

**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA**

**REVERSING GEORGIA'S
INSTITUTIONAL
SETBACKS AND
STAGNATION**

STRATEGY 2021–2025

Reversing Georgia's institutional setbacks and stagnation

Transparency International Georgia is distinguished by its exemplary track-record of contributing to accountability and transparency and fighting corruption. Across its 20 years of work, the organization has delivered a multi-sectoral approach to stem both the supply and demand of corruption at the local and national level, supporting an engaged citizenry and a vibrant and fair democratic environment in Georgia.

Since its foundation, TI Georgia has established itself as one of the leading civil society organizations in the country, endeavoring to be a national and regional civil society leader through objective, insightful and comprehensive analysis, proactive and reactive advocacy, comprehensive training, and the monitoring of the performance of key institutions in a non-partisan manner. Its approach aims to create synergies by promoting collaboration between the government, civil society, and the private sector.

Through this experience, TI Georgia has accumulated and refined outstanding expertise in a number of important areas: anti-corruption policy, fair elections, transparent and accountable legislative process, reform of the judiciary, protection of the freedom of the media, and effective economic policies and reforms. In its pursuit of long-term progress, TI Georgia has continuously championed change across these policy areas which are at the centre of TI Georgia's thematic focus.

Transparency International Georgia (TI Georgia) is a national chapter of the global anti-corruption movement, Transparency International. Its vision is to make Georgia a country that is free of corruption in all parts of society and where people are involved in the policymaking process. It aims to make Georgia a place where transparency and openness in government and the private sector is the rule rather than an exception. This includes supporting an engaged citizenry and a vibrant and fair democratic environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE STRATEGY

Organisational developments

Staff and organizational capacity

Board

CONTEXT

Looking Back

Looking Forward

Key Priorities for 2021-2025

What will get us there:

Vision

Mission

Profile

Watchdog

Think-tank

Civic Engagement facilitator

Capacity-builder

Stakeholders

Government institutions

General public

Political parties

Civil society, academia and the private sector

Media

External stakeholders

DRIVING CHANGE

What we have learned

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Capitalizing on opportunities

EXTERNAL PRIORITIES

INTERNAL PRIORITIES

ANNEX I

Theory of Change

Conclusion and next steps

THE STRATEGY

To capitalize on and reinforce our strengths, this strategy seeks to leverage Transparency International Georgia's bold thinking and extensive experience to provide a framework for TI Georgia's actions in 2021-2025. This strategy will provide focus, structure and direction to generate and sustain TI Georgia's impact in the coming years.

This strategy further builds on the vast experience that TI Georgia has accumulated in mitigating risks and dealing with pressure. It provides an overview of major lessons learnt and of how TI Georgia can sustain these lessons to enhance its impact. Strategic planning ensures continuity of our work: it both helps us learn from the past and ensures the sustainability of our priorities in the future. It sets boundaries within which we will engage, and clarifies where we will not engage. The strategy brings coherence to our priorities and projects, ensuring they align under our core principles.

In this strategy, we concentrate on the problems of long-term decision making in each of the four dimensions of governance: Institutions, instruments, processes and actors. It should be noted that the future is quite unpredictable and uncertain. The unexpected emergence and rapid spread of Covid-19 has been a clear example of this, and, at the time of writing the strategy, it is still unclear how the events will unfold in this regard. Also, in the traditionally fast-changing political and social environment of Georgia, the ability to plan is inherently limited. Therefore, the goals articulated here may not be achieved during this strategy period, as improving governance is a very complex and long-term process. Moreover, should they be achieved, it will not be based solely on the work of TI Georgia.

As such, the strategy and the supporting monitoring framework does not make claims of attribution for any goals, objectives or outcomes. Development is slow and there are bound to be many hurdles along the way. However, the work that we will undertake within this period will lay the important groundwork necessary for building a mature and robust democracy in Georgia.

As we engage with multiple stakeholders, the strategy also serves as a primary means of enabling our partners and the general public to understand our mandate, and priorities.

This is TI Georgia's third strategy document. The first was the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, while the second one covered the years 2016 to 2020. Accordingly, this strategy reflects the changes that have taken place in Georgia, as well as the impact our team has made in Georgia so far. The strategy clearly articulates TI Georgia's guiding principles and the link between our mission and the areas of our work. It is thus a reference for future decision-making, project planning and implementation.

The strategy was developed through internal and external consultation.

Organisational developments

Transparency International Georgia (TI Georgia) was established on 7 May 2000 as a local non-governmental organization committed to combating corruption in Georgia through the promotion of transparency and accountability. We are a member of the Transparency International (TI) movement, which is made up of over 100 independent National Chapters, 5 Individual Members and an International Secretariat in Berlin. We are the TI's national chapter in Georgia.

Staff and organizational capacity

TI Georgia recruits staff for permanent and project-based positions. We are an equal opportunity employer, striving to achieve diversity among personnel. The staff is deployed across six offices in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Telavi, Akhaltsikhe and Zugdidi. We also have three regional representatives in Gori, Gardabani and Ozurgeti.

The Tbilisi office staff members focus both on the local issues in Tbilisi and those of nationwide significance. We also have an office (including a Project Manager/Parliamentary Secretary, a Senior Analyst and a Senior Lawyer) in the Parliament (Tbilisi). The offices in Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Akhaltsikhe, Telavi and Batumi focus exclusively on regional issues. We have regional representatives in Gardabani, Ozurgeti and Gori, who are based at local NGOs and help build the capacities of those organizations in addition to working for TI Georgia. A regional offices manager, based in Tbilisi, coordinates the activities of the regional offices and regional representatives.

Staff members are supported by volunteers and interns. The internship program is used to promote activism and build skills among young Georgians, to extend the impact of TI Georgia's work, and to engage with prospective future staff members. As of December 2020, TI Georgia has a full-time staff of more than 45 people. In our attempt to put an emphasis on the work through volunteers, and generally our desire to promote volunteerism, TI Georgia has successfully rolled out a novel form of volunteer work throughout the regions of Georgia through the Committees of Concerned Citizens: groups of non-partisan socially active locals in different parts of the country whom we help to get mobilized and equipped to effectively work for the resolution of problems in their local communities.

TI Georgia has well-established human resources practices and policies which include rules for conduct, evaluation and promotion, recruitment, salary ranges, benefits and training, labor safety and health, anti-harassment. We have detailed financial and procurement manuals.

TI Georgia developed a crisis management plan that includes the list of risks that might occur, together with the risk mitigation strategies and risk response emergency procedures and

protocols. The crisis management document includes several management strategies of the risks like government attacks on TI Georgia, global pandemics like COVID 19 and etc.

