



**The European Union's programme  
For Georgia**

# **Needs Assessment of the Parliament of Georgia**

*Final Report*



This project is funded by  
The European Union



A project implemented by  
Policy and Management Consulting  
Group - PMCG

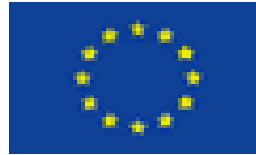
**Parliament of Georgia**



**Policy & Management consulting Group**



**European Union Delegation in Georgia**



## ACRONYMS

<b>BO</b>	Budgetary Office of the Parliament of Georgia
<b>E-HRM</b>	Electronic Human Resource Management
<b>EN</b>	Explanatory Note
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GoG</b>	Government of Georgia
<b>HRM</b>	Human Resource Management
<b>IRP</b>	Institutional Reform Plan
<b>IT</b>	Information Technologies
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NDI</b>	National Democratic Institute
<b>PMCG</b>	Policy & Management Consulting Group
<b>RoP</b>	Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia
<b>SAO</b>	State Audit Office
<b>TI</b>	Transparency International
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNM</b>	United National Movement
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WFD</b>	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	4
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY .....	9
III. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE .....	11
IV. FINDINGS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT .....	17
A. Exercise of Institutional Functions .....	17
(1) Lawmaking .....	17
(2) Government oversight .....	24
(3) Representation .....	27
B. Organization of Work, Administrative and Informational Support .....	29
(1) Organization of work process: administrative and support functions .....	29
(2) Human Resource Management .....	31
(3) Communication and Information Flow .....	36
V. SWOT ANALYSIS .....	44
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	49
A. Exercise of Institutional Functions .....	49
(1) Lawmaking .....	49
(2) Government oversight .....	51
(3) Representation .....	52
B. Organization of Work, Administrative and Informational Support .....	53
(1) Organization of work process: administrative and support functions .....	53
(2) Human Resource Management .....	53
(3) Communication and Information Flow .....	54

## INTRODUCTION

Through the support of the EU Delegation in Georgia, Policy & Management Consulting Group conducted the Needs Assessment of the Parliament of Georgia to identify and analyse a variety of institutional needs or performance gaps of the Georgian Parliament. The needs assessment addresses the issues, factors or shortcomings that affect the exercise of institutional functions by the Parliament and efficiency of parliamentary activities or operations.

The results of this needs assessment may be used to guide subsequent decisions of the Parliament of Georgia and those of other stakeholders including the donor community, civil society organizations, other civic groups in designing, implementing and evaluating projects, programmes or initiatives that will lead to achieving desired results.

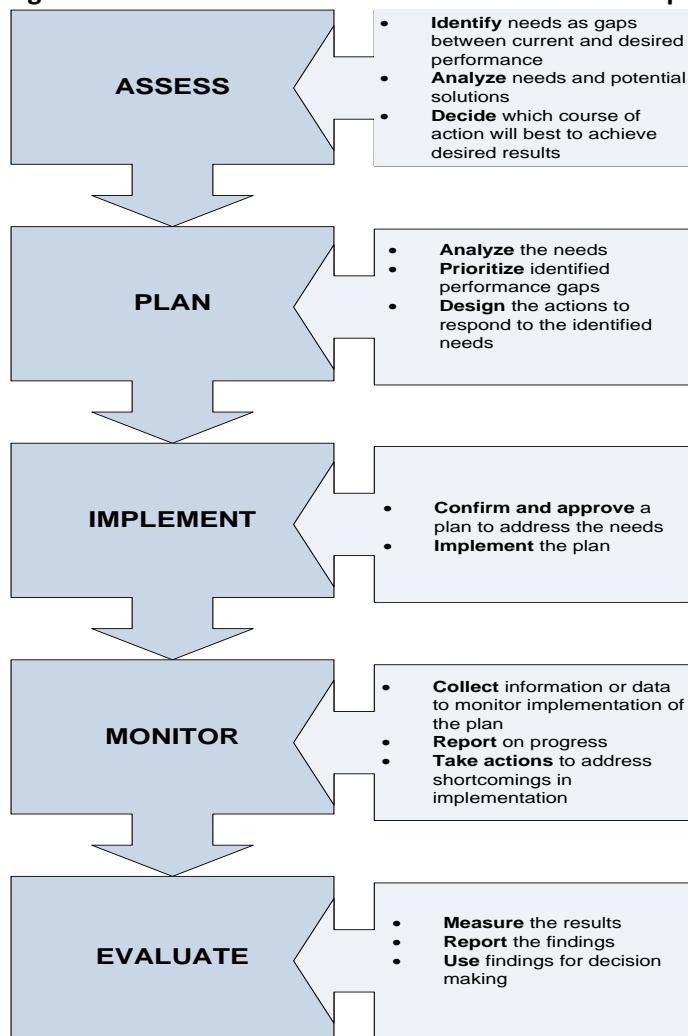
The overall goal of all performance assessments is to *improve the performance*. That is the move from achieving current results to obtaining desired results. Thus, *improving* refers to the assessed progress from a less-than-desirable state to a desirable state, whereas *performance* refers to the results—no matter if the organization classifies them as products, outputs, outcomes, impacts, or some combination of these titles. Within a performance improvement framework, needs assessments play a critical role in starting the improvement process.

This needs assessment intervention helped to identify and recommend solutions to the performance or organizational gaps. Recommended solutions however have to be further discussed and confirmed with the Parliament of Georgia and this should be conducted during the next phase of the performance improvement programme. The EU Delegation to Georgia will assist the Parliament to analyse and prioritise the identified needs or performance gaps, and with the Institutional Reform Plan design actions to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs. The performance improvement interventions by a single donor agency may not be sufficient to resolve the complex issues detailed in this Report. Consolidated and concerted efforts are required from all stakeholders including donors and CSOs. Most importantly, the Parliament should commit its resources (human, financial, technical) and intensify discussions on the potential measures that could lead to efficient exercise of main institutional functions and enhanced efficiency of organizational performance.

Once the plan of actions is developed, agreed and approved, Parliament and its partners should design the communication and coordination mechanism enabling an efficient information flow or exchange among various parties involved so that all stakeholders and members of parliament have access to information on ongoing interventions and as necessary provide input in implementation.

The establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system over implementation is yet another crucial element for achieving success in implementing the institutional performance improvement initiatives. Periodic information or data collection, analysis and reporting should help the Parliament and stakeholders observe or measure the outcomes and make adjustments to respective plans or approaches as appropriate.

Figure 1 – Needs Assessment within a Performance Improvement Framework



It should also be emphasised that the Parliament is a political body that consists of members who have different ideas or viewpoints with regard to a wide range of issues. The assessment team has identified conflicting ideas as to the organization of Parliament's work or exercise of institutional functions that are also summarised in this report. On a number of issues, including the location of the Parliament, it will be unreasonably optimistic to expect that consensus of all political parties can be achieved within the near future. While this assessment Report summarises the conflicting political viewpoints or ideas, no specific solutions are being recommended by the assessment team since these politically sensitive issues have to be discussed, debated and resolved in the context of political discourse.

Nonetheless, all issues or shortcomings in organizational performance can be resolved and the assessment team recommends the members of Parliament, top and mid-level managers to engage into dialogue or discussions for reaching agreement on how to organise the Parliament's work so that the Parliament is capable of efficiently exercising its law making and oversight functions and the MPs receive all administrative, organizational and informational support that is needed for securing the efficiency of the institutional performance. As noted in this assessment report, one of the fundamental causes of some identified needs/gaps is the lack of communication on organizational matters.

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section of the Report summarises the main findings of the Parliament's needs assessment and recommended solutions to the identified needs or performance gaps. Each of the performance gaps as well as recommendations is detailed in the forthcoming sections of the Report.

The needs assessment of the Parliament of Georgia sought to identify and analyse different types of needs of the institution, issues, factors and performance gaps that affect the exercise of institutional functions and overall efficiency of operations. Areas covered by the needs assessment include organizational performance, internal and external communications, civic engagement mechanism in decision making, and human resource management.

The needs assessment was conducted through the desk study of the Parliament-related documents, reports and observations and facilitation of semi-structured individual interviews with the leadership of the Parliament, parliamentary committee chairpersons, MPs, heads of the committee offices, managers of departments and other structural units, stakeholders – CSOs or international organizations implementing projects or programmes with the Parliament.

### **Needs or performance gaps identified by the assessment team:**

- a) Exercise of institutional functions – lawmaking:
  - Deficiencies in document flow.
  - Absence of an electronic editor
  - Absence of a searchable electronic database of laws tailored for the Parliament's lawmaking needs.
  - Inadequate quality of explanatory notes
  - Lack of institutional capacities to conduct policy planning and evaluation
  - Excessive speed of the legislative process and associated risks
  - Legislative initiatives on the part of the MPs
  - Lack of institutional capacities to assess fiscal or economic effects of initiated draft laws
  - Insufficient public engagement into the lawmaking process
- b) Exercise of institutional functions – government oversight:
  - Lack of the political will on the part of the majority to publicly exercise oversight of the Executive
  - Lack of periodic, consistent public hearings of government officials in the Parliament
  - Inefficient use of the examination reports of the State Audit Office
  - Shortcomings in the regulatory framework
  - Deficiencies in responding to the official requests of MPs
  - Access to international best practices of parliamentary oversight of governments
- c) Exercise of institutional functions – representation
  - Capacity gaps of MP bureau staff
  - Low public awareness with regard to the mandate of the Parliament
  - Ineffective administration of RoP reporting requirements
  - Limitations for MPs elected through the proportional system to communicate or interact with their electorate

- Deficiencies in Parliament's reporting mechanism
- d) Organization of Parliament's work: administrative and support functions
  - Management of staff of parliamentary committee offices.
  - Technical issues in the plenary hall.
  - Managing the donor programmes.
  - Unsupportive work environment.
- e) Organization of Parliament's work: Human Resource Management
  - Absence of performance management and evaluation system
  - Inefficiency of key HR management processes including staff recruitment and professional development
  - Absence of the knowledge management system
  - Deficiencies of HR management software
- f) Organization of Parliament's work: Communications
  - Inadequate structure and overlapping functions of Parliament's communications and public relations units
  - Inefficient use of communication channels
  - Deficiencies of the Parliament's web-page
  - Lack of qualified staff
  - Absence of communications strategy and action plan
  - Absence of the media centre

**Recommendations delivered by the assessment team:**

- a) Exercise of institutional functions – lawmaking:
  - Introduce the policy planning and evaluation function within the Parliament.
  - Digitalise the lawmaking process.
  - Establish stricter requirements for development and submission of explanatory notes.
  - Enhance the capacities of the Parliament staff to conduct the assessment of fiscal and economic effects of initiated draft laws.
  - Encourage and facilitate public engagement in the lawmaking process.
- b) Exercise of institutional functions – government oversight:
  - Utilise the existing possibilities of the governmental oversight by the Members of the Parliament to the maximum extent possible
  - Utilise the conclusions or audit reports of the State Audit Office
  - Address the legislative gaps
  - Replicate the international best practices of government oversight
- c) Exercise of institutional functions – representation
  - Enhance capacities of MP bureau staff
  - Enhance the public awareness with regard to the functions and mandate of the Parliament



- Provide the MPs elected through the proportional system with a possibility to interact with voters
  - Administer the performance of the RoP reporting requirements or refine the regulatory framework
- d) Organization of Parliament's work: administrative and support functions
- Agree on the rules of operation and management of parliamentary committee offices
  - Refine the donor programme management system
  - Address the technical issues blocking the normal performance of the Parliament
  - Improve the work environment to the maximum extent possible
- e) Organization of Parliament's work: Human Resource Management
- Refine staff selection and interviewing procedures
  - Improve performance management and evaluation system
  - Improve staff learning and development System
  - Refine the E-HRM software
- f) Organization of Parliament's work: Communications
- Develop the Parliament's communication platform
  - Develop Parliament's communication strategy and action plan
  - Develop communication crises management strategy and action plan
  - Establish the "Service Plus" standard and train staff
  - Establish internal standards
  - Conduct IT Audit
  - Introduce new software in the Parliament's system and update channels of e-communication
  - Refine mandates of the structural units in charge of Parliament's communications
  - Develop citizen feedback mechanisms
  - Organise study tours for citizens

## II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The needs assessment of the Parliament of Georgia sought to identify and analyse different types of needs of the institution, issues, factors and performance gaps that affect the exercise of institutional functions and overall efficiency of operations. Areas covered by the needs assessment include organizational performance, internal and external communications, civic engagement mechanism in decision making, and human resource management.

More specifically, objectives of the needs assessment include:

- a) Identify needs or gaps related to the exercise of main institutional functions of the Georgian Parliament:
  - Law making
  - Representation
  - Government oversight
- b) Identify and analyse organizational, administrative, technological, regulatory gaps, issues related to the organization of the Parliament's work, human resource management, internal and external communications:
  - Structural arrangement of Parliament, decision-making system, accountability and oversight system between various structural units;
  - Operations and management of Parliament's structural units (departments)
  - Human resource management (formal or informal systems of personnel selection, recruitment, promotion and motivation, future plans);
  - Qualifications of Parliament's staff members, capacity building or enhancement practices, knowledge management systems;
  - Internal communications and information flow;
  - External communications with wider public, media, non-governmental and international organizations, donor agencies or other stakeholders;
  - Transparency and institutionalised mechanisms of civic participation in Parliament's decision-making process;
  - Organizational culture and core values (formal or informal values or principles, to which the Parliament remains committed during years);
  - International programmes or projects;
  - Parliament's material and technical capacities, information technologies.
- c) Conduct analysis of institutional strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and strengths of significance to unimpeded exercise of institutional functions and achievement of mid- or long-term objectives;
- d) Develop a package of recommendations with a view to addressing the identified needs or performance gaps.

The needs assessment was conducted through a variety of tools including the desk study of documents, reports and observations related to the issues falling under the scope of the assessment. Facilitation of semi-structured individual interviews, however, is the principal tool for information/data collection.

Target groups of the needs assessment:

- Leadership of the Parliament;
- Committee chairmen and deputies, MPs;
- Heads of the committee offices;

- Heads of departments and other structural units
- Stakeholders – CSOs or international organizations implementing projects or programmes with the Parliament.

To conduct this assignment PMCG engaged a team of three consultants. While the Team Leader is responsible for the assessment of needs related to the exercise of institutional functions and organization of Parliament's work, the other two consultants assess and analyse the efficiency of communications and human resource management systems. To align the assessment results and secure compatibility of solutions, the team leader and Project manager will provide guidance, instruction, and direction the team to achieve the aligned results.

