

**External Evaluation Report
of Penal Reform International's EU-Funded Project**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ENP AP	EU-Georgia European Neighbourhood Policy and Action Plan
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FOI	Freedom of Information
GoG	Government of Georgia
ICC	Interagency Coordination Council
HRC	Human Rights Center
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MCLA	Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism under the Office of the Public Defender
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PDO	Office of the Public Defender (Ombudsman)
PRI	Penal Reform International South Caucasus Regional Office
RIVG	Rehabilitation Initiative of Vulnerable Groups
RoL	Rule of Law
SPS	Special Penitentiary Service
TA	Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Penal Reform International's South Caucasus Office commissioned an external evaluation of its EU-funded project *Monitoring Government's Commitments and Promoting the Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of CSOs*, which it implemented in partnership with Human Rights Center (HRC) and Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups (RIVG). The evaluation was conducted from September 15 through November 17, 2020.

The project's theory of change underscores the importance of civic monitoring and advocacy actions and societal support for well-functioning penitentiary and probation system in Georgia, so that it protects the rights of inmates and prepares them for reentry into society. To be successful in this effort, CSOs need to cooperate, develop their capacity, and engage in evidence-based advocacy, to build momentum for increased humanization and liberalization of penitentiary and probation system. To balance the absence of political will to effect real changes, CSOs must reach out to others in society and receive support and solidarity from likeminded organizations abroad. By supporting CSOs in finding a unified voice for penal and probation system reforms and by strengthening their capacity in evidence-based monitoring and advocacy, the project partners support enhanced policy dialogue and contribute to creation of a criminal justice system that has trust and confidence of all stakeholders.

Findings

1. Relevance

The relevance of the evaluated project was found to be high, in terms of alignment with the priorities of the call for proposals, the EU-Georgia Association Agenda, the GoG's declared priorities, and underlying needs in Georgia. The evaluator noted an excellent practice of involving future beneficiaries and implementers in the elaboration of the project proposal and confirmed the project's responsiveness to the needs of the beneficiaries throughout the entire implementation period.

2. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The project was found to be both effective and efficient. Its overall objective was accomplished and all outputs mostly delivered as planned. Deviations from the original implementation plan were significantly more than could have been anticipated at the project design stage, due to the transfer of prisons under the purview of MoJ's Special Penitentiary Service (SPS) and the COVID-19 pandemic. The former had significantly more impact on achieving some of the projected outputs under Outcomes 1 and 3. The inputs made were utilized appropriately, with savings achieved, which allowed the project implementers to divert the savings toward additional activities, most notably on student and media competitions. The project had good outreach on the level of the target group and government actors, which ensured effectiveness and efficiency. The project management, financial management included, did not pose any issues.

3. Impact

The project was able to reach both micro and macro level impact, through creating valuable evidence for policy dialogue and building thematic and advocacy capacities of civil society

actors, including the media. Despite many challenges, the project made notable strides toward effecting macro level impact, by putting many important issues on the policy agenda. The latter has been achieved through different means, such as (1) forging strong partnerships with the Ombudsman, (2) including CSO recommendations in the relevant GoG action plans, and (3) raising stakeholder awareness of the problems facing penitentiary and probation systems.

4. Sustainability

The project was able to achieve results that will contribute to penal and probation reform efforts in the future. Sustainability of results was achieved through encouraging thematic networking, creating evidence for the needed reforms, and putting salient issues firmly on the policy agenda.

Recommendations

- PRI is recommended to continue its excellent practice of engaging stakeholders and future beneficiaries during the project development stage, but try to enhance the design by more critically evaluating the capacities of the action's implementing partners and target groups and setting goals that do not exceed their potential. If goals have to be set beyond the target group's potential, consider provision of additional expert advice.
- PRI is recommended to further hone the project's systemic approach to CSO capacity building in policy dialogue and advocacy, which recognizes the importance of inter-organizational networks and learning for addressing multi-dimensional problems that cannot be tackled by a single organization. In future projects that aim at increased civil society participation in policy dialogue, PRI is encouraged to create more learning-by-doing opportunities for CSOs, so that they are empowered to apply their skills in practice.
- Since civil society actors increasingly operate in fast-changing environments, PRI should consider instituting a practice of conducting formal assessments of the post-award environment, to determine whether there is a need to revise the initial project implementation plan, so that it is reflective of the context on the ground.
- PRI is recommended to provide a detailed breakdown of means and costs for each activity cluster in the logframe's activity matrix, to better assess whether there is a reasonable relationship between project inputs and outputs.
- PRI should consider raising funds for a follow-on project that will build upon the results achieved through the evaluated intervention and deepen both micro and macro level impact. However, even without larger funding, PRI should continue its stewardship of the Alliance for the next two-three years and promote its growth as a viable interlocutor in policy dialogue. To maintain and build on the results achieved, PRI should continue serving as the Alliance's secretariat and start grooming other member organizations, including the implementing partner RIVG, to take over this role.