Board

The Board is the highest governing body of TI Georgia. It sets the main directions of TI Georgia's activities. In addition, the Board oversees the work of the Executive Director. As of December 2020, TI Georgia has five members on its Board:

1. Mr. Shio Khetsuriani (Georgia), Chair
2. Mr. Andro Dgebuadze (Georgia)
3. Ms. Nino Chichua (Georgia)
4. Ms. Maia Mikashavidze (Georgia)
5. Ms. Sophie Panjikidze (Georgia)

Any updates to the composition of the Board are reflected in the official registration records published by the National Agency of Public Registry and the TI Georgia Charter which is published on the organization's website.

CONTEXT

In recent years, Georgia has experienced a number of setbacks in terms of the consolidation of democracy and the fight against corruption. The key challenges facing the country have remained unresolved and the situation has even worsened in some respects.

Looking Back

Freedom House's Nations in Transit index for 2014 gave Georgia an overall democracy score of 4.68 (with 7 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 1 the lowest). In 2020, the country has seen a drop to a score of 3.25 due to its failure to consolidate its democratic structures.

According to TI Georgia's 2020 National Integrity System (NIS) assessment (a methodology developed by the TI Secretariat to examine the resilience of a country's political system against corruption), most of Georgia's major institutions are currently unable to perform effectively their roles within the country's system of democratic governance, resulting, among other things, in significant problems in terms of combating corruption. Compared with the previous Georgian NIS assessment published in 2015, the performance of a majority of institutions has deteriorated and only the Public Defender has made notable progress.

Weak checks and balances are currently the primary challenge of Georgian democracy. This is the result of an insufficiently competitive political environment and the undue partisan and

informal influence over the system's main institutions, which has currently reached a scale where it can be described as state capture, since key public institutions increasingly serve private, rather than public, interests. The efforts to strengthen democratic governance must therefore focus in the coming years on eliminating undue influence and promoting political competition. This will create favourable conditions for the genuine independence of the system's key institutions and their effective operation.

Georgia's anti-corruption reforms have also stalled, with the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) assigning Georgia a score of 56 (on a 100-point scale) in 2019. This score, as well as the fact that it has not changed significantly since 2012 (when the current methodology for calculating CPI scores was introduced), points to the stagnation of anti-corruption efforts in the country.

The 2019 CPI score indicates that the country has not addressed the following problems highlighted in the last year's report: A lack of accountability of the law enforcement bodies; corruption and political interference in the judiciary; state capture; government-sponsored attacks on civil society; and the absence of an independent anti-corruption investigative agency.

Furthermore, major concerns still exist over concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the elite; lack of public trust in government and state institutions; the failure to establish an independent and professional civil service; low levels of citizen engagement and public dialogue; low levels of capacity in the media; and poor representation of women and minorities.

Meanwhile, there have been worrying trends in the judiciary where a group of senior judicial officials (the influential group of judges) appears to have established an informal system of control, exerting undue influence over judges and entering deals with the country's political leadership whereby courts deliver decisions favorable to the government in return for the ruling party's ensuring the decisions and policies favorable for the influential group, further strengthening their powers in the system and eventually abandoning the plans for a genuine reform of the judiciary. While this new arrangement is different from the kind of direct control that the executive branch exercised vis-a-vis courts before 2012, it still represents corruption of the judicial system and prevents the judicial branch from fulfilling its role in the democratic system of checks and balances.

A combination of these factors has created fertile ground for high-level corruption as the current situation makes it possible for the most influential members of the ruling party and those who have ties with them to enjoy nearly total impunity. The agencies responsible for investigating alleged cases of corruption (the Prosecutor's Office and the State Security Service) do not have the degree of political independence and professional autonomy that would enable them to effectively handle cases involving high-ranking officials and other influential individuals with links to the ruling party. Consequently, they have failed to follow up on any of the alleged cases of high-level corruption publicized by the media and civil society organizations.

In a particularly worrying recent trend, the ruling party's leadership has engaged in public attacks against civil society organizations, responding to the civil society's statements regarding possible cases of abuse of power by questioning the impartiality of these organizations and making baseless allegations regarding their links with the political opposition. The government further uses its influence over traditional media in addition to Facebook to attack NGOs. These attacks tend to be accompanied by social media campaigns where anonymous Facebook pages and accounts are spreading disinformation about Georgia's leading civil society organizations and their representatives. Facebook has confirmed the links between these pages/accounts and the Georgian Government and has deleted large numbers of them.

Such attacks (along with an often hostile attitude from the government) undermine the civil society's ability to productively contribute to public discourse and the policymaking process. CSOs are further weakened because they are dependent on the donor priorities at a great extent. The lack of institutional grants weakens their organizational development.

On the positive side, overall, Georgia continues to have a free environment for civil society organizations to operate, while the government's commitment to closer ties with the European Union is an important impetus for governance reform. Multiple positive changes have been made to the country's legislation since the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU in 2014 and the continuation of this process creates extensive opportunities for civil society organizations to conduct effective advocacy interventions.

Looking Forward

The period between 2021 and 2025 will be crucial for the future of democracy and good governance in Georgia. Regardless of the outcome of the ongoing talks over the disputed 2020 Parliamentary election results, the election and its runoff have demonstrated the worrying degree of political polarization. As of December 2020, there is a danger of ending up with a one-party Parliament, which would render the role of CSOs (as external checks on government power) even more important (due to the opposition's dropping out of the formal legislative process).

Disinformation and malign influence (including the efforts funded from abroad) targeting both political and civil society actors will continue to be a major problem. Disinformation remains a serious threat and growing challenge to Georgia's democratic trajectory and information integrity. Both the ruling party and major opposition parties are involved in the dissemination of the fake news. All of these expected developments present challenges, which our organization will need to take into consideration as it plans its activities for the next few years.

At the same time, the EU Association process will continue, which means that the government will be under sustained pressure to implement a set of ambitious reforms, including those

concerning democracy and public administration. This creates opportunities for civil society organizations to engage in advocacy efforts for better governance.

Key Priorities for 2021-2025

1. Contribute to reduced opportunities for corruption (including high-level corruption) in all branches of power through more effective anti-corruption legislation and practices; raise awareness of corruption amongst different target groups at the national and sub-national levels.
2. Promote the independence, transparency, accountability and integrity of the Parliament, as well as its effectiveness as an oversight institution.
3. Promote independence, transparency, accountability and integrity in the justice system.
4. Contribute to a more transparent, accountable and responsive local government.
5. Promoting independence, professionalism and investigative activities of journalists in order to empower the media as an anti-corruption watchdog.
6. Strengthen broader civil society by building the capacity of local grassroots organizations, informal civic groups, and individuals to monitor government and advocate citizen-driven initiatives and by raising awareness of the role and impact of the civil sector organizations among the general public.
7. Promote Volunteerism and engaging youth in the fight against corruption.
8. Support Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
9. Counter disinformation and promote unbiased information about Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
10. Promote the use of technology in the fight against corruption, including the monitoring of public procurement and the assets and interests of public officials.