The organizational needs assessment is being implemented into four phases:

Phase 1: Specification of the scope of work. PMCG assessment team coordinated with the Parliament and EU Delegation in Georgia representatives to develop and confirm the assessment methodology and timeframe, specific issues covered by the assessment, information sources, and list of respondents. Accordingly data collection instruments (interview guides) have been developed through which information was collected from a wider range of respondents.

Phase 2: First round of data collection and analysis. PMCG consultants conducted the desk study of documents, reports and observations of relevance to this assessment, conducted semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including MPs, Heads of Parliamentary Committees and Committee Offices, mid-level managers, representatives of CSOs or international organizations running programmes or projects with the Parliament of Georgia. The information was subsequently discussed and analysed within the assessment team. As a result, a preliminary assessment report and early SWOT analysis were developed.

Phase 3: Second Round of data collection and analysis. During the next phase of the organizational assessment the PMCG consultants conducted the second round of information or data collection to effectively respond to the feedback of stakeholders in relation to the Preliminary Report and refine the recommended solutions. The information obtained was analysed and incorporated into the final draft of the Parliament of Georgia Needs Assessment Report.

Phase 4: Representation a final report. At the concluding phase the Needs Assessment Report will be communicated to the leadership of the Parliament, stakeholder group and a discussion will be facilitated over the needs assessment findings or conclusions.

### III. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The authorities and competences of the Parliament of Georgia, and members of the Parliament are regulated by the Constitution, Rules of Procedure of the Parliament and Law on the Status of the Member of the Parliament of Georgia.

Under article 48 of the Constitution, the Parliament is the supreme representative body that exercises legislative power, determines main directions of domestic and foreign policy, oversees the activities of the Government within the framework defined by the Constitution and exercises other authorities.

The Georgian Parliament consists of 150 members elected for 4 years term. 77 members are elected through a proportional system, whereas the remainder are elected through a majoritarian system. The Georgian constitution and legislation provides safeguards to the MPs. Namely, under the Constitution, a member of the Parliament is a representative of all Georgia, enjoys a free mandate and his authorities cannot be suspended or terminated within the term of the respective Parliament. Moreover, an MP can be detained or arrested, his apartment or vehicle may be searched only with the consent of the Parliament. The exception is only when an MP is captured at the place of offense, in which case the Parliament should be immediately notified. However, if the Parliament does not agree to detention or arrest, the MP should be immediately released. AN MP is authorised not to give testimony over the fact of which he is informed as a Parliament member. AN MP retains this right upon termination of his/her authorities.

A Member of the Parliament however is not authorised to hold another public office or pursue entrepreneurial activities. The matters of recognition or termination of an MP's authorities are decided by the Parliament. These decisions may be challenged before the Georgian Constitutional Court.

The state is under the obligation to ensure security of the Parliament and its unimpeded activities.

The Parliament is authorised to enact the constitution of Georgia, constitutional laws, constitutional agreements, organic laws, laws, its Rules of Procedure, orders, resolutions, declarations, addresses, statements or other decisions, hear information, develop recommendations.

The Exclusive competences of the Georgian Parliament include:

- Revision of the Constitution of Georgia;
- Implementation of legislative activities;
- Determination of main directions of domestic or foreign policies;
- Hearing the annual reports by the President of Georgia;
- Determination of the structure, authorities and rules of operations of the Government of Georgia;
- Declaration of trust or mistrust towards the composition of the GoG or the governmental programmes;
- Requesting reports from the Government on implementation of governmental programmes and organization of respective hearings;
- Election or approving appointment of officials determined by the Constitutions of Georgia and other legislative acts; releasing theses officials from their offices;
- Implementation of government oversight;

- Parliamentary oversight of officials or bodies accountable before the Parliament;
- Ratification, denunciation or abrogation of international treaties and agreements of Georgia;
- Determination of Georgia's state borders;
- Approving the size of the Georgian Armed Forces;
- Approving the concept of the national security and other concepts;
- Approving the President's decision on the matters of war, martial law, or ceasefire;
- Approving the President's decision on allocation, use or deployment of armed forces of other countries on the territory of the Country;
- Determination of the Parliament's internal structure, authorities and rules of procedure;
- Recognition and premature suspension of the mandate of the MPs;
- Holding of ordinary or extraordinary sessions or plenary hearings of the Parliament by the procedure laid down in legislation;
- Impeachment of officials determined by the Constitution of Georgia;
- Enacting the national budget and exercise of parliamentary oversight over its implementation;
- Approving the Constitution of Adjara autonomous Republic;
- Determination of main directions of country's monetary policy;
- Annual hearing of the Georgian National Bank;
- Determination of the taxes and dues, their amounts and rules of imposition, taking decisions on additional expenditures from the state treasury;
- Conduct of hearings of authorised officials in the occasions determined by the Constitution, laws and RoP;
- Approving the President's decisions on suspension of activities or dismissal of a local-self-governance body or a representative bodies of territorial unit;
- Exercise of other authorities vested into the Parliament under the Constitution or other legislative acts.

The Rules of Procedures is the principal legislative act that determines the internal structure of the Parliament and lays down the rules of Parliament's activities. The RoP are mandatory for all members of Parliament, parliamentary committees, commissions, factions, as well as for the President and Government of Georgia and other bodies subordinated to the Parliament, bodies and officials of the Adjara and Abkhazia Autonomous Republics, self-governance bodies and their officials. The Rules of Procedure currently in force were enacted on June 22 2012, however, the RoP took effect upon holding the first session of the new Parliament in autumn 2012.

The RoP determines the main principles of the Parliamentary activities. Namely:

- Multi-party character;
- Respect for representative proportionality;
- Free, collective discussion and resolution of matters;
- Adherence to the Constitution, laws of Georgia, Rules of Procedure and other normative acts and oversight in compliance with these acts;
- Securing compliance with and respect for the universally recognised norms of international law;
- Openness;
- Integrity of interests of the state and the people.

**The Chairman of the Parliament** is elected at the first session of the newly elected parliament through a secret ballot. The Chairman represents the parliament in internal or foreign relations of the country, exercises full administrative authorities in the Parliament, manages Parliament's activities, coordinates

the activities of parliamentary bodies and officials, and exercises other powers as defined in the Constitution and Parliament's RoP.

The chairman of the Parliament has five deputies, one of whom is the First Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament.

**The parliamentary committees** are being formed for reparation of legislative issues, maintaining the execution of the Parliament's decisions and overseeing the activities of the Government of Georgia. The Chairman of the Parliament coordinates the activities of the Parliamentary committees.

For the time being there are 15 committees in the Georgian Parliament:

- Agrarian issues;
- Human rights and civic integration
- Education, science and culture
- Environment protection and natural resources
- Sector economy and economic policy
- Diaspora and Caucasian matters
- European integration
- Defence and security
- Legal matters
- Regional policy and self-governance
- International relations
- Procedural matters and rules
- Financial and budgeting
- Sports and youth matters
- Healthcare and social matters

The numbers of members in each committee, as well as quotas of proportional representation of political factions are determined by the Parliamentary Committee of Procedural Matters and Rules and approved by the Bureau of the Parliament. A committee should consist of at least 10 MPs. AN MP is obliged to be a member of at least one parliamentary committee. Only the Chairman of the Parliament and his first deputy are not allowed to be committee members. The chairpersons of the parliamentary committees are elected by the Parliament in the procedure laid down in the RoP.

The parliamentary committees are authorised to:

- Draft, review and prepare for plenary hearing laws, resolutions of the Parliament or drafts of other decisions;
- Participate in the processes of reviewing and drafting the legislative acts;
- Prepare conclusions on draft laws;
- Review the nominationsto the GoG;
- Review the draft national budget and delivers respective conclusions;
- Monitor the implementation Georgia's laws, resolutions of the Parliament or other decisions;
- Exercise oversight over the activities of GoG and other bodies accountable before the Parliament, etc.

The officials of bodies accountable before the Georgian Parliament and members of the GoG upon request of the parliamentary committees are under obligation to submit respective documents,

conclusions or other relevant data or materials to the committee. Likewise those officials are obliged to attend the committee hearings and respond to questions of the MPs, if so requested by any parliamentary committee.

Prior to being placed on the agenda of Parliament's plenary session, the issue should be reviewed by the respective parliamentary committee. The committee, upon hearing information, exploring and examining the issues falling under its competence, develops a conclusion that will be subsequently submitted to the Parliament's Bureau which then places the matter on the agenda of the plenary session.

Pursuant to the RoP, committee sessions are commonly held on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the weeks of plenary sessions. Committee sessions may be organised on any working day in the weeks of meetings with voters. Whereas the committee meetings are held in the weeks of plenary sessions, committee members should be informed of the session at least one day before the meeting. In the weeks of meetings with voters the information regarding the date and time should be communicated to the committee members at least two days before.

**The office of the parliamentary committee** provides organizational, administrative and legal support to the respective committee. The committee office is a permanent structural unit of the Parliament's Office. Under the RoP the committee offices should also perform advisory and analytical functions.

**The Bureau of the Parliament** consisting of the Chairman of the Parliament, his deputies, chairpersons of parliamentary committees and factions is authorised to organise the Parliament's work. Namely, the Bureau drafts and submits to the Parliament the agendas of plenary sessions, develops a work plan for Parliament's two weeks session cycle. The bureau is also authorised to review the conclusions of parliamentary committees, investigative or other commissions on draft laws, resolutions or decisions prior to these drafts being reviewed at Parliament's plenary session, approves the quotas of proportional representation, the regulations of committees, investigative or other commissions, decides on registration of political factions, approves the recommendations of the Board of Treasurers<sup>1</sup>, etc.

In the period of parliamentary sessions the Bureau sittings are commonly organised every Monday. The Chairman of the Parliament, however, is authorised to summon extraordinary sitting of the Bureau.

For the time being there are 10 **Factions** in the Parliament:

- **Majority:**
  - Georgian Dream (49 MPs)
  - Georgian Dream – Free Democrats (10 MPs)
  - Georgian Dream – Republicans (9 MPs)
  - Georgian Dream – Conservatives (6 MPs)
  - Georgian Dream – National Forum (6 MPs)
  - The Georgian Dream – Entrepreneurs (6 MPs)
- **Minority**
  - United National Movement (40 MPs)
  - United National Movement – Majoritarian (7 MPs)

---

<sup>1</sup>The Board of Treasures consists of 10 MPs, appointed by the Chairman of the Parliament. 4 of the Board members are from the minority factions. The Board is a consultancy body of the Chairman providing assistance in financial management of the Parliament.

- United National Movement – Regions (6 MPs)
- Independent non-party Majoritarians (6 MPs)

A further six MPs are not associated with any political factions of the Georgian Parliament.

**Parliamentary Commissions and Councils:**

- Temporary commission for the Restoration of Territorial Integrity
- Parliamentary Groups of Friendship
- Parliamentary Standing Delegations
- Temporary Commission on Implementation of Quality and Internal Control, Procedures of Audit, Financial-economic, Legal and Organizational activities of the State Audit Office
- Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia
- Inter-faction Group engaged on Election issues

**The Office of the Parliament** provides organizational, administrative, legal, informational, financial, material technical and social services to the Parliament's plenary sessions, Bureau, members of the Parliament, Chairman of the Parliament and his deputies, parliamentary committees, factions, and temporary commissions.

The Office is managed by the Head of the Office, appointed by the Chairman of the Parliament. The Head of the Office manages the activities of the Office and its structural units, represents the Office, oversees the performance of official responsibilities by the Office structural units and monitors the activities of the Office staff. The Head of the Office appoints the Office staff members including those employed in parliamentary factions. Further the Head of the Office contracts the staff of parliamentary commissions (specialists, experts) and personnel of the bureau of MPs elected through the majoritarian system. The Head of the Office also submits the regulations of Office departments and units as well as candidates for the positions of managers of these departments/units to the Chairman of the Parliament.

The structural Units of the Office include:

- Cabinet of the Chairman
- Secretariats of the deputy chairpersons
- Secretariat of the Head of the Office
- Information Technologies Department
- Legal Department
- Research Department
- Public Relations Department
- International Relations Department
- Human Resource Department
- Logistics Department
- Organizational Department
- Financial Department
- Chancellery Department
- Office of Supervisors
- Offices of parliamentary Committees
- Budgetary Office of the Parliament



The Operations of the Parliament's Office are governed by the Regulations of the Office of the Parliament.

## IV. FINDINGS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### A. Exercise of Institutional Functions

#### (1) Lawmaking

##### **Overview of the Parliament's lawmaking process**

Under Georgian legislation the lawmaking process is an integrity of procedures that implies drafting a law by the subjects possessing the authority of a legislative initiation, presenting the legislative draft to the Parliament, review and enactment of the draft law by the Parliament, referring the legal act to the President for signing, signing the act and subsequent publication.

Drafting the law and presenting the draft to the Parliament is the starting point of the lawmaking process. Under the Constitution, the government of Georgia, a member of the Parliament, parliamentary committees, factions, supreme representative bodies of the Adjara and Abkhazia Autonomous Republics and at least 30,000 voters are authorised to initiate legislation.