INTRODUCTION

Penal Reform International's South Caucasus Office commissioned an external evaluation of its EU-funded project *Monitoring Government's Commitments and Promoting the Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of CSOs*, which it implemented in partnership with Human Rights Center (HRC) and Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups (RIVG). Following a short preparatory period, an Inception Report was submitted to and approved by PRI on September 29, 2020. During the inception phase, PRI and the consultant agreed on the field visit schedule, as well as on a general interview guide.

The evaluation was conducted from September 15 through November 17, 2020 with the field phase taking place during October 8-20, 2020. Given the continuously worsening public health situation in the country, all interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom or Skype. When the respondents had difficulties with internet speed and connection, the interviews were conducted via mobile telephone. The consultant had a chance to attend the project's final open air presentation of the criminal subculture report on September 10, 2020, which provided a glimpse of the project's outreach to stakeholders and their views about the importance of the intervention.

Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The ToR issued by PRI concerns the evaluation of a single, multi-partner project implemented by PRI's South Caucasus Office in partnership with two Georgian CSOs: Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups (RIVG) and the Human Rights Center (HRC) during March 2018 – September 2020. According to the ToR, the ultimate goal of the exercise was “to assess the impact of the project, the outcomes achieved and PRI's contribution towards these as well as identify lessons learned and recommendations to inform future work.”¹

Apart from the global objective identified above, the ToR asked several specific questions² that can be grouped under one of the five DAC evaluation criteria. Thus, under the **Relevance** criterion, PRI sought the consultant's assessment of the extent to which the objectives of the project were congruous with the priorities of the call. In addition, PRI was interested in an external assessment of whether the project design was relevant to the development context (justice reform landscape in Georgia) and in line with the needs and priorities of the project's target groups. Lastly, the consultant was asked to assess the quality of the project design, in order to draw lessons learned for future interventions.

Under the **Effectiveness** and **Efficiency** criteria, the consultant was to review the extent to which the project's objectives have been reached and whether the project was implemented as envisaged in the original proposal. In the areas, where the project outputs have not been achieved, the consultant was asked to ascertain the reasons (both external and internal) for lackluster performance. In addition, it was agreed that the consultant would check the procedural and organizational aspects of project implementation, including general administration of the project and roles, responsibilities, and communication between the project partners. Given that this is a single project assessment, the consultant did not evaluate whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives. Consequently, the issues of effectiveness and efficiency was dealt with in parallel.

¹ Terms of Reference for an External Evaluation issued by PRI South Caucasus Office, p.1.

² The ToR groups these questions under the subheadings of accountability and learning, p.3

Following the ToR, the consultant was to ascertain the **impact** by assessing to what extent the realization of the project's outcomes has had an impact on the specific problem to be address and on the Action's beneficiaries. In addition, the consultant looked into the possible catalytic effect of the project and the potential that it could be **sustained** over time. It was agreed that a part of the sustainability review would be identification of systems and processes that are likely to support continued impact and an assessment of the likelihood of the involved parties to continue the project activities on their own.

The main user of the evaluation will be PRI South Caucasus Office, but given PRI's global reach, it was requested to see whether the project implementation provides "any global/universal lessons learned" that could be replicated outside Georgia. However, the assessment of "lessons learned for future projects" will also be useful for the project's partner CSOs – Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups and the Human Rights Center, as they continue their work toward human rights protection and better criminal justice in Georgia. Considering the overall objective of the intervention, the recommendations on future actions may also be useful for the members of the Georgian Criminal Justice Reform Alliance as well. Given the

Methodology and Data Collection

To undertake the evaluation, the consultant initially conducted desk research looking at the project implementation in detail, mostly through reviewing the project proposal, the reporting provided to the donor, publications and other project-related documents, such as shadow reports, training modules, grant RFPs, media coverage, etc. In addition, the consultant reviewed the content of most recent country-level evaluations commissioned by the EU Delegation, in an attempt to put the findings of this project evaluation within the broader context of EU assistance to Georgia. As referenced in the ToR, the consultant reviewed the project's own mid-term evaluation report, both to learn about its findings and to mark concrete changes in the original project design that were made based on its findings.