What will get us there:

Vision

TI Georgia seeks to make Georgia a country which is free of corruption in all areas of public life. We believe that corruption arises primarily from the lack of transparency and accountability in government. We therefore consider promoting transparency and accountability the most fundamental element of our anti-corruption efforts.

We believe that corruption cannot be defeated through narrowly focused law enforcement work alone. It is necessary to reduce the opportunities for corruption through well-designed preventive measures.

Our view of corruption and the ways of eliminating it are based on Transparency International's theoretical framework of the National Integrity System which is defined as a set of institutions (both state and non-state) that all play an essential role in enhancing a country's resilience

against corruption. According to this framework, successful fight against corruption is impossible unless institutions such as the executive branch, the legislature, the judiciary, the media, the civil society, the private sector, and others are characterized by high levels of independence, transparency, accountability, and integrity.

Furthermore, we consider European and Euro-Atlantic integration essential to safeguarding Georgia's sustained democratic development and fight against corruption.

Mission

TI Georgia's main aim is to support state institutions that empower the people, develop good governance, and develop the rule of law. To do this, TI Georgia seeks to ensure the transparency and accountability of state institutions, and support fair and democratic elections. The organization aims to protect universally recognized human rights.

Profile

Founded in 2000, Contributing to more competitive political processes through greater transparency and accountability in political parties and electoral processes TI Georgia is one of the leading and most reputable non-governmental organizations in the country. TI Georgia worked hard to place and maintain anti-corruption reforms, transparency and accountability high on the government's agenda. We have gained very high visibility due to our quality research and advocacy. We have remained a leading civil society organization, pioneering the use of civic tech and citizen engagement platforms in Georgia. These were the goals of our Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and we were successful in attaining most of them.

TI Georgia is among the most reputable think tanks and most active and vibrant watchdog organizations in Georgia. Based on the findings of our research and monitoring, we produce policy papers and plan advocacy campaigns. Along with identifying problems, we work to strengthen the capacity of our stakeholders on the local and national level.

TI Georgia is committed to eradicating all forms of corruption in Georgia. To do this we have monitored the work of public institutions, engaged in advocacy on a wide range of important issues, mobilized the public and worked to empower citizens. We have undertaken to represent the interests of those who have been mistreated or suffered due to failures of governance. This includes vulnerable social and minority groups, business companies, civil servants, journalists -- anyone who is affected by government policies and practices that have been poorly formulated or implemented unfairly.

The past five years have been challenging for Georgia and TI Georgia has adapted and positioned itself to maximize its impact. Our ability to perform as a watchdog, think-tank, civic engagement facilitator, expert and capacity-builder has helped us be resilient to pressure.

These five roles will be relevant and help TI Georgia achieve its goals during the period of the next strategy.

1. Watchdog

TI Georgia has been operating as a watchdog for years and we have strengthened our capacity in this area as concerns have increasingly emerged over the process of policy and decision-making. We have played a critical role by closely monitoring the government's activities in the past years. We have served as a credible source of information for the public, the media and independent observers. Our watchdog work on political finance and monitoring of the electoral environment, government spending and cases of conflicts of interests have promoted integrity of the political and electoral processes. In our discussions with other civil society actors and the wider public in Georgia, this role has been highlighted as being of particular value and importance.

2. Think-tank

Over the past decade, TI Georgia has been a leading think tank engaged in policy analysis in the broad field of democracy and good governance. The organization has further expanded its activities and now covers most of the key areas of public policy and the majority of main public institutions. As a result, TI Georgia continuously generates up-to-date and in-depth information and expert knowledge in multiple fields. These include anti-corruption policy (including collection of evidence demonstrating the need for an independent anti-corruption agency -- a proposal which has now been presented to the Parliament), judicial reform, parliamentary democracy, local government, elections, political and campaign finance, media, economic policy, and healthcare.

TI Georgia has a 20-year-long experience of monitoring alleged cases of corruption, the media environment, the work of the Georgian Parliament, the operations of the judiciary and the elections in Georgia. While generally relying on in-house expertise TI Georgia also invites external independent specialists to collaborate on issues that require narrow specialization.

We are often approached for help by various public institutions to provide assistance in drafting action plans and amendments. The fact that public institutions request our assistance is due to a range of factors, including insufficient internal expert capacity, lack of resources, and lack of institutional memory. Moreover, it demonstrates the public service's view of TI Georgia as a fair and professional organization. When requests for assistance align with our mandate and knowledge, we provide expertise and technical support. We also found that developing staff capacity and cooperation with public institutions can support other activities we engage in to achieve change.

In certain cases, we provide our expert opinion at our own initiative, when we see that the issue is of vital importance for the Georgian public. When required, we practice soliciting outside expertise from an internationally acclaimed source.

3. Civic Engagement facilitator

Freedom and protection for key individuals and groups best placed to identify and expose corruption is central to effective checks on power. In the face of narrowing civic space, it is a fundamental requirement for ensuring power can be held to account for the common good. As a civil society enabler, we focus on:

- Working with partners from all walks of life to empower those who stand to lose from corruption, those willing to speak up and social actors seeking real change;
- Identifying and joining campaigns against barriers to the meaningful exercise of fundamental human rights of freedom of assembly, association and political expression, as well as the freedom of the media and the right of access to information;
- Forming coalitions to improve the effectiveness of these campaigns and of advocacy in general
- Promoting strong whistleblower protection laws, as well as their enforcement by authorities and implementation in workplaces;

We know that empowered citizens can be the best guardians of accountability and effectiveness in government programmes and initiatives, as well as corporations' responsibility to the community. Citizen-based initiatives such as community monitoring, social audits and participatory budgeting help ensure the best quality delivery of public goods. Where other checks and balances are absent or failing, social movements may be the best or only means by which political accountability for the use of entrusted power can be pursued. Thus it is important to continue our work in the following areas:

- Working with institutions and communities to ensure all necessary mechanisms for the beneficiaries of government programmes to be involved in their design and implementation;
- Advocating for the highest standards of right to information, including disclosure by default and open data standards;
- Facilitating innovation and use of technology to streamline and simplify processes for citizen input and engagement in public decision-making, and support their right to information, assemble, organise and mobilise peacefully for political accountability;
- Ensuring that women, ethnic minorities and marginalised groups are equally empowered to exercise their voice and choice in the name of integrity, accountability and anti-corruption.

4. Capacity-builder

Defending civic space is a further objective underpinning our entire strategy. It feeds directly into the goal of ensuring social action and oversight, without which checks and balances may not work and the government is unlikely to be held accountable. Integrity and accountability rely on the ability of people, community groups, whistleblowers and the media to stand up for what is right, expose abuse of power, pursue civic rights and remedies and trigger political change.