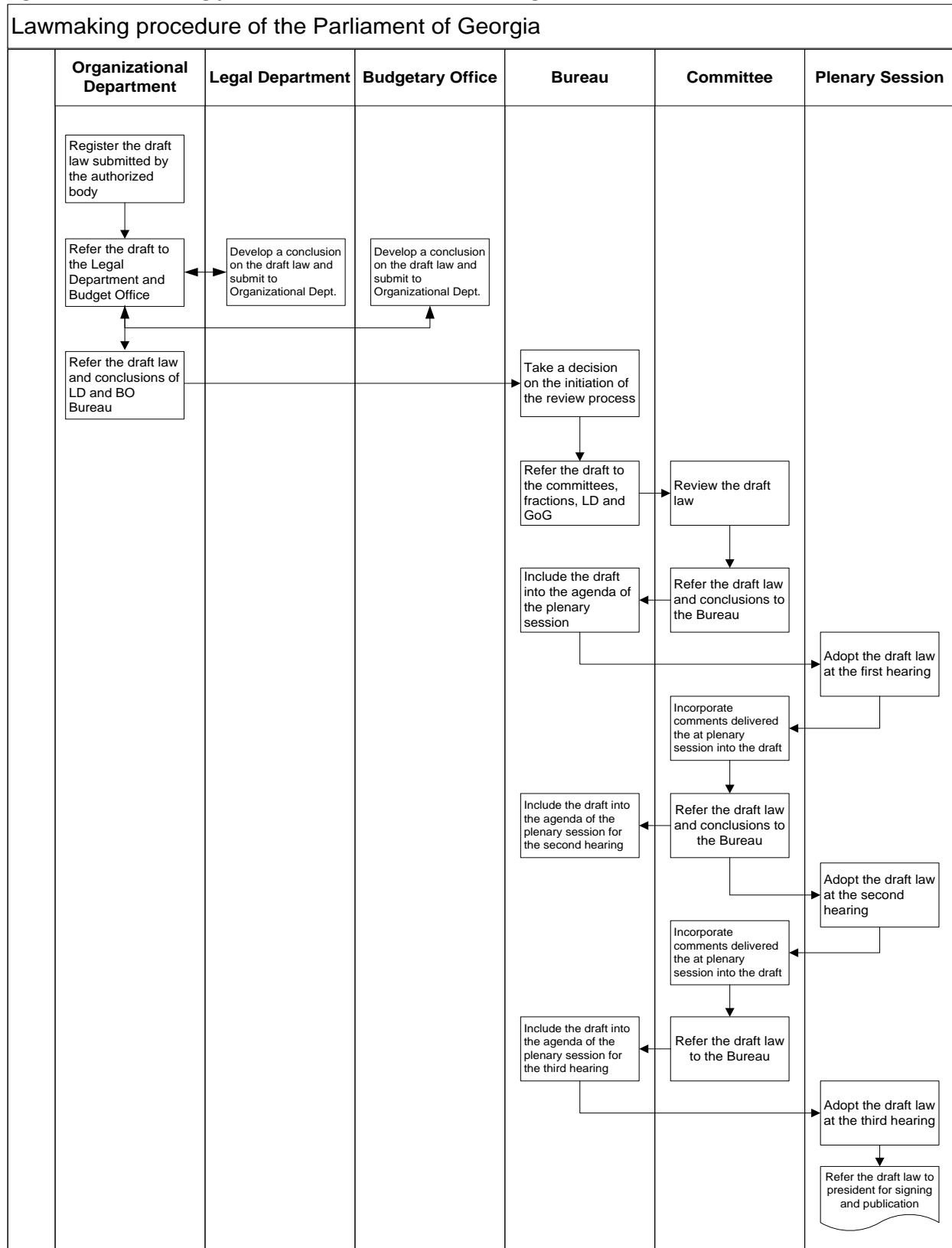
The initiator is obliged to annex an explanatory note to the draft law that, *inter alia*, should explain the reasons for the law and provide financial justification as well as the list of stakeholders consulted. Where a draft law necessitates amendments of other legal acts, those amendments should be presented in the legislative package.

The procedure of legislative initiation is conducted through the following steps:

- The draft is referred to the Organizational Department for registration
- The draft is referred to the Legal Department and Budget Office to produce relevant conclusions
- The Organizational Department refers the draft act and respective conclusions of the Budget Office and Legal Department to the Bureau
- The Bureau takes a decision on the initiation of the review process and refers the draft to the lead committee, other parliamentary committees, factions, the Legal Department and GoG
- The lead committee reviews the draft law within the timeframe established by the RoP (not earlier than 3 days and not later than 3 weeks from the date the bureau takes a decision to initiate the procedures of review of the legislative draft)
- Following the review of the draft by the lead or other committees, the draft act with respective conclusions is referred to the Bureau for inclusion into the agenda of the upcoming plenary session
- Once the draft law is adopted at the first hearing, the draft is referred to the lead committee for incorporation into the draft of the comments or notes delivered during the first hearing
- Within two weeks from the first hearing the lead committee conducts a detailed review of the draft and refers the draft and respective conclusions to the Bureau for inclusion into the agenda of the upcoming plenary session
- Following the second hearing, the draft act is referred to the lead committee to prepare for the third hearing
- Within 5 days from the second hearing the lead committee incorporates any comments into the draft and refers the draft act to the Bureau or inclusion into the agenda of the upcoming plenary session
- Following the review of the draft law at the third hearing the final edited version of the draft law is adopted.

- Within seven days of the adoption of the draft law at the third hearing, the draft act is referred to the President of Georgia for signature and subsequent publication.

Figure 2 – Law making process of the Parliament of Georgia



The Government of Georgia and other authorised bodies, however, are authorised to request the extraordinary review of the draft law that implies an expedited lawmaking process where the draft law is reviewed in all three readings within one week of the Parliament's plenary sessions. The Bureau is also authorised to take a decision allowing the review and adoption of the draft law by more than one reading during a day of the plenary session.<sup>2</sup>

The draft laws initiated at the Parliament are also placed on the Parliament's web-page allowing access to the draft for all interested individuals or organizations. Namely, the draft law, together with the decision of the authorised body on the initiation of the legislative review and the explanatory note is available at the Parliament's web-page<sup>3</sup>. Conclusions of the Legal Department, Budgetary Office or Parliamentary committees however not published at the Parliament's web-page.

Under Georgian legislation all draft laws that cause an increase in national budget expenditures, a decrease of public revenues or the assumption of additional financial commitments by the state can be adopted and enacted only with the consent of the Government.

There are several structural units of the Office of the Georgian Parliament that participate in the lawmaking process through providing input to the reviews and refinement of the draft laws. These include the Legal Department, Budget Office and committee offices.

Namely, the Legal Department prepares a conclusion on the following issues:

- Compliance of the draft law with Georgia's legislation and internationally recognised norms of the international law
- Necessity to enact the new law
- Compliance of the draft law with Georgia's commitments assumed under international treaties or agreements
- List of normative acts that should be amended or abolished following the enactment of the new law
- Compliance of the draft law with EU legislation

The budget office prepares a conclusion on the following issues:

- Impact of the draft law on the revenues of the state budget
- Impact of the draft law on the expenditures of the state budget
- State's new financial commitments implied under the draft law

The Georgian legislation provides a possibility to individuals or organizations not possessing the right of legislative initiation to submit to Parliament a legislative proposal with a view to adopting or enacting a new law, introducing changes into or abolishing a valid law. Georgian citizens, public agencies, self-governance bodies, political or civil society organizations and other legal persons are authorised to submit legislative proposals to the Parliament. The legislative proposal can be presented as either a draft law or as a conceptual document underlining the basic principles or reasoning of the new legislative act. All legislative proposals however have to be properly reasoned by the authors.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Parliament is authorised to conduct extraordinary reviews of the draft laws that only introduce amendments into the enacted legislative acts. Further draft laws introducing amendments into the Constitution or Constitutional Law may not be enacted through the extraordinary review process.

<sup>3</sup> Whenever a draft law introduces amendments into the valid law, the new reading of the amended articles or clauses is also submitted and published at the Parliament's web-page.

The Bureau or Chairman of the Parliament refers the legislative proposal to the committees within 5 days of submission, whereas the committees are obliged to review the draft within 20 days of receiving the proposal. This term may be prolonged for another 10 days. The Bureau should be informed of the committee's decision. If the legislative proposal is approved the initiation and review of the draft law undergoes the standard procedures laid down in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

### **Needs or performance gaps**

The needs or performance gaps summarised in this section of the Report have been identified through the interviews held with the MPs, mid-level managers of the Parliament and representatives of CSOs. While the overall assessment of the regulatory framework governing the lawmaking process is mostly positive there are a number of areas where the efficiency of the lawmaking process can be enhanced, namely, by refining the procedures and deploying Information technologies. The use of policy evaluation tools in lawmaking process is yet another major challenge. Importantly, a wider public engagement is crucial for designing policies and legislation that is aligned with the public interests and meets the expectations of a wider spectrum of stakeholders.

**Deficiencies in document flow.** From the moment a draft law is registered with the Organizational Department of the Parliament's Office, the circulation of the drafts laws and respective conclusions by the Legal Department, Budget Office, or parliamentary committees is conducted through actual dissemination of the hard copies of drafts and other documents attached to it. According to all MPs interviewed in the course of this needs assessment project, this is inconvenient and ineffective for several reasons:

- The MPs, Parliament staff and stakeholders do not have the access to the electronic versions of the document which makes it difficult to comment on those documents and communicate those comments on specific articles or clauses of the draft laws to other MPs and committees. Several factions scan the documents and subsequently convert into the PDF format, this however still does not solve the issue of inaccessibility of electronic texts of legislative drafts;
- A vast amount of paper is wasted on making the photocopies of the drafts and other documents attached to those drafts. Some legislative packages consist of over 100 pages photocopies of which should be prepared for all 150 MPs, requiring a lot of effort and time from the Parliament's administrative staff and most importantly entails huge expenditures. The impact on the environment is also not insignificant;
- Absence of an electronic editor and respective database of laws makes it difficult (if not impossible) to compare the suggested edition of the law with the original.

**Absence of an electronic editor.** As noted above the lawmaking process is not digitalised. No software is in place that would enable stakeholders to observe the lawmaking process. Only the initial draft law is published on the Parliament's web page. Eventually the draft law changes during the first, second and third hearings but the modified drafts are not accessible on the Parliament's internet site. MPs and stakeholders agree that there definitely is a need to develop and install the software that will enable the MPs and society at large to observe how a draft of a legal act changes between the day it was registered with the Parliament and the day it was adopted. The law editor should have other primary functions such as provision of a generic template for actual drafting of the law. The electronic editor properly protected from unauthorised access should have different levels of access and enable the MPs/parliamentary committees to develop and comment on the drafts, enclose conclusions or other materials. Stakeholders on their part should have limited access but they should be enabled to comment on the draft laws and present their viewpoints or arguments to decision- or policymakers. This will enhance the effectiveness

and efficiency of the lawmaking procedures and secure a greater level of transparency and public engagement in the legislative process.

Importantly digitalization of the process will diminish the risks of obscurity in the legislative process. For instance, at the third hearing of a draft law an MP may suggest a comment without articulating the specific wording of the respective paragraph or clause, to which comment or suggestion the initiator may agree. The draft law will be passed accordingly, but it is not absolutely clear at that point what wording the adopted law will have when it is submitted to the President for signing and publication.

The electronic editor should also have an archiving feature so that once the draft law is adopted and signed by the President the software archives the portfolio of the law including the various versions of the draft developed during the parliamentary or committee hearings and reviews, comments of MPs, stakeholders, conclusions, ballot results, etc.

Some years ago a concept of a law editor was developed but until now it was not possible to initiate the process of software development. For the time being Parliament's Information Technologies Department is working with the World Bank to initiate the lawmaking process digitalization project. Once the software is developed, the lawmaking procedures should be aligned with the new circumstances and requirements and the MPs, staff should be trained on using the new system.

***Absence of a searchable electronic database of laws tailored for the Parliament's lawmaking needs.***

Lawmaking is a scrupulous process that requires harmonization of domestic legal framework through the alignment of the new laws with existing legislation. Whenever a new law is initiated it commonly necessitates amendments of other legislative or normative acts. The MPs or the Parliament staff (committee offices, Legal Department) must identify the acts that should be brought into compliance with the new law. This, however, on many occasions is dependent on the ability of the MPs or staff to remember as to which legal acts (both legislative and sub-legislative) are or may be linked with the new law. In some occasions new laws generate normative collisions because the other acts are not brought into compliance with the new legislation.

While there are some searchable legal databases (e.g. Codex, Law Publisher LEPL), the Georgian Parliament needs a database with a special structure of codification or systematization that will help the users of the legal database search and find all laws or normative acts enacted in specific areas. Notably such a database must be useful and accessible for all bodies authorised to initiate legislation.

***Inadequate quality of explanatory notes.***As noted above an explanatory note should be necessarily enclosed to the draft law once the legislative review process is initiated. While this requirement of the law is always met, the MPs as well as stakeholders note that the explanatory notes on many occasions do not provide sufficient justification and reasoning for the initiation of the draft law. No consistent ideas have been offered as to how to resolve this issue. CSO representatives however take the view that the Parliament's Rules of Procedure may be modified so that it provides clearer guidelines of EN development or sets out the specific requirements an explanatory note should meet.

***Lack of institutional capacities to conduct policy planning and evaluation.***Georgia is in a transition process undergoing reform in many areas. Therefore the regulatory framework is in need of frequent modification or amendments. Various governmental initiatives require proper legislative support. The parliament reviews a large number of legislative initiatives and enacts a considerable number of new laws or introduces amendments into the valid laws.

According to the MPs and stakeholders the Parliament lacks capacity to measure the effects or impact of the enacted laws. Such analytical capacities would definitely help the Parliament enhance the efficiency of the policymaking process and diminish the risks of enacting laws that are inefficient or do not help attain the effect anticipated at the initiation phase.

Strengthening of the policy planning and evaluation function within the Georgian Parliament cannot be attained in a short period of time and requires mobilization of respective human resources or alternatively, enhancement of analytical or policy evaluation skills of the current Office staff. The institutionalization of the policy planning, design and evaluation function will also raise the issue of revising the statutory functions of the committees or Parliament's Office units.

***Excessive speed of the legislative process and associated risks.*** As noted above the profound reforms in many areas of the public life and the speed of the reform processes require frequent amendments to the regulatory framework. The Parliament has to review a large number of legislative initiatives within a short period of time that puts the efficiency of the lawmaking process under certain risks. In other words, there is a collision between two basic parliamentary interests – (a) legislative support to the reforms and (b) securing efficiency in lawmaking. Over hasty reviews of a large number of initiatives causes the overload of the parliamentary committees and in some occasions the MPs do not have sufficient time to conduct in depth analysis of initiated draft laws and their effects. This, on its part, increases the risks of enacting inefficient legislation. A hasty legislative process also implies the risks of neglecting the procedural rules of legislative review or lawmaking.

Under the Parliament's Rules of Procedure the government of Georgia is authorised to request the extraordinary review of a draft law initiated before the parliament. In such a case the review and enactment of the draft should be conducted through an expedited lawmaking process where the Bureau determines the terms of the review. At the same time the legislation (RoP) does not set the criteria as to which draft laws may be reviewed in an expedited manner. A limited timeframe for the lawmaking process also hinders the stakeholder involvement in the legislative review. Parliament stakeholders take the view that many of the laws that were enacted by the Parliament could have been reviewed through the ordinary lawmaking process.

***Legislative initiatives on the part of MPs.*** Most of the laws enacted by the Parliament in the past few months have been initiated by MPs. At the same time, in Western countries the overall trend is for legislation to be initiated by governments who submit respective drafts to the parliaments for review and enactment. The basic concern of MPs interviewed is that there are certain risks that fiscal or economic effects of the draft laws may be neglected if the drafting or initiation is not properly coordinated, reviewed and studied with the Government. While the RoP stipulates that draft laws that cause the increase of national budget expenditures, decrease of public revenues or assuming additional financial commitments by the state may be adopted and enacted only with the consent of the Government, there exists the opinion that the government is not sufficiently involved in the reviews of the initiatives or assessment of fiscal effects.