Secondary data gathered from desk research were complemented with primary data from fieldwork. In order to collect the data from primary sources, the consultant used a combination of two non-probability sampling methods – purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is well-suited for undertaking an assessment of this type, as the method allows the consultant to select each sample element for a purpose, usually because of its unique position. This method also allows the consultant to target individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the issues under investigation. Although there are no strict rules to follow, the consultant kept in mind the "Rubin criteria" for selecting informants when designing the purposive sampling strategy for this evaluation: (1) informants should be knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied, (2) they should be willing to talk, and (3) they should be representative of the range of points of view.³

While purposive sampling was the main method used in this research, the consultant complemented this method with the use of snowball sampling, to identify the underlying and invisible connections between different members of the target population. The application of

³ Herbert Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, p. 66.

this method helped identify two additional informants who were not included in the purposive sample and who provided valuable information to the evaluator.

Over the course of the evaluation, the consultant interviewed representatives of all partner organizations responsible for the implementation of the project, as well as the project's direct beneficiaries and stakeholders. Following the purposive sample approved during the inception phase, the consultant interviewed members of the Alliance on Penal and Probation Systems Reforms, as well as other civil society organizations (CSOs) that received grant support from the project or work on relevant criminal justice reform issues. When selecting the CSO sample for the evaluation, the consultant considered the following criteria: (a) membership in the Alliance and degree of activism within it, (b) regional coverage, (c) involvement in the project, (d) mission and constituency of the organization, and (e) demonstrated experience in criminal justice reform work, including through EU funds. Following the sampling approach described above and given the objectives of the evaluation provided in the ToR, the consultant also reached out to public authorities and the media targeted by the project and, with only a few exceptions, was able to interview all respondents identified in the purposive sample.

Given the continuously worsening public health situation in the country, all interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom or Skype. When the respondents had difficulties with internet speed and connection, the interviews were conducted via mobile telephone. However, the consultant had a chance to attend the project's final, open air presentation of the criminal subculture report on September 10, 2020, which provided a glimpse the project's outreach to stakeholders and their views about the importance of the intervention. By October 20, the consultant concluded a critical mass of interviews, as a result of which she achieved completeness and saturation in responses, allowing her to complete the interviewing process as per the Rubin Criteria.⁴ The field visit and interviews allowed for stakeholder participation, as the consultant was able to meet wide range of respondents, from implementers, to donors, and the beneficiaries.

Key Constraints and Mitigation

One of the key limitations facing the consultant was related to COVID-19 pandemic, as the continuously worsening public health situation precluded any possibilities of in-person interviewing, requiring all data collection efforts to be moved to virtual realm. The use of technology for qualitative data collection creates specific limitations, as technology dictates modes and forms of communication and creates different experiences for both the researcher and the respondent. For this reason, the consultant tried to utilize those ICT tools that would allow for a full range of visual and verbal exchange and minimally impact the quality of the dialogue between the researcher and the participant. Consequently, most interviews were conducted via Zoom and Skype videoconferencing, so that the process could closely resemble face-to-face communication. However, as many respondents worked from home or resided in the regions of Georgia, quite a few interviews had to be conducted via mobile telephone, which somewhat diminished the quality and perception of the dialogue.

⁴ According to the Rubin Criteria, for interviewing to end, the researcher should feel that she achieved completeness and saturation in responses. The completeness test is passed when the data gathered by the researcher provides an overall sense of the meaning of a concept, theme, or process. Saturation, on the other hand, is achieved when the researcher gains confidence that with each new interview she is learning little that is new from previous interviews.