Transparency International Georgia has established itself as a lead trainer for a number of practitioners ranging from journalists to officials in the municipalities, parliamentary staff and MPs.

TI Georgia aims to serve as a capacity builder for civil society organizations. Along with conducting training sessions and workshops for them, we have three regional representatives based in the offices of local NGOs in different parts of Georgia and they serve as mentors for the local staff. TI Georgia also considers distributing small grants in future in order to further strengthen the capacity of the local organizations.

Stakeholders

To make our work more effective, we recognize that we need to work with people, as individuals and as part of collective action, and encourage them to engage in anti-corruption efforts.

Operating in a highly polarized environment, we are committed to remaining objective, fair, impartial and neutral in our work. TI Georgia endeavors to be open, honest and accountable in its relations with everyone we work with.

1. Government institutions

The implementation of TI Georgia's last Strategy demonstrated to us the importance of engaging and working collaboratively with the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches of government, as well as with local government bodies, when and where there are opportunities for this. Such collaboration is essential to successful advocacy for reforms and improved practices.

As a watchdog, however, TI Georgia will not refrain from criticizing government actions when it exercises poor judgment in policy areas. In all of our interactions, we aim to retain a professional and constructive relationship with all government agencies, as well as all political parties.

We are often invited to collaborate by various governmental agencies and commissions and our contribution is usually welcomed because of its high quality. We often deliver training and capacity building to civil servants, upon request or at our initiative. This, once again, proves that the government recognizes us as an important partner.

2. General public

In order to achieve real change, TI Georgia recognizes it needs to change behavior of individuals and institutions involved in governance. This, in turn, requires public support. Without informed citizens acting to protect their interests, our efforts will be unsustainable. In the past years, TI Georgia has advocated on issues by first gaining public support. TI Georgia considers the general public not only a partner that supports us but as a “customer” whose requirements we endeavor to meet. This is why we constantly conduct public opinion surveys which have been helpful for us in measuring public perception of the success of these efforts. We have found that young people are especially motivated to engage, as are citizens living outside the capital. TI Georgia, therefore, plans to put even more emphasis on engaging these groups in the years to come.

We plan to do so through regular community consultations, civic engagement campaigns, promotion of volunteerism and crowdsourcing of opportunities.

3. Political parties

As a government watchdog, TI Georgia is an important point of reference for political parties. We understand the importance of not being viewed as affiliated with any individual party. We aim to facilitate the political process in general and try to promote an environment where political parties carefully listen to public needs and effectively communicate their political agenda with them.

We work with political parties mostly in the context of elections. We monitor if the ruling party and incumbent candidates misuse administrative resources or engage in other types of unlawful or unfair practices vis-a-vis other candidates. We also monitor party and campaign finance and watch out for suspicious cases and trends (such as public procurement kickbacks in the form of campaign donations). In all instances where irregularities are noted, we report on them publicly, advocate for improvements in the law and in practice, and defend the interests of those whose rights have been violated.

4. Civil society, academia and the private sector

To achieve our mission, TI Georgia will continue working with all interested groups that can make valuable and significant contributions to the promotion of transparency and accountability in Georgia. Such groups may include national and local civil society organizations, members of the academia, and representatives of the private sector. We will work as part of, and engage

our partners, through networks and coalitions, meetings, training sessions, mentoring and awareness raising.

5. Media

During the last strategy period TI Georgia actively collaborated with media organizations operating in Georgia. Media outlets play a vital role in the country and remain our important partner enabling us to deliver our messages to the general public.

Editorial independence in the media is vital for a functioning democracy. It is, therefore, one of our main priorities to defend reporters from undue government interference. TI Georgia will continue monitoring and reporting on the freedom of the media and the environment in which they operate.

TI Georgia will continue to monitor the performance of the Public Broadcaster and of the media regulatory authority. The independence and institutional impartiality of both institutions are crucial for safeguarding a free domain for public debates.

Transparency of media ownership contributes to a more diverse and pluralistic media landscape. TI Georgia will continue to monitor the current status and possible changes of the ownership of major media outlets in order to identify potential influence of political, business, financial or other types of interests.

Disinformation poses a serious threat to the Georgian media environment which remains politicised and polarized. We will therefore continue to monitor and expose the activities of different domestic and foreign groups disseminating disinformation and inciting hatred and violence, informing the public about the persons behind these efforts and their targets.

Financial independence remains one of the key components of the freedom of the media. For more than 10 years now, TI Georgia has conducted regular studies of the Georgian television advertising market in order to identify its most significant trends. TI Georgia will continue to monitor this market along with the sources of funding of the media.

We constantly provide support and training for the journalists working for media outlets in Tbilisi and in the regions on research tools and methods, as well as standards of professional journalism. TI Georgia furthermore protects the rights of journalists by providing free legal consultation and representation of their interests in court, and also responds publicly to any threats against them and violations of their rights. We analyze proposed legislation which affects the freedom of the media and freedom of expression, and advocate for the protection of the journalists' rights and improvement of their working conditions.

6. External stakeholders

TI Georgia is also monitoring Georgia's compliance with various international commitments, including those under the EU-Georgia Association Agenda and the OECD Istanbul Action Plan, delivering our findings to the relevant international actors.

Moreover, the broad scope of TI Georgia's research provides outstanding amounts of high-quality research and evidence which the governments of the countries that are Georgia's partners often rely on as they design their cooperation and aid programmes.

DRIVING CHANGE

What we have learned

During the period of 2016-2020, TI Georgia learned many lessons that will affect how we implement future activities and how we operate. Below are several of the most important take-aways for the next four years:

1. Investing in local legitimacy: For any civil society organization to be able to influence the public discourse on important issues, it needs to be seen as legitimate. TI Georgia's work targets diverse audiences and there are multiple actors that we aim to influence in order to achieve good governance outcomes. This means that we must maintain our legitimacy with a wide range of stakeholders. Among our international partners, legitimacy is maintained through the high quality of our analysis. The quality of advice we provide on a range of issues within our mandate is critical.

In the government's case too, it is important to provide sound, realistic and workable recommendations based on solid research and evidence. As for the Georgian public, legitimacy can be achieved and maintained by addressing effectively the issues of governance which the people consider important and are concerned about. In the coming years, we plan to strengthen grassroots community work. We cannot succeed as an organization without local support, just as we cannot succeed without securing high-level backing for reforms.

2. Investing in an improved evidence base: We believe in the power of showing over telling and will maintain our track record of excellence in providing solid evidence for our recommendations, policies and actions. Technology will be an important element of our work in the coming years. We will seek to continue to find new and innovative ways to strengthen the evidence base of our work, in partnership with practitioners, academics, journalists and affected stakeholders.