***Lack of institutional capacities to assess fiscal or economic effects of initiated draft laws.*** As noted above, whenever a draft law is initiated, the Budgetary Office of the Parliament has to deliver a conclusion which assesses the impact of the draft law on the revenues or expenditures of the state budget and identifies any new financial commitments implied by the draft. Some of the MPs doubt the capacities of the Budget Office staff to conduct the financial and fiscal analysis. The staff of the



parliamentary committees and those of the Research Department cannot conduct the fiscal or economic assessment or analysis. Under the Regulations of the Office of the Parliament this function falls solely under the scope of the BO mandate. To fill this gap, the UNM faction hired 2 economists as the faction staff who serves all members associated in the faction. It appears there is a need to enhance the capacities of the BO staff to assess fiscal, financial or economic effects of initiated draft laws. Moreover, the current staffing of the BO is not sufficient to address the workload efficiently.

***Insufficient public engagement into the lawmaking process.*** While there are some specific mechanisms set up for the civic engagement in the lawmaking process, according to the overall assessment the extent to which the CSOs or civic groups participate in the process is not sufficient. The National Democratic Institute has set up the NGO Liaison Office with the Parliament that seeks to involve the CSOs in the lawmaking process through publishing the draft laws, organizing thematic discussions over draft laws, administrating the NGO database. The parliamentary committee that wants to consult stakeholders may seek the assistance of the NDI's NGO Liaison Office in organizing the discussions. However these discussions are basically held in Tbilisi, since the Parliament's agenda in the weeks of plenary sessions in Kutaisi is overloaded. Notably, for the time being the CSOs are more active in interaction with the Parliament compared to the previous parliament.

Under the RoP the parliamentary committees can set up consulting boards. The experience however demonstrates that the efficiency of such consulting bodies is quite low. None of the committee boards has been sustained so far. According to stakeholders and MPs a greater civic engagement in the lawmaking process would help to:

- Design policies and legislation oriented to the public needs
- Obtain public participation in the decision or policymaking process
- Reduce the risks of omissions or mistakes
- Strengthen the evaluation or assessment component of the policy planning and design process.

## **(2) Government oversight**

### **Overview of the Parliament's oversight authorities**

Georgian legislation identifies several forms of the parliamentary oversight of the government.

- AN MP is authorised to submit questions in written form to any bodies accountable before the Parliament, GoG, GoG members, head of the territorial bodies, public agencies. The questions by the MPs should be properly answered within 7 days from the date the question was submitted. This term may be prolonged by another 10 days with the consent of the inquiring MP.
- A group of 10 MPs or parliamentary factions are authorised to submit questions to any bodies accountable before the Parliament, GoG, GoG members, head of the territorial bodies, public agencies who are under an obligation to respond to these questions at the Parliament's plenary session during the governmental hours. The questions may be asked in written form or orally. A written answer may also be submitted that will be presented to the Parliament's plenary session.

The written answers to the parliamentary questions may be given only by the heads of the bodies or agencies mentioned above.

The matters heard at the governmental hour may become the subject of the Parliament's review. The Parliament may decide to form a commission to further investigate or explore the issues.

The Parliament's plenary session, Bureau, committees are authorised to nominate and appoint a rapporteur or group of rapporteurs to study the acute matters. The rapporteur develops the work plan, invites specialists or experts to provide input in the study of the issue, processes and analysis the information or data and drafts the resolutions of the Parliament that will be subsequently presented to the Bureau or a committee.

Following the hearing of information on or study and examination of issues falling under their competence parliamentary committees or investigative commissions may develop recommendations on the fact of breaches of the Constitution or legislation. Those recommendations should be communicated to the GoG or other agencies of the Executive, who for their part, should within a month report back to the Parliament on the measures taken in the light of the Parliament's recommendations.

The Parliament through its Financial and Budgeting Committee exercises general and consistent oversight over the national budget. Meantime other parliamentary committees are authorised to oversee the budget in the areas falling under their scope of competence.

The Ministry of Finance is obliged to submit to the Parliament quarterly budget reviews. Under the RoP the parliamentary committees may review the budget revenues and expenditures and they are authorised to request additional information or data from the MoF or other respective public agencies. The results of the parliamentary examination may be reported to the Parliament and become a subject of the Parliament's discussion.

Further the GoG is under an obligation to submit to the Parliament a Report on the Fulfillment of the National Budget for approval within five months from the date of completion of the fiscal year. The report should be reviewed by the parliamentary committees, factions, majority, minority, and Parliament's independent MPs. The State Audit Office, subordinated to the Parliament, should also submit to the Parliament its observations on the GoG's Report on the Fulfillment of the National Budget.

No later than September 30<sup>th</sup> the Parliament should take a resolution on approval or disapproval of the GoG's Report on the National Budget. The approval undergoes the same procedure as for the review process of draft laws for the first hearing. Namely, conclusions of the Finance and Budgeting Committee, other parliamentary committees, factions, majority and minority should be presented to the plenary session of the Parliament and the review and debates should be conducted over the report.

The Parliament is further authorised to oversee the legitimacy of the public expenditures through the State Audit Office.

Finally, the Parliament oversees the compliance of the normative acts issued by the GoG, Ministers, other agencies of the Executive with the Georgian legislation, monitors, studies and analyses the implementation and efficiency of those acts as well as deficiencies identified since those acts were enacted, designs the measures to eliminate the deficiencies. As necessary, the Parliament may take a resolution that will provide the assessment of implementation of a normative act and recommend amendments to be introduced in the act.

A parliamentary committee within the scope and areas of its competence monitors the implementation of normative acts issued by the Georgian Parliament. At a plenary session the Parliament may conduct regular hearings of reports by GoG officials on implementation of legislation issued by the Parliament.

**Needs or performance gaps**

While the legislative regulations of the parliamentary oversight are in place, all stakeholders agree that to date all Georgian parliaments have failed to effectively exercise these functions due to several reasons summarised below. This function traditionally has been weak in the Georgian Parliament. Notably the Parliament of 1999-2003 was most active in exercising the government oversight function – government representatives were summoned to the plenary or committee hearings almost on weekly basis. Parliamentary control over the executive has been practically non-existent since 2003 and there have been occasions when some ministers or government officials did not even appear before the parliament when summoned.

Political factors mainly affecting the efficiency of Parliament's oversight. The regulatory framework needs to be improved to certain extent to facilitate the enhancement of the oversight function. While minor modifications (see p. ) into the legislation may be sufficient to enhance the efficiency of the oversight function, the institutional capacities should also be strengthened through enabling MPs and Parliament staff to explore the best practices of European countries and replicate or copy the practices that best suit Georgia's political and legal contextual framework.

***Lack of the political will on the part of the majority to publicly exercise the oversight authorities.*** According to the stakeholders and some of the MPs interviewed the main political factor impeding the effective oversight is that the Majority of the Parliament and the Government officials consider themselves as members of the same team. Therefore there is a viewpoint that they prefer to discuss the issues in the team "behind closed doors", thus avoiding speculation regarding disagreements within the coalition.

***Lack of periodic, consistent public hearings of government officials in the Parliament.*** To date the new Parliament had not conducted the governmental hour. The UNM faction however intensively uses the government oversight mechanism of summoning the GoG members to the faction hearings. The UNM faction is comfortable with this tactic, since mostly MPs associated in the UNM factions attend the hearings conducted with no to little representation of MPs from the majority factions. Up to date several faction hearings have been held (ministers of Interior, Energy and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs). The UNM faction plans to summon other GoG members in the upcoming months. Nonetheless the Parliament does not have a consistent plan or strategy of maintaining open and continuous public debates, dialogue or communications with the GoG officials.

***Inefficient use of the examination reports of the State Audit Office.*** The Georgian Parliament or committees do not use intensively conclusions or Examination Reports of the State Audit Office that could provide a fruitful basis for parliamentary discussions or debates ultimately contributing to strengthening the Parliament's oversight function. There is the lack of trust apparent in relation to the SAO on the part of the majority factions who consider the Office as the body that was used by the previous government for mainly political purposes. Nonetheless the new Parliament plans to intensify its interrelations with the State Audit Office, undertake initiatives to build the trust among two institutions and make better use its conclusions or reports.

***Shortcomings in the regulatory framework.*** While MPs or stakeholders basically positively assess the regulatory framework for government oversight function, there still is some room for minor improvements or modifications. Namely, the RoP sets out the rules of submitting questions by MPs and responding to these questions. The RoP however does not specify the measures that can be applied

against the defaulting officials or public agencies, i.e. those who fail to respond to the questions of the MPs, committees or factions.

***Deficiencies in responding to the official requests of MPs.*** The MPs from all parliamentary factions are quite active in submitting questions to GoGand line ministries, departments in written form. In this regard, some major government oversight-related issues were mentioned by MPs during the information collection phase, namely:

- Some agencies of the Executive fail to timely respond to the MP questions
- Information provided to MPs is not always precise, accurate or responsive to the originally communicated questions/requests
- Submission of responses to inquiring MPs does not always adhere the rules set out in the RoP (e.g. responses are signed by the unauthorised officials – deputy ministers).

***Access to international best practices of parliamentary oversight of governments.*** Finally there is a need to make the best practices of the parliamentary oversight over the governments available for MPs or the Parliament staff. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy and other donors have already undertaken rigorous efforts to improve the Parliament’s oversight functions. Nevertheless, in terms of ensuring sustainability and consistency, such efforts have to be focused on aligning the Parliament’s oversight system through reflecting the new capacities and tools of oversight into the Parliament’s regulatory framework. The capacity building measures and study of best practices should be followed by the respective actions that will help the Parliament to embed the new knowledge in the organizational memory. Apart from installing the effective knowledge management system, the Parliament should also consider modifications into the legislation or regulations soon after each round of the capacity building or best practice study courses.

### **(3) Representation**

For the purposes of this Assessment Report, *representation* refers to the institutional system enabling the members of the Parliament to represent the interest of their constituencies or electorate before the Georgian Parliament or other bodies of state power, establish and sustain contacts or communications with the wider public, obtain their involvement or input in decision making and conduct the periodic reporting on the individual or institutional achievements. Obviously representation is also a cross cutting issue related to the exercise of other institutional functions, public engagement into the policymaking process, conducting regular consultations with stakeholders, etc.

#### **Overview of the Parliament’s relations with voters**

The Georgian legislation sets up several mechanisms of Parliament’s interrelations with voters and wider public.

A group of individuals may submit a petition requesting the Parliament to address an issue of national or public significance. A properly registered petition should be addressed to the Chairman of the Parliament, who subsequently refers the petition to the respective parliamentary committee or a temporary commission that takes a decision on further actions (e.g., conducting studies of the issue identified by the petition, sending the petition to a line ministry). In case the petition is referred to a line ministry or other body of the Executive, the agency is under an obligation to inform the Parliament of the actions or remedies taken to address the issue. Whenever the Parliament decides to engage on the petition itself, following the reviews the Parliament may take an order, resolution or other decision.

According to the RoP, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays of the weeks, where Parliament's plenary sessions are not organised should be used for conducting MPs' meetings with voters. Basically it is the responsibility of the faction offices to organise meetings with voters. The MP should communicate the information obtained through meetings with voters to the respective parliamentary committees. A committee on its part should conduct an analysis of the information submitted by the MPs and inform the Chairman of the Parliament of the actions taken based on the information analysis. The information should also be placed on the Parliament's web page.

The MPs as well as public agencies or officials to whom information was communicated regarding the voters' concerns should review the complaints or addresses of citizens and take appropriate measures of which individuals should be notified within a month.

Recently the Parliament set up individual bureaux for every MP elected through the majoritarian system. The main functions of the bureaux include easing the communication of MPs with voters, organizing meetings or discussions, reporting to the constituencies of the recent developments or progress attained in resolution of community or national issues, etc. Previously the MPs had their individual bureaux, financed and sustained by the municipalities. According to the general assessment this was an unreasonable and illegitimate burden imposed on the self-governance. The Parliament allocated 5000 GEL at the start to equip bureaux. Further the Parliament allocates 5000 GEL on monthly bases to every bureau to support their activities. It is left at the discretion of an MP to decide on the staffing of the bureau and use of the allocated monthly allowance on the condition the money should be spent solely for the needs and operations of the bureau.

### **Needs or performance gaps**

***Need to enhance capacities of MP bureau staff.*** Establishing of MP bureaux is a positive effort towards securing a greater level of Parliament's interrelations with the public. One of the main challenges of the MPs or the mid-level managers of the Office is to enhance the efficiency of the MP bureaux so that they are capable of facilitating MPs' more efficient communications or interrelations with the constituencies. NDI provided initial rounds of the capacity building measures for the MP bureau staff to enhance their skills in organizing public meetings, interacting with the public and planning the bureau activities. The post-training survey however demonstrates that there are more capacity gaps to be addressed to establish the fully functional and effective bureaux. Further rounds of training workshops are being planned by NDI to address these capacity gaps of the MP bureau staff.

***Low public awareness with regard to the mandate of the Parliament.*** In interactions with voters there are some challenges that cannot be solved solely through the efforts of bureaux. In particular, the level of public awareness with regard to the Parliament and MP functions is quite low. In most occasions individuals seek MP's assistance to address or resolve the issues that are not in the mandate of the MP or Parliament (e.g. employment, social welfare issues). As relevant, the MPs or committees refer the questions or request of the citizens to respective bodies of the Executive, who on their part should inform the individual of the actions taken or recommend solutions to their issues. In many occasions the referring MP or committee is not informed of the public agency's respective actions.

To address the awareness gap the Parliament needs to design the civic education measures that would inform the wider public of the functions and mandates of the Parliament. The best practices of western countries (e.g. "street law" publications) could be studied and replicated as a part of Parliament's awareness raising interventions.

**Ineffective administration of RoP reporting requirements.** As noted above the RoP set out the rules of analysing and reporting of voters' concerns as well as of remedies taken to address those concerns. As identified these rules are not always respected. No information on the actions of the MPs or committees taken to address the needs or concerns of the voters is available on the Parliament's web page in breach of the RoP requirements. Namely, the RoP stipulate that MPs should submit information obtained through meetings with voters to the respective parliamentary committees. The Committee on its part is obliged to analyse the information submitted by MPs and report to the Chairman of the Parliament once in every three months on the outcomes of its actions taken in response to the information submitted by MPs.

**Limitations for MPs elected through the proportional system to communicate or interact with their electorate.** While majoritarian MPs do have the institutional mechanism of communication with their constituencies, the MPs elected through the proportional system are concerned that they do not have access to such a sustainable mechanism of interactions with citizens. Party forums remain as the principal venue of interrelations with the wider public. MPs shared several ideas with the assessment team as to how to resolve the issue:

- Setting up Parliament information offices in regions where MPs representing both majority and minority will be enabled to organise meetings and discussions with citizens
- Allocating funds to the MPs elected through proportional system to establish and sustain their offices in the Parliament that will help them communicate with voters and conduct research or analysis of issues being discussed by the Parliament or committees

Supposedly from 2014 every MPs elected by the proportional system will have an assistant who will provide communicational and logistical support to the MP.