Another key limitation, which the consultant had anticipated when developing the assessment methodology, was the respondents' willingness to talk. Significant effort was spent on reaching the representatives of targeted public authorities (except for the Office of the Public Defender), with delays explained by a new internal procedure, which requires that all employees seek their supervisor's approval prior to granting interviews. Regrettably, despite multiple attempts both from the evaluator and the project team, an interview with a representative of the Special Penitentiary Service (SPS) could not be arranged. Staff turnover in public institutions and the associated loss of institutional memory did not create additional hurdles to this research. However, the sheer number of penal reform interventions funded by the EU Delegation during 2017-2020 did create an unanticipated challenge to the evaluation, as the respondents were often confused about the many activities, assessment reports, and media stories issued by these projects, making it difficult to attribute observed outcomes to the evaluated intervention.

CONTEXT

Support to justice sector reforms has been a key area of EU-Georgia cooperation, as provided initially in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and later in the EU-Georgia European Neighbourhood Policy and Action Plan (ENP AP) and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. During the first decade of Georgia's independence, progress toward promoting the rule of law (RoL) and protection of human rights was patchy at best, as government officials often paid lip service to these values, failing to take tangible steps to eliminate corruption, improve human rights protection, or ensure judicial independence and impartiality. Thus, for many years, prosecutors continued to control the outcome of court cases, the right to defense counsel or the presumption of innocence were often violated, inmates were kept in degrading conditions, culture of brutality was condoned in the police and the prison system, and judicial decisions were rarely enforced.

The post-Rose Revolution Government of Georgia (GoG), with support from development partners, embarked on sweeping anti-corruption and RoL reforms, which included (1) adoption of the new criminal procedure code, which instituted jury trials and transformed the previously inquisitorial court proceedings into adversarial, (2) merger of the General Prosecutor's Office into the Ministry of Justice and the creation of a separate Ministry of Corrections, Probation, and Legal Assistance, (3) implementation of a new wave of judicial reform to supported institutional independence of the judiciary and to improve court administration and case management practices, (4) adoption of the Code of Imprisonment and establishment of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), and (5) the much celebrated police reform. These reforms were informed by a stringent criminal justice policy (often referred to as "zero tolerance" policy toward crime), which was launched in 2006 and has significantly decreased crime rate in Georgia. At the same time, however, this "zero tolerance" policy has been credited for extremely low acquittal rates in the Georgian courts, disproportionately lengthy prison sentences, and crowded prisons. The 2012 prison scandal confirmed the veracity of various independent reports, which claimed that the inmates in Georgian prisons suffered not only from overcrowding and inhumane prison conditions, but were also subject to torture and degrading treatment from the hands of prison authorities.

The Georgian Dream government, which came into power as a result of the October 2012 elections, pledged to rectify the human rights violations of the previous government and to engage in consultative process with all stakeholders, including the civil society, to improve the accountability and transparency of law enforcement agencies and to de-politicize the justice

system. The new ruling coalition declared judicial independence to be its main priority and engaged in several waves of judicial reform to improve judicial independence and disciplinary accountability of judges. It also signaled a policy change favoring penal reforms that aimed at increased humanization and liberalization of the penitentiary and probation systems. While these and other justice sector reforms were initially promising, they have not led to the positive results sought by the population.

In fact, the many attempts at reforming the judiciary supported, and even encouraged, clan-based governance within the system, whereby a small group of interconnected people, who controlled the system during the Saakashvili government, were able to consolidate and increase their power in the judiciary, precluding any or all reform efforts. Similarly, consolidation of the initial achievements in the penitentiary and probation systems has not taken place and some rollbacks are evident in the recent years, especially since the 2018 merger of Ministry of Corrections and Probation with Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, the post-2012 openness of the penitentiary system to civil society organizations and the NPM mechanism, slowly gave way to closing the system for outside actors, including to the Office of the Public Defender (PDO), who has been a subject of many attacks from the ruling party and its satellites. In addition, CSOs that were initially more involved in planning and monitoring justice sector reform initiatives, including through the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC), have since been sidelined from the process, owing partly to the merger of Ministry of Corrections with Ministry of Justice and partly due to the general lack of institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation in public decision-making processes.