3. Tracking our impact: The nature of our work makes it challenging to assess its impact. Complex nature of the policymaking process and the multitude of factors at play make it difficult to attribute impact. This means we need a holistic approach, one that captures incremental changes and our contribution to those changes, as well as the wider impact.

Along with measuring the extent to which our strategic goals have been achieved, we aim to establish the extent of TI Georgia's contribution to specific outcomes by combining a number of proxy indicators, such as the organization's prominence in the media, as well as the awareness of the organization's activities among the general public.

4. Improving sustainability: TI Georgia's holistic approach of capacity-strengthening not only invests in improved skills, knowledge and guidance of local partners, but it also challenges entrenched norms to sustain social and behavior change long after the project's end. This, in turn, contributes to increased ownership and capacity, and ultimately builds up to improved political will. Going forward, TI Georgia can focus on three main strategies to support sustainability and contribute to lasting change by:

- Empowering civil society activists at the grassroots level and involving volunteers in our work;
- Spreading knowledge among partner organizations, local activists, and the media;
- Building coalitions and implementing broad-based advocacy campaigns on issues related to corruption.

This approach ultimately facilitates the development of activities that continue beyond the lifetime of an individual project and reinforcing partnerships that can be sustained. In turn, it contributes to the sustainability of media and CSOs that are committed and enabled to meet public needs in the long term.

5. Improving value for money also goes hand in hand with improving sustainability. Since TI Georgia works on a wide range of issues related to transparency and accountability across all branches and all levels of government, we've found that the key to maximising the impact of our activities lies in not over-stretching our resources and using existing infrastructure in place, such as using collaborative co-working spaces for CSOs in the regions. TI Georgia has also invested in minimising waste and recycling to both cut costs and be environmentally conscious. Going forward, we will follow media consumption trends in the country to best capitalise upon distribution streams that will reach audiences.

6. Upscaling to tech-savvy project management: TI Georgia has recently sought to tap into the power of new technological advances to improve its productivity and efficiency and streamline its resource management. New management software has produced many benefits including improved planning and scheduling, better collaboration, effective task delegation, simpler file access and sharing, easier integration of new members, effective risk mitigation, budget management, ability to work remotely, and enhanced productivity.

TI Georgia monitors all ongoing project activities through the internal project management, HR/ADM software - www.tigoffice.ge. The software consists of two major parts: one deals with internal management of financial, procurement, HR and administrative tasks - acting as an

internal document management and workflow system, and while the other is a project management software for all the projects in the organization.

A significant advantage of project management software is that it makes effective collaboration extremely simple. It keeps all communication in the same place. Data like project finances and status updates can be accessed easily with a single click and important alerts can be automatically sent to the relevant parties. Through the use of new software, TI Georgia has improved the process of cross-checking project implementation against the proposed activities and the timeline as well as supporting programme managers in collating, reviewing and following up on outcomes on a semi-annual and annual basis. Moreover, the software gives a clear picture of the financial standing according to the existing projects. Budget transactions and any purchases are automatized and all transactions are reflected in the software.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Capitalizing on opportunities

In the upcoming years of 2021-2025, TI Georgia can set its goals knowing that there is a **greater understanding and awareness** of corruption across the country and much lower toleration by many communities. **Political participation** has been on the rise over the past decade, thanks in part to new technologies and platforms that have helped boost awareness, information and opportunities.

Instant communication and **new forms of digital engagement** will continue to redefine politics and public policy processes, with young people leading the way. This trend has been accelerated by crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The shock of the pandemic has also awakened society to the cost of misinformation, bringing new debate on the importance of **reliable official information and expertise**, as well as new initiatives and regulation to combat the damaging impacts of fake news and media manipulation in their many new forms.

Other positive **technological advances** show no signs of slowing. In governance and civil society, technology is expanding the reach and efficiency of accountability programmes beyond what was previously imaginable. From blockchain-based land registries to algorithmic detection of fraud in procurement, from real-time disclosure of political donations to increased use of open data by anti-corruption reformers, we live in a new landscape of integrity and compliance tools.

This also brings fresh impetus for calls for transparency and accountability in economic activities, generating stronger support for ending the channels by which wealthy companies and individuals evade taxes or engage in various types of illicit financial dealings.

Accordingly, the framework below sets out the key elements to capitalise upon as TI Georgia sets its priorities and vision for measurable change.

Achieving these changes relies on a holistic approach, encompassing the roles and relationships of government, business and civil society. It means better confronting the interconnections between anti-corruption efforts at both the local and national level. Crucially,

to address the extent of the challenges ahead, it means not only having **institutions** in place, but building or strengthening:

- The **values and awareness** at the heart of entrusted power
- The **freedoms** that enable citizens to fulfill their accountability roles; and
- The **actions** at the local and national level that will ensure that entrusted power is held to account, for the common good.

EXTERNAL PRIORITIES

TI Georgia has elaborated a Theory of Change (ToC) which identifies areas of focus and priorities. Activities that TI Georgia will engage in for the period of this strategy will align with and support the outcomes identified in the ToC (please see ANNEX I).

Goal: A mature Democracy and Society - free of corruption, inclusive, fair, transparent and accountable					
↑ Purpose: National and Local Government operates in a transparent and accountable manner					
Objective 1: Contribute to a more transparent and accountable executive branch	Objective 2: Contribute to a more transparent and accountable legislative branch	Objective 3: Contribute to a Judiciary that is transparent and accountable	Objective 4: Contribute to more transparent, accountable and responsive local government	Objective 5: Empower media as an Anti-corruption watchdog	Objective 6: Support Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration
Outcome 1.1: The executive branch and all its agencies and sub-agencies operate with higher levels of transparency, accountability and integrity.	Outcome 2.1: Legislative processes are more transparent and accountable	Outcome 3.1: Judicial appointments are made in a fair and transparent manner	Outcome 4.1: City Hall (executive branch) is more transparent in its operation	Outcome 5.1: Independence, Professionalism and investigative activities of the journalists are promoted	Outcome 6.1: Disinformation is countered and unbiased information about Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration is promoted
Outcome 1.2: The public officials' connections and dealings with business are more transparent.	Outcome 2.2: MP and parliamentary administration relationships with business are more transparent and free of corruption	Outcome 3.2: Judicial decisions are free from political interference and based on good jurisprudence	Outcome 4.2: City Council (legislative branch) is more transparent and accountable	Outcome 5.2: Close cooperation with local, national and international media is ensured	