**Deficiencies in Parliament's reporting mechanism.** As far as reporting to voters is concerned, the stakeholders take the view that the previous Rules of Procedure imposed stricter reporting requirements compared to the present RoP. Particularly, an MP was obliged to report to the voters on semiannual basis. Admittedly, requirements of this rule were rarely met partly due to the technical difficulties (i.e. monitoring or administration of the MP's performance of this requirement). Instead, the present RoP stipulates that an MP has to submit information obtained at the meetings with voters to the Chairman of the Parliament. Again it is not certain that this new requirement of the law is always respected. All parties approached by the assessment team agree that the Parliament's reporting mechanisms should be improved so that the public receives timely and sufficient information of the Parliament's activities, decisions, achievements or challenges.

## B. Organization of Work, Administrative and Informational Support

### (1) Organization of work process: administrative and support functions

#### Organizational Structure

The needs assessment conducted by the PMCG assessment team covers the issues of organization and management of Parliament's day-to-day work and provision of administrative or other support services for the efficient and effective exercise of the main institutional functions. The consultants studied and analysed the issues related to the structural arrangement of the Parliament, management, internal control and reporting of official assignments, human resource development and management practices, internal and external communications, relations with international partners or donors.



The MPs and the Parliament staff approached by the assessment team take the view that the current organizational structure of the Parliament fully meets the needs and is appropriate to cope with the Parliament's workload. There are no major overlaps or duplication of functions of various structural units of the Parliament.

As noted above in Section II, the Office of the Parliament provides organizational, administrative, legal, informational, financial, material technical and social services to the Parliament's plenary sessions, Bureau, members of the Parliament, Chairman of the Parliament and his deputies, parliamentary committees, factions, and temporary commissions. The Office formally consists of both parliamentary committee offices and departments.

Head of the Office manages the activities and operations of the office and reports directly to the Chairman of the Parliament. All structural units of the Office are officially subordinated to the Head of the Office. The Budget Office however is under the supervision of the Finance and Budgetary Affairs Committee. Each Department and Committee has its own regulations approved by the Chairman of the Parliament upon the submission of the Head of the Office.

#### Reporting and Supervising System

The Parliament's internal system of decision making, reporting and supervising is quite complex which is standard for this type of the institution. Apart from MPs, the Parliament employs a staff of over 600 people, the centralised and integrated management of which is not an easy task to achieve.

The Parliament's staff employed within the departments, committees, factions and commissions are appointed by the Head of the Office, who formally also manages and coordinates the activities and operations of all structural units of the Parliament's Office. However the Head of the Office has limited capacities to manage or coordinate the staff of the parliamentary committees or factions who basically perform the tasks or assignments given by the chairman of the respective parliamentary committees or factions. Further in the staff selection/recruitment process of the committee or faction staff, the chairpersons or heads of the offices of respective committees or factions play a decisive role.

The Head of the Office however directly manages the structural units of the so called "Central" Office of the Parliament. The department managers directly report to the Head of the Office. Authority to assign individual tasks to the office staff members falls within the competence of the Department managers.

According to the common idea of the respondents and considering the specific nature of parliamentary work the current structural setting, reporting and control systems are acceptable indeed. With due regard to the nature of the institution such a system of supervision and reporting of the Georgian Parliament does not create essential problems for unimpeded functioning of the organization.

#### Needs or Performance Gaps

**Management of staff of parliamentary committee offices.** The offices of parliamentary committees are managed by the chairpersons of the respective parliamentary committees. The chairperson gives assignments or tasks to the committee office staff members, who on their part report to the chairperson of the Committee. According to the MPs representing the minority factions, the members of the committees have limited possibilities to give assignments to the committee office staff members. Whenever an MP representing the UNM seeks legal, financial or other type of advice or analysis of the

issue discussed by the committee, the respective assignment is given to the UNM faction staff. However the capacities of the UNM faction office are quite limited: the faction staff members (2 lawyers and 2 economists) are overwhelmed and cannot always timely perform the assignments. The Chairpersons of the Parliamentary committees on their part assert that the office staff is a resource that is accessible for all members of the respective parliamentary committee. It seems there is a lack of communication and agreement among the MPs on the rules of operation of committee offices.

**Technical issues in the hall of plenary sessions.** According to the representatives of the Organizational Department staff, the hall of the Parliament's plenary sessions is not equipped with the stenographic recoding system that creates problems for both the Organizational Department staff and MPs. The stenographic records are not always readily available when requested by the committees or leadership of the Parliament.

**Managing the donor programmes.** Parliament is partnering with a large number of donor organizations. The donor programmes are launched at the initiative of both donors and Parliament. The Office of the Chairman of the Parliament coordinates ongoing donor interventions and undertakes efforts to identify the issues that can be addressed through the donor supported programmes. Up to now a large number of projects have been completed, however the results of various donor interventions and capacity building programmes are not well embedded in the institutional memory of the Parliament. While there is an apparent need to redesign the overall knowledge management system in the organization, the Parliament may also need to discuss the possibility of structural rearrangement of the donor coordination function (e.g. assigning this function to other structural unit, namely, Research Department). Further there is a need to diversify the donor programmes particularly in the area of staff and MP capacity building, knowledge and performance management, civic engagement in lawmaking process, policy design and evaluation, etc.

**Unsupportive work environment.** The Parliament staff members complain that the new office is not well designed to support the uninterrupted and normal work flow. Namely, department staff members are located in large rooms which are not fully convenient and cozy. The main discomfort however is caused by the vibration and inappropriate functioning of the central ventilation system that causes the extreme heat and lack of oxygen.

## **(2) Human Resource Management**

During the initial assessment phase PMCG's HRM consultant conducted the contextual analysis of the human resource management system of the Georgian Parliament. The initial analysis sought to define and analyse the current HRM system and respective processes. The analysis was done by the desk study and field interviews with HRM Staff and Parliament officials.

Currently, Parliament employs 1027 employees among whom 603 are permanent staff members and 424 are employed on the basis short and long term contracts. The work is organised under 15 Departments and the 15 Committee Offices.



**Table 1 – Parliament Staff**

	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Total Number</b>
	<b>Permanent Staff</b>	<b>603</b>
1.	Organizational Department	36
2.	Legal Department	34
3.	Department of International Relations	11
4.	Public Relations and Information Department	29
5.	Department of Informational Technologies	21
6.	Research Department	29
7.	Main Chancellery	18
8.	Personnel Department	16
9.	Finance Supplies Department	19
10.	Economic Supplies Department	47
11.	Budget Office	10
12.	Mandaturi (Supervisor's) Service	9
13.	Staff Offices of Committees	312
14.	Staff	5
15.	Cabinet Office of the Chairman of Parliament	7
	<b>Temporary Staff</b>	<b>424</b>
1.	Factions	60
2.	Committees	254
3.	Bureau	19
4.	Departments of the Office	91

The mandate of these departments and committees is regulated by Parliament's RoP and Regulations of the Office of the Parliament. The good knowledge and understanding of internal regulations is one of the main strengths of the Parliament's staff. There is the minimum level of staff turnover. Although the Parliament was relocated from Tbilisi to Kutaisi, only 30 employees left the Office. It has to be mentioned that these 30 employees were younger compared to the average age of the parliament staff members.

According to Law, the compensation/remuneration package consists of the monthly salary and performance-based bonus. During the previous Administration, the quarterly bonuses had been paid to all staff members and the amount of the bonus was defined by the subjective judgment of direct supervisors. The discretion form of bonus dispersion changed since the new Administration runs the Office, which encouraged the performance based approach. The current performance appraisal system lacks efficiency of performance indicators. The salary was increased in January, 2013 (for all positions) by 17% and the monthly living allowance has been set at 300 GEL per employee. However, according to the staff the salary still remains less competitive against other Government agencies/entities. The overtime hours are not compensated.

All departments are equipped with modern equipment and software.

#### Structure and Functions of HRM Department

The main function of HRM Department consists mainly of recordkeeping rather than HR management. The Head of the HRM Department manages and guides all functions and is responsible for ensuring that the current functions are fulfilled in a timely manner and in accordance with the regulations.

The subdivisions have different functional significance and structure. However, according to the respondents, extra tasks not included in the job descriptions may be added to staff members whenever the Department works on important assignments or issues.

The division of HR Planning, Analysis and Registration is responsible for recordkeeping and procedural compliance. According to the division structure, the Head of the Division acts as a Deputy Head of HRM Department, manages 9 employees and is responsible for all recordkeeping work and information registration. Other functions of the division include:

- Registering and creating internal acts/documents
- Creating and registering personnel files
- Creating and managing information for payroll administration (field trips, days off, sick leave bulletin, pension contribution, etc.)
- Creating and registering documents about appointment, transfers/promotion, resignation
- Developing and updating job descriptions;
- Creating information booklets, telephone directories;
- Registering all information in HR software
- Managing staff attestation and selection/recruitment process

The Training Centre consists of 3 employees, who work on planning the training activities, organizing of training sessions, preparing, and disseminating training materials, identifying training needs through conducting periodic assessments of capacity building needs or gaps. In many occasions the actual trainers have been sourced externally.

The Group of Confidential Information is responsible for registering, keeping and managing all information defined by the Resolution on Secret File Management.

#### *The functional context of HRM*

The HRM Department basically conducts administrative work, namely, by creating, registering and maintaining personnel information. However, few activities are implemented in the areas of staffing recruitment, training and performance management.

##### *(i) Job analysis and developing of Job descriptions*

Job analysis is conducted on annual basis. In 2009, the reorganization and restructuring was held by the Administration as result of which 75 positions were terminated.

In 2012, UNDP launched the HR support project, the main objective of which was to:

- Conduct the job analysis and develop JDs for all administrative positions
- Train HRM staff for developing job analysis skills (including JD creation skills);
- Design a performance evaluation system;
- Develop recruitment procedures and
- Train the HRM staff with a view to developing interviewing skills.

In 2013, the Parliament recruited interns. 721 candidates applied out of which 128 were selected and eventually 108 candidates were employed as interns. Currently, Parliament has official vacancies for 139 positions. All job openings are announced publicly.

For recruitment purposes, the Parliament advertises its vacancies on the web site - [hr.gov.ge](http://hr.gov.ge) publicizing information on vacancies in the public sector. The selection procedures are structured and managed by the Recruitment Committee, members of which are shifting depending on the positions or structural units where these positions are vacant. Generally, the head of the HRM Department is a permanent member of Recruitment Committee. Shortlisted candidates who successfully pass the testing phase are invited to the interviews with the Recruitment Committee. The final decision is made by the Recruitment Committee.

*(ii) Training*

In the past years trainings were conducted intensively. Parliament of Georgia was benefiting from a number of assistance projects from EU, UNDP and other donors and had ample possibilities to receive trainings on various topics identified by the needs assessment. There were at least 4 training sessions during a day. Generally, the needs for training and learning were identified by surveying employees or their supervisors. As a result, the training plan was developed and presented to the donors. After the trainings are provided, a HRM Department staff member conducts an evaluation of learning activities and develops a respective report. There is an understanding that the identification of capacity needs could be done in more efficient manner. Capacity building measures delivered by the Training Centre could be designed in response to the results of personnel appraisal interventions which represents a more efficient approach to addressing capacity gaps.

For the time being the number of assistance projects is considerably reduced and staff has very few opportunities to benefit from capacity building measures. The current trainings offered to the staff are mainly in the areas of finance and communications (relations with media) and even here, the learning priorities mismatch with real needs or interests of the personnel. The Training Centre is not active due to changed location and lack of resources. There are no other internal training opportunities available. It should be noted that the Training Centre has very limited budget for supporting the learning activities. However, there is a huge interest of staff in improving/learning management skills, updating the knowledge of different laws, improving communications, etc.

*(iii) Development and Performance Management*

The system for promotions and performance evaluation is quite rigid and inflexible. This process is mainly based on and guided by Law on Civil Service, according to which the attestation process is mandatory for all servants (excluding supervisors) in every 3 years. The decision of promotions should be based on the results of the attestation. This process is expected to detect the level of individual performance. HRM Department of the Parliament organises the attestation process once every 3 years. The Head of HRM Department is a permanent member of Attestation Committee. The attestation process consists of a test and an interview conducted by the Committee. The Head of HRM Department conducts preparatory workshops for staff to communicate information about the attestation process and the topics in which the qualifications of the staff will be tested. Only 2 persons were demoted after the last assessment process.

The whole process of attestation is carefully documented through the evaluation forms and consequently, the acts are made up as soon as a final decision is delivered by Committee. This process functions and is considered an effective tool for assessing results, evaluating individual performance and

knowledge. However, this opportunity occurs once every 3 years and there is a risk that this long period may weaken the individual motivation to consistently improve performance.

The new Administration initiated another system of performance evaluation, where individual results are assessed by the main 3 indicators: job volume, importance of work conducted, and importance of additional work performed. This system is based on reporting process (completed jobs, time for completion and focuses on quantitative traits only. The current performance management system requires considerable improvement to become an efficient tool for assessing organizational and individual results.

*(iv) Payroll administration*

HRM Department coordinates only a few tasks for payroll administration. As noted above, the HRM Department staff prepares the specific and different orders for allowance and compensation (vacations, trips, inability acts). This information is always kept and registered in the Parliament's HR management software. Besides, HRM department creates orders if the amount of salary is changed. Head of the HRM Department provides her recommendation when salary ranges are revised. Usually salary ranges are defined by the Head of the Parliament's Office. The HRM Department team also provides input in reporting on HR issues whenever respective information is requested by the other departments or divisions.

**Needs or performance gaps**

The Parliament's HRM system is focused on routine processes of recordkeeping and preparing different documentation as opposed to performing the comprehensive and results-oriented human resource management practices. Hence, there is an overall interest and expectation among the MPs, middle-level managers and staff to undertake initiatives for transforming the Parliament's cadre units into contemporary human resource management structures.

- ***Absence of performance management and evaluation system.*** Through the UNDP's assistance the Parliament designed the performance evaluation system that still needs to be finalised. A well-functioning performance management and evaluation system should motivate the staff of all departments and structural units to perform better. Further the HRM team needs to be trained or coached to utilise the performance management systems.
- ***Inefficiency of key HR management processes including staff recruitment and professional development.*** Although the Parliament has a training centre and respective infrastructure in place, the intensity of the capacity building interventions has reduced during the past two years. The Parliament's training centre fails to meet the demand of the staff and interns to receive the trainings and coaching. The system through which the Training Centre identifies performance gaps of the staff needs to be changed.