The overriding challenge facing Georgia's justice sector continues to be the need to strengthen the rule of law, improve the protection of human rights, and reform the judiciary. On the judicial reform front, two most important issues continue to be independent, impartial and well-reasoned delivery of justice and maintaining balance between judicial independence and judicial accountability. Liberalization of criminal policy also continues to pose a challenge, despite some of positive changes that have already been enacted over the past several years. Much is needed to ensure access to justice for all segments of the population, as well as to improve prison and probation capacities and to open the penitentiary system to outside world, so that impartial parties are able to monitor the human rights situation there. It is important that the relevant public authorities heed to the alarm signals issued by the NPM, CSOs, and international bodies about the human rights violations taking place in the prisons and deliver on their promise of ensuring rehabilitation and re-socialization for inmates and probationers.

As in all other sectors in Georgia, inclusivity of criminal justice policy making remains a challenge, which has exacerbated over the years, with gradual consolidation of power by the ruling party and increased attempts to silence or delegitimize different or dissenting voices found among the civil society actors.⁵ As CSOs face unprecedented attacks on their legitimacy and security, they have to counter their own weaknesses, most especially, long-term sustainability. Reasons for sustainability challenges are many, ranging from weak institutional capacity and inability to maintain qualified human resources to weak connections with local

⁵ This unfortunate development has been noted by Georgia's international partners that closely follow the country's development trajectory. Thus, according to Freedom House, Georgia's democracy score in 2018 plummeted to 4.68 as a result of multiple attacks on civil society organizations, their leaders, and human rights defenders by public officials, concerns over judicial appointments and the functioning of the court system, changes in the law on broadcasting, politically motivated prosecutions, and multiple irregularities observed during the 2018 Presidential elections. See the *Nations in Transit Report* by Freedom House at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/georgia>, last accessed on October 20, 2020.

constituencies and inability to access funding. Perhaps due to the latter issue, CSOs are often found in competition with each other, rather than trying to share experiences and lessons learned, so that together they can better respond to criminal justice reform challenges and advocate for solutions.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

PRI South Caucasus Office implemented the evaluated project during March 2018 through mid-September 2020, in partnership with two Georgian CSOs: Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups (RIVG) and the Human Rights Center (HRC), to promote “engagement of civil society in the penitentiary and probation reforms through enhanced advocacy, improved networking, influencing policy making and monitoring of completed and ongoing stages of reforms.”

The theory of change employed by the project implementers underscores the importance of civic monitoring and advocacy actions and societal support for well-functioning penitentiary and probation system in Georgia, so that it protects the rights of inmates and prepares them for reentry into society. To be successful in this effort, CSOs need to cooperate, develop their capacity, and engage in evidence-based advocacy, to build momentum for increased humanization and liberalization of penitentiary and probation system. To balance the absence of political will to effect real changes, civil society actors must reach out to others in society and receive support and solidarity from likeminded organizations abroad. By supporting CSOs in finding a unified voice for penal and probation system reforms and by strengthening their capacity in evidence-based monitoring and advocacy, the project partners support enhanced policy dialogue and contribute to creation of a criminal justice system that has trust and confidence of all stakeholders.

1. Relevance

The relevance of the evaluated project was found to be high, in terms of alignment with the priorities announced in the call for proposals, which aimed at increased “civil society engagement in penitentiary and probation reforms through advocacy, policy dialogue, networking, and monitoring of relevant strategies and action plans.”⁶ Furthermore, the project is in line with the EU-Georgia Association Agenda 2017-2020, which provides for continued reform of the justice sector, with aim to ensure independence, efficiency, impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary and the prosecution, as well as “increase[d] accountability and democratic oversight of law enforcement agencies [which should be] free from any undue interference.”⁷ Lastly, the project is relevant to the objectives of the 2015 financing agreement on provision of support to the justice sector reforms signed by the EU and Georgia, which envisions capacity building and networking support to CSOs for their increased engagement in monitoring the sector-specific reforms.

Just as importantly, the project is consistent with internal policies and priorities of the Government of Georgia, as declared in various strategic documents developed under the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, such as the Human Rights Strategy, Penitentiary Reform Strategy, Probation

⁶ See the Guidelines for Project Applicants, p. 4.

⁷ Association Agenda between European Union and Georgia, 2017-2020, p. 9. See the document at <http://www.parliament.ge/uploads/other/78/78447.pdf>, last accessed on October 31, 2020.