Outcome 1.3: The Parliament, the judiciary and other relevant institutions exercise more effective oversight of the executive branch.	Outcome 2.3: The operation of committees and commissions are more transparent and accountable		Outcome 4.3: Citizen issues and needs are better understood and enacted within the competencies and mandate of the local government		
Outcome 1.4: The civil services operates with higher levels of independence, transparency, accountability, and integrity.	Outcome 2.4: Elections are free fair and transparent		Outcome 4.4: There is less outside political and other interference in local government operations		
Outcome 1.5: More effective mechanisms are in place to fight high-level corruption; Independent Anti-corruption agency is established	Outcome 2.5: Parliament effectively exercises its oversight function over the executive branch		Outcome 4.5: Local government elections are free, fair and transparent		
Outcome 1.7: State Audit office is more effective in terms of monitoring Government spending and political party financing	Outcome 2.6: Citizen Participation in the legislative process is ensured				
Cross cutting issue 1: The public is engaged to provide oversight on government actions					
Cross cutting issue 2: Gender mainstreaming					
Cross cutting issue 3: Volunteerism is promoted and youth is engaged in fight against corruption					
Cross cutting issue 4: Use of technology in the fight against corruption is promoted					

Some expected areas to be prioritized include:

- Contribute to reduced opportunities for corruption (including high-level corruption) in all branches of power through more effective anti-corruption legislation and practices; raise awareness of corruption amongst different target groups at the national and sub-national levels.
- Promote the independence, transparency, accountability and integrity of the Parliament, as well as its effectiveness as an oversight institution.
- Promote independence, transparency, accountability and integrity in the justice system.
- Contribute to a more transparent, accountable and responsive local government.
- Promoting independence, professionalism and investigative activities of journalists in order to empower the media as an anti-corruption watchdog.
- Strengthen broader civil society by building the capacity of local grassroots organizations, informal civic groups, and individuals to monitor government and advocate citizen-driven initiatives and by raising awareness of the role and impact of the civil sector organizations among the general public.
- Promote Volunteerism and engaging youth in the fight against corruption.
- Support Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
- Counter disinformation and promote unbiased information about Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
- Promote the use of technology in the fight against corruption, including the monitoring of public procurement and the assets and interests of public officials.

TI Georgia has previously focused much of its attention in these areas. There has been a good deal of progress across all branches of government, however continued focus is needed to ensure backsliding does not occur. Activities under each objective area will be identified and prioritized based on rigorous and on-going needs assessments, horizon scanning and identification of opportunities. The objectives and outcomes have been further elaborated in the appendix.

Types of actions taken to achieve the above objectives include the following:

1. Conducting objective, insightful and comprehensive analysis

Thorough, objective, insightful analysis is our core institutional strength. It provides the evidence-base for our other activities. Over the next four years, TI Georgia will work to further improve the impact of the research and analysis it produces. TI Georgia is dedicated to providing reliable, fact-based and fair analysis that has a level of depth and detail necessary to influence and shape policy debates.

We will conduct comprehensive surveys and analysis of public opinion to learn how the public defines corruption and whether people consider various corruption-related activities a crime or not. This will give us a clearer idea of how we need to plan our anti-corruption activities.

At the same time, we aim to communicate our work so that interested non-experts can easily follow and understand our research and recommendations. For this to be possible, we intend to actively use visualizations, infographics and videos and make our products simple and more

understandable. Cooperation with creative consulting companies and engagement with youth in our activities will also help our work in this regard. Active social media campaigns will enable us to raise public awareness of corruption.

2. Effectively employing proactive and reactive advocacy to ensure increased transparency and accountability of the public and the private sectors

TI Georgia effectively employs advocacy to ensure that past successes in increasing transparency are solidified and future goals are achieved. This is done in part by responding to new initiatives and policy proposals coming out of the Parliament or the executive branch.

As we foster engagement with larger groups of society, we seek to represent more voices and more people with our advocacy efforts. We, therefore, also work to focus on proactive advocacy on important policy issues. We aim to trigger and shape discussions about political accountability and strengthening democratic institutions in Georgia. During the previous strategy period we found it effective to submit our own legislative proposals and plan to continue this practice. When possible, these will be followed by public advocacy campaigns around them to gain support and raise awareness.

During the upcoming strategy period we expect intensified pressure on civil society organizations, so we will conduct pro-active, awareness raising campaigns about the role and impact of the civil society organizations and benefits of their work for individual citizens. Being in the proactive regime with our global partners and attaching the local problems to the international context will help our advocacy become more effective. We will think globally and act locally when it comes to targeting corruption. This is why we plan to actively engage in global kleptocracy and anti-money laundering initiatives.

We have also found that strategic litigation is an effective tool to influence government. When within its mandate, TI Georgia will undertake legal action to defend the rights of those who have suffered due to lack of legislation, poor quality of existing laws and/or their poor enforcement.

3. Promoting broad public engagement in TI Georgia's work so that TI Georgia's activities reflect the needs and interests of parties from all parts of Georgian society

We strive to promote broad public engagement in our work. This ensures that TI Georgia's activities reflect the needs and interests of the public from all parts of Georgia. We have employed new ways of engaging people and communicating in a way that makes our research and analysis interesting and relevant for larger audiences. These range from technical solutions to tours of Georgian regions for community consultations.

At the same time, we try to ensure that our communication is not a one-way street: We want citizens to share their views with us. We aim to engage with the public and to work together towards a positive impact in communities. Our recent initiative of the Committees of Concerned Citizens greatly contributes to this cause.

In order to ensure more public engagement, identifying our partners and planning our activities in close coordination with them would greatly help us be more effective. Establishing the network of partners who share the same values will help us reach larger audiences and promote broader public engagement.

Close cooperation with local, national and international media will greatly help us in promoting public engagement. It is crucial that the media coverage of our research and findings is a constant and not a one time process. It is crucial that TI's partnership with the media is an ongoing and mutually beneficial process to entail not only coverage of our research, findings, and initiatives but also assistance to media's own watchdog activities and investigations.

4. Supporting TI Georgia's activities with innovative uses of technology, recognizing that new technologies offer increasingly powerful ways of improving the scope, reach, and impact of our work

We seek to support all of our activities with innovative uses of technology. We recognize that new technologies will allow our work to be more collaborative. New technology, thus, offers increasingly powerful ways of enhancing the scope, the reach, and the impact of our work. TI Georgia extensively uses new tools and technologies to monitor governmental institutions and processes, share its work, engage in discussions, receive information and feedback, and connect groups of individuals who care about similar issues. At the same time, new technological tools allow us to initiate new forms of communication between citizens and authorities. They can create a sphere that allows individuals to make their voices heard and their concerns be taken seriously. We actively share our innovative approaches with partner watchdog organizations and the media.

INTERNAL PRIORITIES

Improving impact and learning: TI Georgia could benefit from adopting a more robust, collaborative learning framework that will provide a regular source of valuable evidence for the program managers to use to reflect and adapt activity and training design and to feed into broader learning outcomes. Central to this learning framework could be the creation of opportunities for TI Georgia to continuously work with a wide range of its key stakeholders to incorporate voices, experiences and reflections from across its project spectrum of actors.