Importantly the HRM team has to refine the staff selection and recruitment processes.

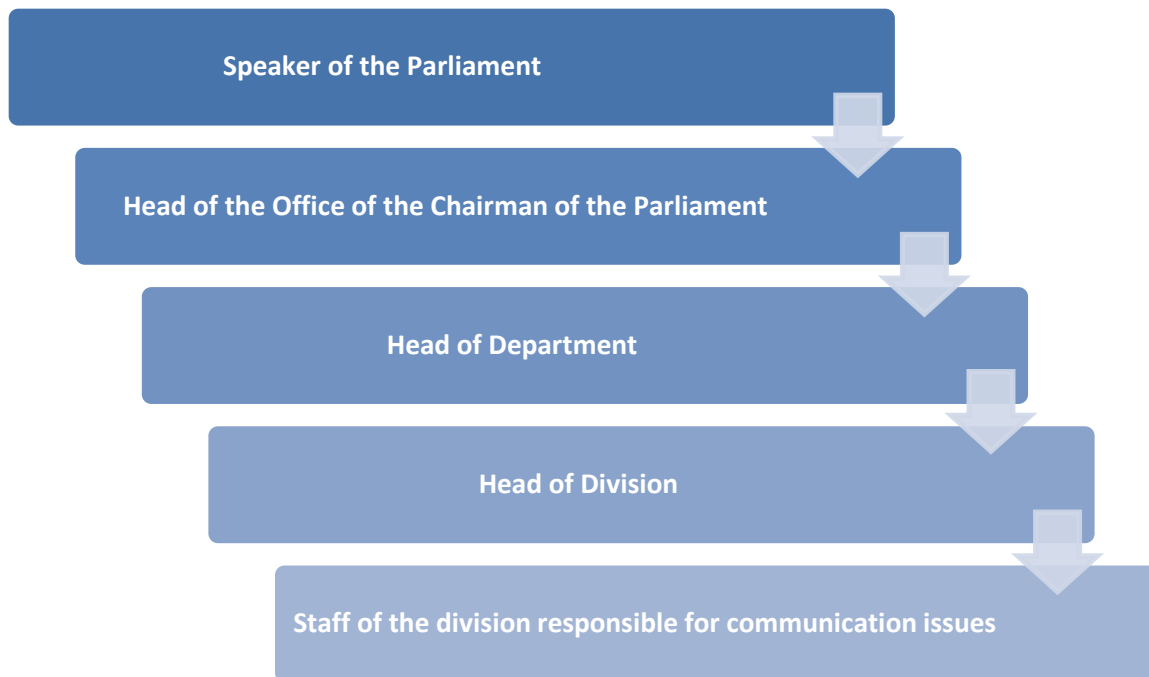
- ***Absence of the knowledge management system.*** No knowledge management system is in place that would help the Parliament to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences accumulated in various structural units or divisions.

- **Deficiencies of HR management software.** The HRM Department operates the HR software that needs to be customised to add the new features including the performance management and evaluation of the staff.

### (3) Communication and Information Flow

#### Regulation and Coordination of Activities

For the purposes of personal and processes management, communication activities are regulated on the basis of vertical hierarchy principle. Directives are assigned from top to down; particularly, tasks are assigned according the following principle:



Similarly, reporting on the communication processes is provided bottom-up. However, there is no regular form of reporting, e.g. agreed written form, regular reporting period, reporting within the structural unit or management.

The communication process is provided through official letters. The coordination within the PR department and Majoritarian, Committees, Factions, Cabinet of Speaker is organised in written form. All the letters are delivered to the Head of the Staff, which allocates them to the head of relevant departments. Accordingly, Head of the Department allocates the letters based on the issues.

The committee members are not systematically notified on the planned events and activities, but instead have the possibility to obtain the information from the web-page of the Parliament. However, for the time being the Parliament's web-page does not work properly and currently it is being upgraded by the IT Department. The communication between the departments, divisions and other units does not have a regular form (despite some exceptions) and mostly, it depends on the individual activity of the department/division/staff.

There is no regular meeting in the departments and divisions and the meetings are held on an *ad hoc* basis. For the time being, managers of the Parliamentary Committee Offices or chairpersons of the committees do not participate in the meetings held in Departments/Divisions. Participation of the management in some meetings would facilitate exchange of information and task allocation. In addition, it would promote discussions on new initiatives, challenges and needs within the departments/divisions.

The schedule of events is not mutually agreed within the units in the Parliament and Parliament's communication with the mass media often becomes overloaded (more than 15 events in a day). Conversely, at other times there is no communication at all (especially, during the non-session period). As a result, delivery of the messages and information to the target groups is complicated and inefficient.

For communication purposes, the Parliament does not operate according to a strategic cooperation format with other public agencies. The dates and venues of significant events are not communicated with each other. Executive agencies (government of Georgia) have developed online exchange system to exchange information about planned activities and events. The system gives the opportunity to the PR management of the Ministries to share their plans and news. This system does not represent a coordination mechanism in any real sense, but it could serve for information sharing.

The structure of communication within the head of Departments and Divisions responsible for the communication is as follows:

- The head of the Department or Division determines assignments; subsequently, he/she supervises implementation of the assignments
- Exchange of information and reporting is carried out verbally and not systematically, or through the implemented assignment (e.g. document/coverage/other communication means).

Staff of structural units who are working on the communication issues have good team working skills. Each decision and task is made on the basis of mutual support and assistance.

#### Planning and Implementation Process

On the one hand, in the vast majority of the Departments/Divisions decision making and general planning process is made by the management. The management of the Departments/Divisions assigns tasks to the subordinated agencies/persons without preliminary procedures (action plan, strategy, mission, objectives and other means of planning). On the other hand, the whole staff is involved in the planning and decision making process. For this purpose spontaneous ideas of the management of PR office and consequences of top management meetings are used. Structural units working on the communication issues are responsible for planning and implementation of the assignments.

The functions of the units responsible for the communication do not include budgeting process and evaluation. Fundraising is considered as a direct responsibility of the management (Speaker of the Parliament, Head of the Staff, Head of the Office of Speaker of the Parliament). Reporting is made through the verbal spontaneous conversations, without formal procedures.

#### Procedures and Relevant Documentation

None of the structural unit responsible for Communication have any communication strategy, short term or long term action plan or other efficient evaluation systems of communication (e.g. PR concept). Such documents could be used as a basis of the unit's activities. In addition, there is no document describing the procedures (for instance, media relations guide, communication risk management or internal

communication procedures). Each decision is made on the basis of the individual opinions and experience of the leadership of structural units.

## **Description of Main Activities**

### Relations with the media

The responsible unit for Media Relations in the Parliament of Georgia is the Press Centre of the Department of Public Relations and Information.

The press centre has various functions, such as:

- Communication with producers;
- Communication with Journalists;
- Communication with International Journalists;
- Attendance of Parliamentary events;
- Preparation of audiovisual and written materials
- Distribution of press releases, announcement of news;
- Accompany the Chairman of the Parliament during international visits to collect and disseminate media materials.

The Press Centre gets information about events from the Speakers Office, Committees and other departments. Accordingly, the news is disseminated among the staff. Organization and coverage of a specific event falls under the responsibility of a particular staff member, who is responsible for communication with the media and preparation of informational materials/announcements. First, the event announcement is made and then information is sent via emails to inform producers, news agencies and printed media. The process depends on the scope and importance of the event. As needed, preliminary announcement and press release are issued. In the case of an international conference, introductory information about the conference is prepared. The information includes brief history of the conference/event, agenda of the conference, venue and anticipated results. A journalist from the press office attends the event in order to prepare information with relevant photo/video materials and disseminate it via the web-page of the parliament. The special group, including a photographer, a journalist and acameraman etc., accompanies the speaker of the Parliament during the international visits. This group provides information about the meetings with the relevant audiovisual materials.

The role and activities of the Press Centre is fully defined by the management of the Parliament, which indicates that the Parliament does not have an institutional plan in terms of Media Communication and decisions related to the communication means are made according the personal perceptions of the management.

Media monitoring suggests that the majority of the covered information is interesting for the media and especially for the public. Mostly, covered information is about the confrontation between the political forces as well as information about political scandals and intrigues. Less attractive information, which may still be significant for society, is not covered. This indicates that strategic approach for the media relations does not exist within the Parliament. The list of draft laws, activities and initiatives is not perceived to be the information that should be delivered to the public in popular language.

The particular period of time is assigned for the Parliament on the second channel, which based on the audits and conducted interviews, seems to not be used efficiently.

In general, central media mainly focuses on session activities of the parliament, while committee and majoritarian activity is not highlighted at all. Accordingly, there is a need for an action plan and strategy to promote coverage of the information about committee activities and majoritarian activities in the regions.

The role of members of the parliament is problematic in terms of media relations. In many cases, members of the parliament avoid comment on draft laws for variety of reasons. Their relations with media are chaotic as there is no identified person responsible for communication with media. There are different intermediary communication channels operating simultaneously, e.g. Press office, press office of faction, Press office of the Parliament, Press office of majority and etc. There is a need of one intermediary channel or press office to coordinate and systemise the process of media relations.

### Internet Communication

Operation of the web-page of the Parliament is the responsibility of two departments:

- IT Department – technical part of the web-page
- PR and Information Department – the content of the web-page

The Press Centre of the PR and Information Department is responsible for the content of the web-page, while the division of web portals is responsible for posting news on the webpage. The web-page of the Parliament is one of the 59 web-pages created for public agencies. All of the web-pages are developed on one platform and do not have effective adjustment capability. During the merging process of web-pages a large amount of information was lost, including documents, audio, video, photo materials. The web page is bilingual (Georgian and English), however, information is provided mostly in Georgian. Translation of the information requires quite large amount of resources. .

The working time of the web-portal division is defined according to the job description. Because of the high flow of information that should be posted on the web-page, staff of the division has to work overtime. Apart from the press office, division of the web-portal receives information from the organizational departments and committees.

Announcements are updated several times per day. Web-portals Division is provided with materials prepared by the journalists from Press Centre. These materials are corrected and edited in the division and prepared photo and video materials are posted on the web-page. In addition, this information is posted on the social networks.

The standard web-pages for the majoritarian are placed (each majoritarian has draft format with similar design, capacity and informational sections) on the Parliament's web portal. Mainly, these webpages are not active. The design, division and structure of the web-page do not match with the current requirements. In addition, any change to the structure or design is impossible because of the standard form of the web-page. As a result of the lack of flexibility, Majoritarians do not effectively use one of the main communication channels. Active use of the web-pages should promote coverage of the information from the regions as well as coverage of the significant initiatives that are not covered by media.

One of the main problems is an inadequate mail server which is not well maintained. Access to internet is yet another serious technical problem. Access to the



Parliament's mail server is very limited. Namely the mail server can be only accessed through a computer connected to the Parliament's internal network. There is a problem with disseminating general notifications as well, e.g. notification about the committee meetings..

Web-portal development division of the Department of Public Relations and Information is responsible for the new media communication tools.Parliament has an official Facebook page(with up to 22,000 likes) and YouTube channel.

The structure of these pages is simple and does not contain sophisticated APPs (Draft bills, vacancies, Live stream of sessions and etc.). News is posted on Parliament's web-page and official Facebook page at the same time. Despite the number of Likes, facebook page of Parliament is not interactive and lacks feedback. The division does not provide statistical analysis of web-page (Number of Likers, peak/minimum, popular posts, content analysis, etc.). Committees and Majoritarian MPs have their own Facebook pages and YouTube channels that are not administered directly by Web-portal development division. It makes strategic planning of social media more complicated. During the interview all MPs have mentioned the importance of social media.

### Relations with Stakeholders

Target groups:

Internal:

- The Chairmen of Parliament and the Cabinet Office
- The Deputy-Chairmen of Parliament and their Cabinet Offices
- Parliamentary Committees
- Majoritarian MPs' Bureau
- Members of Parliament
- Staff Leader of Parliament
- Factions
- Departments of Parliament
- Parliamentary staff (605 persons)

Internal relationships in Parliament are formalised, but further enhancement of communication is still needed. Usually MPs have no information about the laws that are discussed at the meetings of various committees. Heads of departments/divisions do not have active communication with the Chairman of Parliament, Deputy-chairmen and Committee representatives. There is no intranet in Parliament.

Objectives are set through the direct communication. Press Centre staff plan activities with the assistant of the Chairman of Parliament and Chairmen of Committees and provide technical assistance for them.

Public Relations and Information Department consist of 4 divisions that have direct communications with each other. Through the active communication and consultation, Committee staff and Press Centre plan press conferences, briefings and other activities with media. This process is not standardised and depends on personal initiatives. Staff of each department informs Web-Portal Development Division and Press Centre about the upcoming events. Announcement about these events are published on the web-page of Parliament. Despite, there is still a need to improve planning and coordination tools.

E-mails sent to the Chairman of Parliament are administered and reviewed by the members of his Cabinet. All relevant information is examined and addresses to the Chairman. Analysis is made by the Head of Department, Media-Monitoring and Analysis Division is also engaged in this process.

Head of the Office or assistant of the Chairman of a parliamentary committee inform Organizational Department about the official sessions.

Television and press are the most effective ways of communication with society. Parliament's new location complicates the communication process with different stakeholders/target groups. Most of the non-governmental organizations and political parties of Georgia have financial constraints which impedes participation in committee discussions.

Communication with the government is not coordinated properly. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the only executive body that reports to Parliament on a regular basis. Orders of Prime Minister and President of Georgia are also sent to the different Committees.

Due to lack of communications with the ministries, Chairpersons of the Committees receive information mainly from the media. Ministries are focused on day-to-day activities and pay less attention to strategic issues. The committees are not well informed of the Ministry's action plans.

Participation of the international organizations in the discussions about European integration is crucial. Parliament's new location in Kutaisi makes it difficult for them as their offices are located in Tbilisi and travel to Kutaisi takes three hours.

For effective relationships with international organizations Parliament should elaborate strategy document.

#### Direct Communications

Parliament has direct communications with its stakeholders/target groups through the following channels:

- Public Reception
- Majoritarian MPs' Bureaux
- Committee discussions
- Meetings with constituents
- Conferences and workshops organised by the Parliament or other organizations;

The Main Chancellery of Parliament provides a public reception service to enhance accessibility to constituents. Meetings with constituents (50-70 constituents per day) are organised on a daily basis, they receive legal advice on their specific needs. Over 1500 meetings of MPs with constituents and stakeholders were organised since October 20, 2012.