Reform Strategy, Medical Reforms in the Penitentiary System Strategy, and Rehabilitation-Resocialization Strategy. This alignment with the GoG policies provided the project implementers the basis for their advocacy efforts and ensured effective implementation of the project despite the adversely changing political and institutional environments.

In addition to the alignment with the priorities of the call for proposals, the EU-Georgia Association Agenda, and the GoG's declared priorities, the project's relevance can be assessed in terms of its response to underlying needs in Georgia and the needs of the target group. In this respect as well, the relevance of the project was high, given the situation in the country's penal and probation systems and the need for holistic, participatory, and timely reforms. Moreover, the project was responsive to the needs of the Georgian civil society working on penal and probation reforms, in terms of (1) ensuring regular and effective involvement of CSOs in planning and monitoring of reforms, (2) consolidating the CSO advocacy efforts around the problematic aspects of penal and probation reforms, and (3) strengthening the thematic and advocacy capacity of civic actors, including the media, for improved transparency and accountability of the relevant public agencies.

The evaluator noted an excellent practice of involving future beneficiaries and implementers in the elaboration of the project proposal, which was confirmed by a majority of respondents. Engagement of project partners and stakeholders was present at all levels and had a mutually beneficial character, which according to the respondents contributed to high level of relevance of the intervention. The project's relevance was enhanced by a thoughtful selection of project partners that brought to the table complementary expertise and experience in penal and probation reforms, which was well utilized in designing the action.

The interviews confirmed that the project continued to be responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries throughout the entire implementation period, highlighting the role of PRI South Caucasus Office as a trusted, objective, and professional interlocutor. Namely, the respondents underscored the timeliness of reviving the Penal and Probation System Reform Alliance,⁸ which provided a permanent venue for coordination of CSO efforts in the field, as well as allowed the EU grant project recipients under the same funding scheme to maximize synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. In addition, the field phase confirmed that the project implementers showed flexibility in responding to significantly changed institutional and public health circumstances and needs, which, according to all the respondents, had impacted virtually all aspects of project implementation from prison monitoring visits to public discussions and advocacy.

The evaluator also assessed the quality of the project design, so as to draw lessons for future interventions. Overall, the evaluator found the project's theory of change strong and its design good. The project's methodology of creating evidence through research, assessments, and monitoring, coupled with creating avenues for CSO engagement in policy dialogue through roundtables, working meetings, and capacity building was well configured and poised to achieve the desired results. It could have benefitted from including more learning-by-doing opportunities for CSOs, including an obligation to advocate for the findings and recommendations of the research they conducted with grant support from PRI.

⁸ PRI South Caucasus Office established a coalition of CSOs working on penal and probation systems reforms already in 2013 with previous EU funding, but it stopped operations shortly after the end of the project.

The evaluator would like to highlight the project's approach to CSO capacity building in advocacy, as it went beyond the mainstream organizational development model that focuses on institutional governance and project cycle management of individual organizations, taking on a systemic perspective, which recognizes the importance of inter-organizational networks and learning for addressing multi-dimensional problems that cannot be tackled by a single organization. This approach is particularly relevant for actions that aim at enhancing CSO capacity to engage in policy dialogue and advocacy.⁹ While well-suited for achieving the overall objective of the action, this approach requires long-term and uninterrupted investment and local ownership, which could not have been realized within the project period. This said, PRI has underscored its commitment to supporting CSO engagement in policy dialogue, which bodes well for the future.

When reviewing the project's initial logical framework matrix, the evaluator noted the need to improve baselines and formulation of objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs). However, this issue was resolved during the project implementation, with PRI providing the EU Delegation (EUD) with an updated and significantly improved matrix, which had both baselines, as well as OVIs that had clear connection with the results to be achieved.

2. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The reviewed project was found to be both effective and efficient. The project objective was accomplished and all outputs mostly delivered as planned. The inputs made were utilized appropriately, with savings achieved, which allowed the project implementers to divert the savings toward additional activities, most notably on student and media competitions. The project had good outreach on the level of the target group and government actors, which ensured effectiveness and efficiency. The project management, financial management included, did not pose any issues.

