IQS holders will receive Academy Certificate showing their HICD credentials. Details about the HICD Academy, including the cost-share by the project, will be finalized in October 2021 and all information will be shared with USAID.
SECTION V: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

During this quarter, the HICD Activity closely coordinated with the partner organizations to incorporate the agreed upon M&E approach into the LT and ST technical assistance process. For this purpose, the subcontractor, the HICD Activity and the partner organizations met at pre-determined intervals throughout July-September 2021 to develop a tailored M&E approach to assess the efficacy of the program, and to ensure that the partner is committed to achieving the desired change on a continual basis. The HICD Activity conducted a total of 18 introductory meetings with the representatives from MAG, Sakpatenti, EPP Implementing Partners, GAPOR, CSB, GNCA, PDO, Fund “Sukhumi”, NASP, GLA, the service provider organizations (GEC, PMCG, and TBSC), and the individual consultants.

The MEL Specialist worked closely with the HICD Activity CoE Manager to develop a one-page Activity Monitoring Spreadsheets for each ongoing HICD program. The spreadsheets include a brief description of the activity Theory of Change (ToC) and a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be linked to an intended result (output or outcome) of the program, and relevant baselines, targets, and indicator definitions. We will submit the MEL spreadsheets for PDO, MAG, and GAPOR in early October; we will update the spreadsheet with additional program data on a monthly basis.
SECTION VI: EXCHANGE VISITORS SUPPORT

The HICD Activity provides a complete range of EV processing services to USAID programs in Georgia, including language testing, medical certification, health insurance enrollment, security risk inquiry, and visa processing as per ADS 252. Exchange visitors (EV) processing is a demand-driven service that the HICD team provides in response to requests from implementing partners.

More specifically, to ensure that ADS requirements are met, the HICD Activity administers a comprehensive range of EVs processing services related to:
- Coordinating Security Risk and Fraud Inquiry (SRFI) with the Mission.
- Health and Accident Coverage (HAC) enrollment.
- Visa processing support, including the preparation of the supporting documents for J-1 visa applications.
- Designing and facilitating pre-departure orientation for EVs on all aspects of USAID sponsorship, in accordance with USAID policy.
- Tracking and reporting EVs and program activities based in the U.S. that are fully or partially funded by USAID the agency’s Training and Exchange Automated Management System (TEAMS) reporting system. The HICD staff serves as R1/R2 (see the list below) to enter and verify exchange visitor data and upload support information in TEAMS.
- Monitoring EVs for punctuality and completion of their program and return to home country.

To administer the above services in an efficient and timely manner, the HICD Activity closely coordinates with the implementing partners who request support for nominated training participants.

The HICD Activity TEAMS operators are:
- R1 (Initiator) – Tamar Shalamberidze
- Alternate R1 – Nino Phuturidze
- R2 (Verifier) – Dea Pagava
- Alternate R2 – Eka Leonidze

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, USAID/Georgia stopped all J-1 visa related activities starting March 2020. The Mission resumed visa processing procedures in July 2021 and the project received the first J-1 visa processing request from the USAID Economic Security Program, implemented by Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI). However, later, we received a notice from the USAID TEAMS operators, that the system is backlogged due to the pandemic, and they do not have an expected date of return. The program has been postponed. The HICD Activity will resume J-1 visa processing as soon as we receive final security clearance on participants, and DAI determines the new dates for the study visit.
## ANNEX A: RESULTS REPORTING TABLE

### PIR 1: HICD Capacity of Partner Institutions Strengthened

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program Year 1 2020-2021</th>
<th>Program Year 2 2021-2022</th>
<th>Program Year 3 2022-2023</th>
<th>Program Year 4 2023-2024</th>
<th>Program Year 5 2024-2025</th>
<th>Disaggregated by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1.1. Number of Georgian institutions receiving USG assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quarter</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(denominator for CBLD-9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14 governmental organizations and NGOs receiving ST HICD services, including EPP Implementing Partners (6 NGOs), PDO, Sakpatenti, GAPOR, GNCA, MAG, NASP, MoESD, Fund “Sukhumi” and one governmental organization ‘CSB’ receiving LT HICD service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1.2. Number of Georgian institutions receiving USG assistance that demonstrate</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>improved performance (numerator for CBLD-9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1.3. Percent of U.S. Government-assisted organizations with improved performance</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Standard Foreign Assistance Indicator, CBLD-9)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2.1. Percent of partner institutions receiving long- and short-term HICD</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PIR 2: CoE Established & Operationalized as Effective, Innovative, and Sustainable Hub for KM

### 2.1.1: Percent annual increase in CoE utilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.1: Local ownership of CoE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As of September 30, 2021, the Centre of Excellence (CoE) accounts for 72 registered members. This figure will serve as the baseline. The relevant percentage increase will be measured annually.

## PIR 3: The Subcontractors Develop Systems, Policies, and Procedures that Enable them to Compete for and Manage Large Donor Awards

### 3.1.1 Number of subcontractors leading LT, ST and LM programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GEC, PMCG, TBSC
### 3.1.2: Subcontractors' average performance evaluation score

| Actual | N/A | N/A |

### PIR 4: USAID-Sponsored Exchange Visitors Successfully Avail of the Contractor's Participant Training (J-1 Visa) Processing Services

#### 4.1.1: Percent of exchange visitors that express satisfaction with EVs processing services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>90%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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