Communications with constituents locally are organised through the Majoritarian MPs' Bureaus. These Bureaus allow citizens to connect with their elected representatives. Head of the Bureau solves all the tasks addressed by the constituents and reports to the MP about important concerns. It is observed that society lacks a clear understanding of the competences of Parliament and , as a result, the Bureau receives many inadequate request.

MPs don't have assistants, which undermines any effective communication process. They have to solve all tasks individually as the Factions have limited resources and cannot provide communication services to MPs.

MPs are open to public discussions but Parliament's location makes it difficult, as most events are held in Tbilisi.

#### Securing access of public information

The following departments are responsible for the delivery of public information:

- Main Chancellery
- Organizational Department
- Public Relations and Information Department

Correspondence from the constituents and organizations are organised in the Main Chancellery. Correspondence is received by post and e-mails.

#### Needs or performance gaps

**Inadequate structure and overlapping functions of Parliament's communications and public relations units.** There are some overlaps of functions and responsibilities of the Parliament's structural units in charge of communication and public relations. Namely the Protocol, the Public Relations and Civic Events Planning divisions have overlapping mandates that need be divided in the refined regulations of the Office and respective Office departments.

**Inefficient use of communication channels.** Although there are multiple communication channels available, most of those are not efficiently used by the parliament. In some occasions the communication channels are only formal (e.g. Parliament's official Facebook page, web-pages of majoritarians, etc.). It is crucial to develop the strategy and action plan for each of the communication channels to ensure effective internal and external communications.

**Deficiencies of the Parliament's web-page.** Representatives of the Parliament as well as stakeholders approached by the assessment team agree that the official web-site of the Parliament needs considerable improvements. The web-page is not convenient for navigation and does not contain sufficient information required by the stakeholders. Low level of security of the web site is another major issue. As noted in above sections of this assessment report the web-page does not fully support transparency of the lawmaking process.

**Absence of intranet.** The Parliament of Georgia is a complex organization with a large number of departments and divisions. The staff members do not have sufficient information regarding the ongoing initiatives or projects implemented across the Parliament. This is a major factor impeding the expeditious information exchange internally, as well as the development of a knowledge management system.

**Lack of qualified staff.** Some of the parliament's structural units lack qualified PR and communications professionals. E.g. the staffing of the parliamentary committees does not include PR specialists who could administer the committee sub-pages or Facebook pages, organise public discussions as necessary.

Further there is a need to recruit additional staff in the communications and PR units of the Parliament to perform the communications and PR-related tasks.

***Absence of communications strategy and action plan.*** Analysis of interviews held with the chairpersons of parliamentary committees, heads of the departments and staff members demonstrates that there are diverse perceptions of the Parliament's communication strategies or objectives. There is no consistent vision of the communications and PR functions of the Parliament and the results that should be achieved through internal or external communications systems.

***Absence of a media centre.*** There is no media centre in the Parliament building where reporters would be able to implement their activities and prepare materials to be disseminated by the electronic or print media means.

## V. SWOT ANALYSIS

Exercise of Institutional Functions	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>a) Lawmaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness of the Parliament to respond to the needs of the public at large through designing or implementing legislative initiatives</li> <li>• Institutionalised mechanisms of public engagement into the lawmaking efforts</li> <li>• Supportive regulatory framework</li> <li>• Qualified human resources to implement lawmaking process</li> <li>• CSO's strong interest in participating into the legislative process</li> <li>• Legal mechanism of civic participation in the lawmaking process</li> </ul>	<b>a) Lawmaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of policy design and evaluation mechanisms</li> <li>• Speed of the lawmaking process that jeopardises quality</li> <li>• Deficiencies in document flow</li> <li>• Absence of a searchable electronic database of laws tailored for the Parliament's lawmaking needs</li> <li>• Capacity gaps to develop quality explanatory notes and assess fiscal or economic effects of draft laws</li> <li>• Insufficient public engagement into the lawmaking process</li> <li>• Inadequate timelines for allowing public engagement in the lawmaking process</li> <li>• Parliamentary committees and department staff overwhelmed in the weeks of plenary sessions</li> </ul>
<b>b) Oversight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations in place</li> <li>• MPs motivated or interested to oversee the activities or conductment of GoG/agencies of the executive</li> <li>• Intensification of the governmental oversight efforts by the parliamentary opposition</li> </ul>	<b>b) Oversight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditionally weak institutional function</li> <li>• Lack of political will on the part of the majority to exercise oversight</li> <li>• Insufficient periodic public hearings of government officials in the Parliament</li> <li>• Inadequate use of the examination reports of the State Audit Office</li> <li>• Shortcomings in the regulatory framework</li> <li>• Failure of the officials of the executive to timely and accurately respond to the official requests of MPs</li> <li>• Limitations to access the international best practices of the parliamentary oversight</li> </ul>

<b>c) Representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulatory framework in place</li> <li>MP bureaux in place</li> <li>International donor assistance mobilised to enhance the representation function and improve communication or interactions with the wider public</li> <li>Parliamentary work organised in the manner allowing the MPs to communicate with their constituencies</li> </ul>	<b>c) Representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity gaps of the MP bureau staff</li> <li>Limited possibilities of MPs elected through the proportional system to communicate with the public</li> <li>Low awareness of the wider public in relation to the functions or mandates of the parliament</li> <li>Deficiencies in Parliament's reporting to public mechanisms</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>a) Lawmaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digitalization of the lawmaking process</li> <li>Introduction of the policy planning and evaluation tools in the lawmaking process</li> <li>Adaptation of the lawmaking process to the need of obtaining a greater engagement of CSOs in the lawmaking process</li> <li>Enhancing capacities of the Parliament's staff to conduct the assessment of fiscal and economic effects of draft laws</li> </ul>	<b>a) Lawmaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political instability that may cause the disruption of the Parliament's activities</li> <li>Decrease in transparency of the lawmaking process due to inadequate civic engagement</li> <li>Enactment of ineffective legislation and regulations due to low civic engagement and capacity gaps of the Parliament staff to conduct the impact assessments</li> <li>Personnel turnover</li> </ul>
<b>b) Oversight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSOs and international organizations interested to build capacities in the Parliament to efficiently exercise the oversight functions</li> <li>Performance based budgeting in Georgia's public sector</li> <li>Utilization of the SAO conclusions and audit reports</li> <li>Delivering capacity building measures to the MPs, Staff</li> <li>Securing access to best international practices</li> </ul>	<b>b) Oversight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undermining the role of the Parliament</li> <li>Ineffective use of public funds by the Executive</li> <li>Parliament's possibilities diminished to take informed, evidence-based decisions</li> </ul>
<b>c) Representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up a system allowing the MPs elected through the proportional system to interact with the wider public</li> <li>Refining the regulatory framework</li> <li>Addressing the capacity gaps of the MP bureau staff</li> <li>Enhancing the public awareness with regard to the mandate of the Parliament</li> </ul>	<b>c) Representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce of the public trust towards the institution</li> <li>Parliament loosing ties with the constituencies</li> </ul>
<b>Organization of work process: administrative and support functions</b>	

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well defined organizational structure</li> <li>• Clear division of responsibilities and mandates of structures and units</li> <li>• Supportive organizational infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient coordination and communication among the MPs and chairpersons of the parliamentary committees to agree on the rules of managing the staff of parliamentary committee offices</li> <li>• Deficiencies in managing the donor programmes and embedding the results of respective projects in institutional memory</li> <li>• Unsupportive work environment</li> <li>• Technical issues in the hall of plenary sessions</li> <li>• Project management system not utilised by the parliament while designing and implementing new initiatives</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce project management system and tools in designing, implementing and monitoring new initiatives and projects within the organization</li> <li>• Improve communication among MPs to agree on the rules of utilizing the staff of parliamentary committees</li> <li>• Design and develop the system of the management and coordination of donor projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose of motivation by the staff</li> <li>• Duplication of donor assistance programmes</li> <li>• Negative impact of organizational blockages on the exercise of main institutional functions</li> </ul>
Human Resource Management	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge of Parliamentary regulations and procedures by staff</li> <li>• Performance assessment policy</li> <li>• Low level of employee turnover</li> <li>• Training centre in place</li> <li>• HR data management systems, including personnel filing systems</li> <li>• General discipline and work rules</li> <li>• Good team spirit and ability of the staff to work under pressure or in unsupportive work environment</li> <li>• Clearly defined work goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient competences of the HRM staff to develop advanced level HRM system</li> <li>• Ineffective learning and development system</li> <li>• Higher stress levels, work/life balance affecting quality of work</li> <li>• Insufficient staff training and professional development opportunities</li> <li>• Incapacity of HRM staff to provide proactive HRM services</li> <li>• Ineffective Record Keeping System</li> <li>• Length of recruitment process</li> <li>• Much paperwork</li> <li>• High/low compensation and benefits</li> <li>• Inappropriate workplace</li> <li>• Ineffective HRM software</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement HR strategy and respective action plan</li> <li>• Develop and introduce modern HRM systems and tools</li> <li>• Refine Personnel policy, plans and procedures</li> <li>• Revise job-descriptions</li> <li>• Communicate the new HR policies to staff members</li> <li>• Design and implement capacity building policy/plan for HR professionals (managers, staff)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent changes in the regulatory framework</li> <li>• Weak communication system within the organization</li> <li>• High personnel turnover</li> </ul>
Communications	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliament leadership motivated to improve communications with stakeholders and attain a greater degree of transparency and civic accountability</li> <li>• Traditional set of institutional communications system</li> <li>• Good personal connections</li> <li>• Media coverage</li> <li>• Accuracy of disseminated/communicated information</li> <li>• Media monitoring</li> <li>• Possibility to place the Parliament-related information in the first set of news</li> <li>• Well organised system of event management</li> <li>• Good relations of the Parliament staff members in charge of communications with stakeholders</li> <li>• Recently organised system of reception of citizens by the Chairman of the Parliament</li> <li>• Divers channels of information communication</li> <li>• Readiness to consistently improve the external or internal communication systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmotivated personnel</li> <li>• Inadequate organizational structure and mandates</li> <li>• Inefficient use of communication channels</li> <li>• Web-page and its insufficient security</li> <li>• Unavailability of organizational intranet</li> <li>• Lack of staff members in some of the divisions</li> <li>• Absence of the communications strategy and respective action plan</li> <li>• Inconvenient timing for holding media briefings and presentations</li> <li>• Absence of a system of systematic feedback</li> <li>• Absence of a media centre</li> <li>• Inadequate infrastructure of the citizen reception office</li> <li>• Insufficient communication with NGOs and international organizations</li> <li>• New MPs and committee office staff members do not have sufficient information regarding the functions, mandates and capacities of Parliament's communication units</li> <li>• Lack of equipment</li> <li>• Inconsistent internal communications</li> <li>• Non-licensed software</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement Parliament's communications strategy and action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of the Parliament's leadership in the course of introducing the new approaches or systems in the area of internal or external</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the strategy of managing the emergency and communications crisis situations and conduct respective scenario planning</li><li>• Introduce the system of continuous development</li><li>• Install new software across the communications departments</li><li>• Renew the channels of internet communications</li><li>• Revise the functions of the communications units</li><li>• Gradually introduce the project management tools</li><li>• Develop and renew information databases to respond to the internal needs</li><li>• Develop an institution-wide consistent electronic calendar of events</li><li>• Develop and disseminate informational and awareness materials among target groups</li><li>• Cooperate with international organizations for information sharing</li><li>• Intensify the efforts of the Research Department and Division of Inter-parliamentary Relations to study the communications practices of the parliaments of other countries</li><li>• Organise study tours into the Parliament for youth or any other interested individuals</li><li>• Enhance the qualifications of the staff and encourage their continuous professional development</li></ul>	<p>communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insufficient support of the Parliament's leadership with regard to the initiatives in the communications area</li><li>• Insufficient finances to support the implementation of changes</li><li>• Staff turnover and inexperienced or insufficiently qualified cadres</li></ul>
---	--

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This Section of the Parliament of Georgia's Needs Assessment report details the recommendations delivered by the assessment team to address the needs or capacity and performance gaps summarised in above sections. The leadership as well as the middle-level managers of the Parliament however are advised to engage into further discussions with stakeholders to prioritise the recommended solutions and identify the most efficient ways of implementing the recommended actions. Assistance of the EU Delegation in Georgia to the Parliament to develop Institutional Reform Plan will help to prioritise the performance improvement initiatives, specify the activities that will lead to improved institutional performance and determine the timelines of implementation of the respective activities. Further, a monitoring system should be designed and introduced enabling the Parliament, donor community and stakeholders to continuously track the implementation process and as appropriate adapt the course of the activities to changes in the external or internal environment.

### A. Exercise of Institutional Functions

#### (1) Lawmaking

The Parliament of Georgia implements the lawmaking activities without major impediments and undertakes efforts to reflect the development processes into the respective legislative initiatives. The regulatory framework governing the lawmaking process is mostly positive, however, there are a number of areas where the efficiency of the lawmaking can be enhanced through refining the procedures and deploying Information technologies.

With due regard to the identified needs and performance gaps the assessment team has developed the following recommendations:

- ***Introduce a policy planning and evaluation function within the Parliament.*** The lawmaking process conducted within the Parliament requires continuous evaluation and assessment of the effects that already enacted acts have had on the targeted areas or sectors. The policy design and evaluation tools will help the Parliament to effectively plan the policy making initiatives and avoid the risks of enacting inefficient laws. Clearly, the introduction of the policy planning and evaluation function is a task that cannot be achieved within a short period of time and requires human resources with adequate qualifications and delivery of comprehensive capacity building measures for MPs and committee staff. Alternatively the policy evaluation functions may be integrated into the Research Department. Obviously Parliament's policy evaluation capacities will be limited to assess the effects of all laws or regulations. Nonetheless the Parliament may occasionally decide as to which laws or policies have to be examined to ascertain whether and to what extent they deliver the results expected at the time these laws/policies were enacted by the Parliament.
- ***Digitalise the lawmaking process.*** Digitalization of the lawmaking process will be a major breakthrough leading to a greater efficiency and transparency of implementation of this main institutional function. The Parliament's IT Department through the World Bank assistance programme is at early phases of the respective project implementation. Recently a programmer was hired who will help the IT department to develop the specifications of the law editor software. Supposedly the system development work will be outsourced, however, the IT department will monitor the software development process and as necessary will provide

input in the development efforts. Notably many of the MPs or staff members interviewed by the assessment team do not have accurate information about this important initiative. Therefore it is of crucial significance to disseminate the information regarding the project within the Parliament and among stakeholders, since the MPs, staff and stakeholders can provide valuable comments or ideas at this design phase.