Quantitative and qualitative aspects

The project succeeded in implementing most of the envisioned activities, following the methodology described in the original proposal. Thus, the project awarded 9 sub-grants (against the targeted 10) to civil society organizations to monitor penal and probation systems and to produce analytical/thematic reports and recommendations.¹⁰ As projected, the Alliance of CSOs was revived, its members and other interested CSOs were trained on monitoring and advocacy issues, and its membership increased by more than 85%. All activities and virtually all outputs toward enhanced policy dialogue were completed, despite the COVID-19 restrictions and lack of political will. The same can be said for the awareness-raising component of the project, with some outputs significantly overachieved (e.g. readership of

⁹ For more information about the different approaches to CSO capacity building in policy dialogue and advocacy, please see Monica Blagescu and John Young, *Capacity Development for Policy Advocacy: Current thinking and approaches among agencies supporting Civil Society Organisations*, Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 260, 2006 at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/156.pdf> (last accessed on November 5, 2020) and Chris Stalker and Dale Sandberg, *Capacity Building for Advocacy*, International NGO Training and Research Center Praxis Paper 25, 2011 at <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Praxis-Paper-25-Capacity-building-for-advocacy-Chris-Stalker-with-Dale-Sandberg.pdf> (last accessed on November 5, 2020).

¹⁰ The decision to issue nine grants were made during the project implementation, to make sure that it was possible to carry out the study of criminal subculture in prisons, which according to the project partners required more funds than initially allotted for each sub-grant.

newspaper articles and the PRI blog) and some outputs rather underachieved (e.g. viewership of the movie and public engagement in radio broadcasts).

The capacity building approach utilized by the project was effective, as it focused on inter-sectoral learning, with the Alliance at the forefront of these efforts. As noted above, it was designed logically with ultimate outcomes in mind and fully appreciative of the “training fatigue” that is prevalent in the Georgian civil society sector. Thus, these capacity building activities were led by facilitators with good knowledge of human rights and criminal justice issues, who introduced the participants to advocacy planning frameworks and ways in which they can wage effective advocacy campaigns, underscoring the role of networks and coalitions in achieving the desired results. These capacity building events involved a good portion of practical exercises to prepare the Alliance member CSOs for waging common advocacy campaigns.¹¹

The project adopted an effective approach to capacity building of regional CSOs and media outlets, by modifying its original intention of conducting separate workshops and by bringing together civil society representatives and journalists. As a result, the project was effective in enhancing the participants’ understanding of pressing issues of penal and probation reforms and in building ties between the two sectors, so that together they could work toward increased transparency of the system and improved public awareness about the problems that must be addressed. The evaluator concluded that the modified approach was effective, given the increased coverage achieved by the project through radio programs, newspaper inserts, and penal reform blogs. The PRI blogs and newspaper coverage deserve a particular mention, given the high reader engagement (1,942 and 5,393 respectively) and the valuable contributions from the Alliance member CSOs.

Furthermore, the project succeeded in creating evidence for policy dialogue and advocacy, through research reports, alternative progress reports, prison monitoring efforts, and sub-granting.¹² The view of the evaluator is that the overall quality of outputs achieved by the project was good, as demonstrated by project materials and confirmed by the field interviews with the project’s partners, beneficiaries, and external stakeholders. This said, the quality of research reports produced was mixed, with some being better written and more appreciated by the stakeholders than others. One area of weakness of most reports was the researchers’ inability to gather data from primary sources, either because they were denied access to closed institutions or were not provided publicly held information despite multiple freedom of information (FOI) requests. Another issue was the level of academic research and writing skills in the sector, which is evident in the issued reports and has been pointed out by several respondents. However, when public information was provided and the research capacities were high, the quality of outputs was also good.

Some of the project activities were not conducted as initially envisioned. Deviations were significantly more than could have been anticipated at the project design stage, which, as noted above, was both participatory and contextually relevant. The two main reasons for delays and modifications were the unexpected merger of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, announced at the opening event of the project and the restrictions imposed in Georgia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The former had significantly

¹¹ A good example of this was the creation of two sub-groups comprised of service providers and watchdog organizations, which developed a timebound advocacy action plans to be fulfilled throughout the project.