Improving monitoring and evaluation: We aim to have an agile Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework which is flexible and responsive to different approaches, with a more reflective processes to foster a learning and sharing culture will capture success and failures alike, equipping our decision-making with the tactical information needed to maintain and strengthen our daily work for the common good.

Through greater emphasis on the complexity and interconnection of our objectives and outcomes, and on bridging our national and international activities, we can develop more robust, streamlined ways of monitoring and evaluating our achievements and continually strengthening our understanding of what works to fight corruption.

ANNEX I

Theory of Change

During 2020 TI Georgia has developed the new strategy for 2021-2025. As part of this process, the organisation as a whole clarified how it understood change to occur, and how it identified and prioritised areas of activities.

The scope of the strategy and the Theory of Change is ambitious, and beyond any claims of attribution. It is based on extensive consultation, and should be understood as being targeted across the realms defined and understood as being part of the integrity system: public sector governance institutions, implementation and enforcement agencies (law enforcement, audit bodies, etc) and the media. It is informed by a holistic approach to integrity as understood and defined by the National Integrity Systems survey.

Strong democratic systems are made up of a web of interdependent agencies, legislation and policies. These are mutually reinforcing (both for positive and for negative). As such, any intervention designed to improve governance must include consideration of the full range of

actors in the governance space and how they interact. Any gains in one area will support improvements in other areas, while equally any weaknesses in one agency can undermine progress across the sector.

It is understood that the achievement of the overarching goal cannot and will not be the result of solely TI Georgia's work, and this Theory of Change does not define all aspects of activities needed for their achievement.

In each area of focus, the theory of change considers how to achieve not just improved policies on paper, but actual behaviour change within the organisations. As such, the theory of change includes consideration of behavioural models, with a focus on an information-deficit model. This model understands that without sufficient information actors cannot improve or change their behaviour. However, knowledge alone will not result in systematic organisational and individual behaviour change. Therefore across all objectives, the strategy aims to build the capacity of key champions of change and decision-makers to act in a more accountable and transparent manner, while systematically reducing corruption vulnerabilities. In addition, across all pillars there is the need to incentivise change. This comes from public scrutiny and the media (a cross-cutting theme) and from breaking down patronage networks that encourage and embed corrupt practices within government.

At the highest level, the Theory of Change looks at key weaknesses across the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the national government; and the entirety of local government in one outcome. The reasoning behind this being that at the national level there is the opportunity to engage with all three branches separately and independently of projects occurring in other branches. While this work would be mutually reinforcing, weaknesses at the national level need to be considered both as part of the whole, and within pillars. In contrast, at the local government level all branches of government are considered within one outcome – this is because informal ties at the local government level cross branches more frequently and in more complex webs than at the national level; it would not be feasible or appropriate to engage with one branch of local government without engaging with the others. Equally, it would be unhelpful to engage with local legislatures as part of engagement with national legislature (or with local executive, as part of engagement with national) as the opportunities and risks are not identical, and specific tailored responses and engagement processes are needed.

Cross-cutting issues are identified thus, as they are issues that need to be considered in engagement with all branches of government and at all levels.

Objective 1: Executive Branch

Objective 1: Contribute to a more transparent and accountable executive branch
Outcome 1.1: The executive branch and all its agencies and sub-agencies operate with higher levels of transparency, accountability and integrity.
Outcome 1.2: The public officials' connections and dealings with business are more transparent.

Outcome 1.3: The Parliament, the judiciary and other relevant institutions exercise more effective oversight of the executive branch.
Outcome 1.4: The civil services operates with higher levels of independence, transparency, accountability, and integrity.
Outcome 1.5: More effective mechanisms are in place to fight high-level corruption; Independent Anti-corruption agency is established
Outcome 1.7: State Audit office is more effective in terms of monitoring Government spending and political party financing

The logic of the Theory of Change is based on an understanding of the role of a sound system of checks and balances in ensuring government accountability.

Key weaknesses identified by the 2020 NIS for the executive branch, and by the Nations in Transit report include poor implementation in practice of sound rules covering integrity and transparency, informal influence, highly politicized and insufficiently autonomous civil service, including the law enforcement agencies. Based on these findings, and expert knowledge the Theory of Change has focussed on relevant remedies and pathways of change that might be activated.

Outcome 1.1 covers prevention of corruption within the executive branch and all its components, which can only be achieved by ensuring that the relevant agencies operate with appropriate levels of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Poor enforcement of the relevant laws and regulations is an important challenge in this respect, along with undue external influence on the activities of these institutions.

Outcome 1.2 has a specific focus on ministers and other high-level public officials. As the senior decision-makers of the executive branch their conduct as individuals and as representatives of their organisations sets an example and the tone for appropriate public disclosure. Currently, conflict of interest rules and the regulations governing the relations between public officials and private sector entities are not enforced effectively. For this reason, engagement at a policy-level and then at an enforcement level is needed for the achievement of this outcome and to support the achievement of other outcomes under the executive branch.

Outcome 1.3 covers the range of government bodies that under the constitution and under good democratic practice ought to act as oversight and constraint on the power wielded by the executive branch. This outcome is the ‘stick’ to encourage behaviour change throughout the executive. However, weaknesses in practice have resulted in this group of actors being an ineffective control. Therefore, the strengthening of these actors through improved capacity and knowledge – and the removal of obstacles – will support objective 1.

Outcome 1.4 is focused on the problems of the civil service which currently lacks a sufficient degree of autonomy because of the undue influence from the ruling party. Promoting stronger safeguards against such influence and facilitating the establishment of an autonomous and professional civil service will be our priority in this area.

Outcome 1.5 Georgia's law enforcement agencies have proven unable to effectively address the cases of corruption involving high-level public officials and other influential individuals or groups. TI Georgia will continue to advocate for the establishment of an independent multi-role anti-corruption agency that will be equipped with the necessary powers and resources while also being insulated from any type of undue external influence.

Outcome 1.6 covers the State Audit Office which has a special role as the primary institution responsible for monitoring the spending of public funds, as well as an additional responsibility of overseeing party and campaign finance. This dual role makes the State Audit Office a particularly significant institution in terms of the prevention and detection of corruption and thus a focus of TI Georgia's work.

Objective 2: Legislative Branch

Objective 2: Contribute to a more transparent and accountable legislative branch
Outcome 2.1: Legislative processes are more transparent and accountable
Outcome 2.2: MP and parliamentary administration relationships with business are more transparent and free of corruption
Outcome 2.3: The operation of committees and commissions are more transparent and accountable
Outcome 2.4: Elections are free fair and transparent
Outcome 2.5: Parliament effectively exercises its oversight function over the executive branch
Outcome 2.6: Citizen Participation in the legislative process is ensured

The parliament under the Georgian Constitution is both the law-making body of the country and holds a wide array of powers to oversee and investigate government activities, override a presidential veto and remove government.