It is also important to note that introduction of new technologies in any type of organization necessarily requires the change of the key business processes. Accordingly the digitalization of the lawmaking process will require respective modifications of procedures and processes given in the Parliament's RoP. Another important factor to consider while making such a profound change is the effect of this shift on organizational culture (e.g. some MPs or staff members prefer to work with the hard copies).

Digitalization of the lawmaking process will help to address a variety of the concerns voiced by MPs, parliament staff or stakeholders during the information or data collection phase. These concerns include:

- Accessing the codified versions of laws
- Reviewing the history of legal acts (e.i. comparing the various versions of the laws)
- Accessing the updated versions of the draft laws and enabling the stakeholders to comment on the drafts through the law editor software
- Diminishing the risks of omissions or errors
- Creating a searchable electronic database of laws tailored for the Parliament's lawmaking needs
- Archiving the legislative package, etc.

Digitalization of the lawmaking process will also affect the staffing of the Parliament's structural units. Namely, each of the committees as well as the Legal and Organizational Departments will require one or two operators who will administer the software and secure smooth functioning of the Law Editor.

- ***Establish stricter requirements for development and submission of explanatory notes.*** While explanatory notes are necessarily enclosed to every draft law initiated before the Parliament, the MPs as well as stakeholders approached by the assessment team complain that the notes in some occasions do not provide sufficient justification and reasoning for the initiation of the draft. The Parliament may be invited to examine the possibilities of modifying its Rules of Procedure to provide clearer guidelines of the EN development or impose stricter requirements an explanatory note should meet.
- ***Enhance the capacities of the Parliament staff to conduct the assessment of fiscal and economic effects of initiated draft laws.*** The Budget Office with a staff of 10 lacks the capacities to conduct the precise assessment of the fiscal and economic effects of the draft laws initiated before the Parliament. Further the staff is overwhelmed with the assignments and the time allowed for the assessment is not always sufficient. It is also important to emphasise that it is not easy to recruit the staff capable of conducting the accurate assessment or forecasting of economic and fiscal effects of certain policies or decisions. While GIZ assistance project will help the Parliament to close the capacity gap, the Parliament on its part should consider the staff retention tactics.

- **Encourage and facilitate public engagement in the lawmaking process.** Change of Parliament's location has had an impact on efficiency of institutional mechanisms of civic participation in the lawmaking process. As noted in above in Section IV the NDI's NGO Liaison Office has not facilitated any of the stakeholder consultations since the Parliament moved to Kutaisi. Meantime decrease of intensity of civic participation should not be solely attributed to the change of location. There are some other influencing factors. Therefore the Parliament should consider several initiatives that may facilitate the wider public engagement in the policymaking processes. These initiatives include:
  - Review of timelines laid down in RoP for legislative review
  - Organise the committee meetings in the weeks of meetings with voters that will reduce the workload of committees and departments in the weeks of plenary sessions and allow more time for civic participation in the lawmaking process
  - Secure access to initiate draft laws as modified during the first and second hearings of the Parliament's plenary sessions as well as to explanatory notes delivered by the Budgetary Office and Legal Department

Digitalization of the lawmaking process will also considerably enhance the civic engagement in the policymaking process.

## (2) Government oversight

The government oversight function traditionally has been weak in the Georgian Parliament. There are mainly political factors affecting the efficiency of Parliament's oversight. The regulatory framework however may be improved to certain extent. Further the best practices of European parliaments should be studied and the practices that best suit Georgia's political and legal context replicated.

- **Utilise the existing possibilities of the governmental oversight by the Members of the Parliament to the maximum extent possible.** Although the members of the Parliament's majority faction and managers of the GoG agencies are the members of the same political coalition this should not prevent the exercise of the oversight function by the Parliament. As necessary open public debates should be organised within the Parliament to discuss or debate the performance of the GoG agencies, governmental decisions, budget expenditures, progress attained in implementing the governmental programmes. The best practices of western parliaments could also be replicated since there is an overall understanding and readiness in the Parliament and among the stakeholders that this function should be necessarily revived for the interests of the wider public. Regularly holding the governmental hours at the Parliament's plenary sessions, organizing hearings of GoG officials at committee sittings can help to establish and maintain the institutional tradition. Importantly the Parliament should establish and maintain partnership with NGOs – whistleblowers and watchdogs who can provide early alerts to the Parliament whenever risks of illicit practice or misconduct in the public sector may emerge.
- **Utilise the conclusions or audit reports of the State Audit Office.** While the SAO is officially subordinated to the Parliament of Georgia, the conclusions or audit reports of this agency are rarely used by the Parliament. The primary task is to build the trust and confidence towards the SAO. Effective cooperation mechanisms and information communication channels should also be designed and maintained.

- **Address the legislative gaps.** The Parliament is advised to review the regulatory framework governing the rules of responding to MP questions by officials of the Executive. Namely, the RoP may be amended as appropriate to specify the measures against the officials who fail to respond to or neglect the questions of the MPs, committees or factions.
- **Replicate the international best practices of government oversight.** The parliament of Georgia needs to explore the experiences of western parliaments and replicate the best practices through embedding those into its regulatory framework.

### (3) Representation

In terms of enhancing the representation capacities of the Parliament and improving the communication of MPs with their constituencies the Parliament has to address the capacity gaps of its staff, enhance the public awareness with regard to the mandate of the Parliament and revise its regulatory framework as appropriate.

- **Enhance capacities of MP bureau staff.** MP bureau staff have already benefitted from the first round of capacity building measures delivered by NDI. However the bureau staff need more advanced level training workshops on a variety of issues.
- **Enhance the public awareness with regard to the functions and mandate of the Parliament.** In most occasions individuals seek MP's assistance to address or resolve the issues that are not in the mandate of the Parliament. Accordingly the Parliament has to design the awareness measures that would inform the constituencies of the functions and mandates of the Parliament. Best practices of western countries could be studied and replicated as a part of Parliament's awareness raising and external communication interventions.
- **Provide the MPs elected through the proportional system with a possibility to interact with voters.** There are a few ideas as to how the Parliament could enable the MPs elected through the proportional system to maintain communication with voters (e.g. setting up Parliament information offices in regions, and establishing MP offices in the Parliament). Those are however related to considerable expenditures and it is not clear at this point if the Parliament can afford these expenditures. However there is an ongoing initiative to allocate extra funds into the Parliament budget from 2014 so that every MP elected through the proportional system will be able to hire an assistant who will provide him or her with communicational and logistical support.
- **Administer the performance of the RoP reporting requirements or refine the regulatory framework.** While the RoP sets out the rules of analysing and reporting of voters' concerns as well as of remedies taken to address those concerns, these rules are not always respected. No information on the actions of the MPs or committees taken to address the needs or concerns of the voters is available on the Parliament's web page in breach of the RoP requirements. Neither it is clear that all MPs do submit information obtained at the meetings with voters to the Chairman of the Parliament. Therefore the Parliament either needs to toughen the administration of this requirement or design a different mechanism enabling the public to receive adequate information on Parliament's activities, decisions, and achievements.

## B. Organization of Work, Administrative and Informational Support

In terms of enhancing the efficiency of Parliament's work processes and administrative and support functions, HR management and communication systems the assessment team came up with the following recommendations:

### (1) Organization of work process: administrative and support functions

- ***Agree on the rules of operation and management of parliamentary committee offices.*** The office of the parliamentary committee provides legal advice and administrative support to the operation of the respective parliamentary committee. The managers and staff of the offices report to the chairpersons of the respective parliamentary committees. Meantime the MPs – members of the committee occasionally do need the legal advice from the office staff. Apparently there is a misunderstanding among the MPs as to in which occasions the office staff resources can be utilised. Hence it is crucial to discuss and agree the rules of operation and management of the committee offices so that all MPs have equal access to this human resource.
- ***Refine the donor programme management system.*** Dozens of assistance programmes were implemented in the Parliament in the past few years. The Parliament however needs to design and establish an integrated donor project management system that would help to:
  - Disseminate information regarding the ongoing or planned donor initiatives across the organization
  - Regularly inform the staff and MPs of the progress attained in implementing the donor supported or implemented projects
  - Keep the record of completed projects
  - Maintain and make available the deliverables (e.g., toolkits, reports, models) produced within the framework of completed projects
  - Identify, design or develop the concepts of projects or initiatives that could be conducted through the donor assistance,
  - Coordinate the efforts of various structural units of the Parliament to obtain donor support for their initiatives, etc.
- ***Address the technical issues blocking the normal performance of the Parliament.*** A well-functioning stenographic recoding system is crucial for smooth implementation of the lawmaking process. Accordingly internal communications system must be in place enabling the staff of the Organizational Department to produce the stenographic records of the plenary session at the time these sessions are held.
- ***Improve the work environment to the maximum extent possible.*** Unsupportive work environment discussed above affects the motivation of the staff and causes decrease of productivity. Apparently all of the deficiencies in Parliament's main or administrative buildings cannot be addressed within a short period of time. However, it is necessary to develop a project through which the administration of the Parliament will gradually eliminate the problems causing disruption of the normal work flow.

### (2) Human Resource Management

- **Refine staff selection and interviewing procedures.** The Parliament's HRM staff should contemplate the modifications to the staff selection and interviewing process. Namely, it is crucial to redesign the selection and interviewing process that will be focused on competency assessment. Further it is crucial to enhance the skills of the HR staff to conduct selection interviews, develop job and competency related questions, conduct proper evaluations of candidates based on their main competency or experiences. This training is essential for HRM team as they are permanent members of the selection committee and are obliged to manage whole recruitment process on any vacant position.
- **Improve performance management and evaluation system.** This is one of the priorities of the Georgian Parliament. Despite the previous assistance received through the UNDP project, the Performance evaluation system still needs to be finalised. Engaging external experts who will work closely with HRM Department and middle level managers will provide realistic opportunities to design and implement the performance management model most appropriate to the Parliament's needs and organizational culture. Further capacities of HRM Department and middle level managers have to build or enhanced in performance management and evaluation.
- **Improve staff learning and development System.** The number of learning activities at the Parliament's Training Centre has decreased drastically during the past few years. Meantime there is a huge demand for delivering capacity building measures. While the training infrastructure is in place the Parliament has to intensify its efforts to establish a well-functioning performance centre providing the required capacity building services to staff or interns. An effective system enabling identification of performance gaps should also be in place.
- **Refine the E-HRM software.** The HRM Department operates the HR software developed by the Parliament's IT Department. This software is in its continuous improvement process- whenever needed, the HR team develops tasks according to which the IT Department configures/adds additional functions to the programme. The E-HRM software should support all HRM processes and procedures, including those related to performance management and evaluation. Therefore the software requires major improvements that will enable the HR team to conduct real-time management of the human resources rather than just registering the HR related data. Provided the capacities of the IT Department are limited with other ongoing projects the leadership of the Parliament should consider the possibilities of purchasing the HR management software that will be subsequently customised to the Parliament's needs.

### (3) Communication and Information Flow

- **Develop the Parliament's communication platform.** This document should define the philosophy, principles and minimum standards of Parliament's communications, transparency and accountability. Preferably the document should have mandatory legal effect for the Parliament's office and officials (Chairman of Parliament, Chairmen of Committees, Deputy Speaker).
- **Develop Parliament's communication strategy and action plan.** Communications strategy is essential for securing effective, long-term and successful internal or external communications

system within the Parliament. The Communications Strategy and action plan should include the following:

- SWOT analyses
  - Values
  - Vision
  - Mission
  - Strategic objectives
  - Projects
  - Action plan
  - Monitoring and evaluation system
  - Recommendations for systematization of internal communications
  - Recommendation for visualization and branding
  - Standards of media relations
  - Mechanisms of reporting on implementation of the action plan
- ***Develop communication crises management strategy and action plan.*** The leadership of the Parliament should be capable of reacting to any crisis scenarios. Therefore it is crucial to develop the strategy and action plan of managing the communications crisis. The document should include:
  - List of expected or potential communication crises
  - Rules and tools of crisis identification
  - Composition and responsibilities of communications crisis management group
  - Strategies by crisis type
  - Action plans and budgets
  - Instruction packages for staff
- ***Establish the “Service Plus” standard and train staff.*** “Service Plus” standards should be set for effective communications with different target groups. Intensive trainings in “Service Plus” and communications psychology for the parliament staff are highly recommended. As a result stakeholders’ satisfaction with communication and effectiveness of staff interaction will increase.
- ***Establish internal standards.*** It is essential to define service standards for effective communication so that the staff involved in communication process is clear on their duties, responsibilities, performance deadlines and requirements. For instance, the standards should determine the timeline in which video, audio or printed materials regarding the Parliament’s activities should be published. Individual standards for each of the communication activities can also be developed.
- ***Conduct IT Audit.*** Nowadays, intensive and adequate use of information technologies is essential for effective public relations. Hence, parliament should have relevant IT infrastructure in place. Implementation of this complex project requires assessment of staff needs and auditing the available IT technologies. Development of the IT infrastructure development should be conducted in parallel with the improvement of communications and PR practices of the Parliament.



- ***Introduce new software in the Parliament's system and update channels of e-communication.*** Once the overall communication strategy of the Parliament is developed, the Parliament should update the electronic communications channels as identified by the communications strategy and introduce new software. For instance, development of Public Information Liability programme is recommended. The programme should help to ease the communications of MPs with citizens or media and produce the reporting on types and frequency of communications. It is necessary to develop the list of frequently asked questions and update those regularly.

To ease communication with the citizenry the parliament should install licensed software that will enable the Parliament to communicate with the citizens online.

It is necessary to create the intranet system similar to the Facebook platform. The intranet should facilitate dissemination of not only "organizational information" but enable the staff of the parliament and MPs to use an internal communication channel.

- ***Refine mandates of the structural units in charge of Parliament's communications.*** In order to avoid the duplication of functions and eliminate the 'unrealistic' tasks from the regulations of the Parliament's office it is crucial to review and update the functions and mandates of each of the structural units in charge of the Parliament's communications. The best way to approach this is to make the reorganization and restructuring efforts as a part of the communications strategy planning and implementation initiative.
- ***Develop citizen feedback mechanisms.*** Establishment of communication mechanisms in order to increase involvement of the society in the decision-making process is one of the main PR functions for any public Institution. Accordingly, the Parliament should develop, update or improve the specific mechanisms which ensure the feedback from the target audience. For these purposes use of the direct and electronic communication mechanisms are preferred. Moreover, it is important to continuously analyse the feedback instruments in order to consider citizens' interests and opinions in the decision making process.
- ***Organise study tours for citizens.*** It is recommended to organise regular study tours of citizens to develop successful communication with the target groups and stakeholders of the Parliament. During the study tours, the visitors will be introduced with particularities of the Parliament's activities and other interesting information. Creation of the online registration mechanisms in accordance with the official web-page and social networks will facilitate development of proper systems and mechanisms.