The legislative processes are complex, and there are many opportunities for them to be managed poorly and to undermine accountability. In the research and development of the theory of change, it was noted that in many instances the committee hearings are held in such a way as to undermine public participation and oversight.

For this reason, outcome 2.1 works to improve the processes of the legislature.

The legislative process in the Parliament is characterized by several shortcomings, including the substance of the legislation, adoption procedures and the engagement of citizens in the process (outcome 2.6). TI Georgia will continue its work on improving legislation, namely the analysis of draft laws, identifying shortcomings in terms of human rights and compliance with the Constitution and issuing of recommendations to the Parliament. If an adopted law is not in

compliance with the Constitution then our organization will address the Constitutional Court, as it has done so in the past.

The openness and transparency of the legislative process has significantly improved over the past couple of years, which can be partially attributed to our recommendations and engagement in the work of the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council. There is a lot to be done in the future for improving the legislative process. This is why we are planning to continue working in the Consultative Group of the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council and publishing monitoring reports and recommendations on its activities.

Outcome 2.2 deals with the lack of enforcement of anti-corruption and integrity mechanisms covering MPs' conflict of interest and attestations. There is a lack of a body with the mandate to investigate and enforce anti-corruption rules and procedures. This results in missing or incomplete pecuniary interest documentation, or false and misleading documentation. As it stands, members of civil society, including Transparency International Georgia have been investigating published attestations, and raising awareness on this issue. But while the Civil Service Bureau has no mandate to investigate the honesty and completeness of the documents they publish, there is a serious corruption vulnerability and questionable transparency in this space.

Outcome 2.3 deals with the range of committees in parliament that have specific functions, and sometimes operate more as a rubber stamp than as a form of review.

Elections are an important method of ensuring the accountability of parliament. While they are managed by the executive branch, their purpose is to hold the elected officials of the legislature to account. Therefore outcome 2.4 covers the role of elections as tools of accountability. In Georgia, frequent changes in electoral legislation, weaknesses in electoral management and lack of transparency in electoral processes and finances risk undermining this important tool. Improvements have been made in regulation for managing complaints, although in practice complaints are still poorly handled. There have also been improvements with financial oversight of electoral funds being moved to the State Audit Office, however the misuse of state resources for campaigning remains a concern.

According to the Constitutional amendments that entered into force in 2018, Georgia moved to a parliamentary system of governance. Strong parliamentary control and effective oversight mechanisms (Outcome 2.5) is particularly important within a parliamentary republic. It is important for all parliamentary subjects, committees and factions to be involved in the process of parliamentary control. Furthermore, the role of the opposition is important in the oversight function as well as in the work of the parliamentary committees. TI Georgia will support the development of parliamentary control through its monitoring efforts, identifying shortcomings and issuing of recommendations.

Objective 3: Judicial Branch

Objective 3: Contribute to a Judiciary that is transparent and accountable

Outcome 3.1: Judicial appointments are made in a fair and transparent manner
Outcome 3.2: Judicial decisions are free from political interference and based on good jurisprudence

The judicial branch here is dealt with in lesser detail than the other branches. This is because there are fewer entrances and levers for engagement. Thus the primary objective will be the wide scale monitoring and advocacy. Outcomes 3.1 and 3.2 deal with the management of the judiciary and the processes of case progression.

Objective 4: Local Government

Objective 4: Contribute to more transparent, accountable and responsive local government
Outcome 4.1: City Hall (executive branch) is more transparent in its operation
Outcome 4.2 :City Council (legislative branch) is more transparent and accountable
Outcome 4.3: Citizen issues and needs are better understood and enacted within the competencies and mandate of the local government
Outcome 4.4: There is less outside political and other interference in local government operations
Outcome 4.5: Local government elections are free, fair and transparent

Local government is a reflection of the work we undertake at a national level, but with a reduced scope. This reflects both the comparatively weaker power and institutions of the local governments, and TI Georgia's capacity to engage at the local government level.

The logic of the intervention revolves around ensuring the entire system of integrity is promoted, across the different branches of government at the local level. This is done through improved public engagement, transparency and accountability. As above, a range of levers are identified – regulation, capacity and public scrutiny. There will be a focus on improving public engagement particularly in relation to social policy (including education, health and urban development).

Objective 5: Media

Objective 5: Empower media as an Anti-corruption watchdog
Outcome 5.1: Independence, Professionalism and investigative activities of the journalists are promoted
Outcome 5.2: Close cooperation with local, national and international media is ensured

Objective 6: Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration

Objective 6: Support Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration
Outcome 6.1: Disinformation is countered and unbiased information about Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration is promoted

Cross-cutting issues

Cross cutting issue 1: The public is engaged to provide oversight on government actions
Cross cutting issue 2: Gender mainstreaming
Cross cutting issue 3: Volunteerism is promoted and youth is engaged in fight against corruption
Cross cutting issue 4: Use of technology in the fight against corruption is promoted

Citizen engagement, empowerment and oversight provides the demand for good governance, and is an important aspect of accountability. Evidence from a range of transparency, accountability and open government evaluations have shown that without bottom up advocacy, strong civil society and engaged citizens, the government will not take necessary steps to improve its performance. It is for this reason that citizen engagement and oversight has been noted as a cross-cutting issue for TI Georgia.

Gender awareness and gender inclusiveness in Georgia – in civil society and in government – remains weak. Gender assessments of legislation are not conducted, and the understanding of differential impacts of policy design and implementation is minimal. TI Georgia itself does not have the skills internally to conduct gender assessments of programs or program implementation. Therefore this cross-cutting issue will involve developing our internal capacity, and inviting other civil society organizations and interested members of government to participate in training.

Conclusion and next steps

This theory of change is the initial step in the development of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for the 2016-2020 strategy. It outlines the understood logic of TI Georgia's interventions. It can provide guidance on how, where and when to engage with government and civil society actors. And allows for monitoring along expected pathways of change.

It is necessary for TI Georgia to build in this theory of change in developing a monitoring and evaluation framework. This process should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators with clear and useful data sources.

As far as is practicable, TI Georgia should consider using the range of international research on the country to assist in the monitoring of the impact of the strategy. These include : Freedom House's Nations in Transit; World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index; World Bank Government Effectiveness score; Freedom House's Freedom in the World score; Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (conducted by the TI Secretariat, independently of TI Georgia) and National Integrity Systems survey (conducted by TI Georgia with oversight

from a panel of experts). In addition there are a range of available regular domestic surveys, including National Democratic Institute polls, International Republican Institute polls and the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC) Caucasus Barometer. By using existing monitoring data it would significantly reduce the cost of monitoring and evaluation for the programme.

It would be advisable for the organisation to conduct an evaluation at the halfway point of the strategy, to confirm that change is happening as expected. This evaluation could also assist in any reorienting that might be needed, due to changes in the operating environment.