¹² The following is the tally of the completed research and assessment reports: 8 desk reports, 9 alternative progress assessments, 9 monitoring reports from sub-grantees, and 2 prison monitoring reports.

more impact on achieving some of the projected outputs and outcomes, most notably, **Outcome 3** – Enhanced policy dialogued and advocacy with relevant stakeholders related to penitentiary and probation reforms and **Outcome 1** – To monitor and review progress against sectoral strategies, action plans, legislation, practice and process, in view of European best practices. As noted above, this impacted the CSOs’ ability access information and respondents for the envisioned research and monitoring efforts, which had an addition negative effect on the project’s ability to enhance CSO participation in policy dialogue. Prison monitoring efforts were particularly delayed by lack of political will and COVID-19 pandemic. The release of the first monitoring report was delayed by several months, because the project partners and PDO were waiting for the MoJ feedback, which was not provided despite multiple promises. The second monitoring report came out only at the very end of the project, given the delays related to accessing closed institutions in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.¹³

The negative net impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the gradually diminished political will to engage in policy dialogue with CSOs has been noted by all respondents during the field phase interviews. At the same time, many stakeholders have noted that despite the many difficulties encountered on the way, the implementing partners have been effective on delivering the projected results, including on opening space or resisting to closing of space for civil society participation in policy dialogue.

At the same time, while some activities were carried out as planned, they could have been designed better to maximize the results. The case in point is grantmaking to civil society actors, which succeeded in engaging CSOs in monitoring specific areas in penitentiary and probation systems to produce evidence for policy dialogue and advocacy. However, had the grantmaking efforts gone a step further and required advocacy for the findings and recommendations of these reports, the project would have been able to claim significantly more enhanced CSO advocacy capacity and media engagement. It is noteworthy that this was noted as a shortcoming by some of the sub-grant recipients, who felt that “follow up was missing” from these efforts, even though they never considered to engage in advocacy independently or in partnership with the Alliance members. In fact, while some of the interviewed sub-grantees felt that they increased their research and thematic capacities, they did not advocate for changes, “as this was the part to be led by PRI.” This is a lesson learned for the future, as the logic that CSOs would cease the initiative to advocate for their own findings and recommendation did not pan out either because they did not have the funds or lacked the initiative to do so.

Lastly, the evaluator would like to comment on the duration of the project and its impact on progress toward outcomes. As a rule, projects that seek to unite CSO voices for evidence-based policy dialogue and advocacy for more transparent and accountable penitentiary and probation systems need longer than 24 months to achieve results, as these types of interventions greatly depend on the attitudes and behavior of external actors. As noted above, this project was negatively impacted by the shift in political attitudes against the CSO engagement, which created significant delays in accessing closed institutions for the planned monitoring and assessment activities. Given the timeframe of the project, the number of outputs to be produced, and the unwillingness of political authorities to open up to CSOs, many of the envisioned studies had to be completed without data from primary sources, which effected the quality of the reports and made them less legitimate in the eyes of stakeholders. In addition, regional CSO representatives interviewed for the evaluation felt that the calendar of events organized by the

¹³ Prison monitoring component was significantly modified. Instead of the planned monitoring of 9 prison, the project was able to access only 4 such institutions.

project (trainings, workshops, public discussions, roundtables, and presentations) was very dense and long-distance travel often precluded them from participating in these events and, therefore, in the work of the Alliance. Lastly, as noted above, the capacity building approach selected for the Action, while relevant and potentially effective, needed a longer time period to achieve the desired results.

Outreach

The project's effectiveness can also be assessed in terms of its outreach, both geographic and with respect to target groups, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. Despite its fairly small budget, the project was able to cover several regions of Georgia (Adjara, Imereti, Samegrelo, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli). This was done through presentations, public discussions, capacity building efforts, student and journalist competitions, and the media coverage. Outreach through grantmaking was minimal, with only one regional CSO succeeding in gaining support. Perhaps most important example of geographic and target group outreach is the Alliance on Penal and Probation System Reforms, which was re-activated by the project and includes a diverse group of CSOs representing different regions (Tbilisi, Adjara, Imereti, Guria, and Shida Kartli) and different constituencies and stakeholders (social workers, psychologists, lawyers, drug users, probationers, etc.). The breadth of the Alliance membership is particularly noteworthy, as apart from uniting regional and Tbilisi-based CSOs, it brings together watchdog and service provider CSOs, which generate different types of data and have differing approaches to policy dialogue and advocacy. While this creates delays in issuing common statements,¹⁴ it can also be a powerful mechanism for evidence-based advocacy. The field phase interviews confirmed the effectiveness of the project in reaching out to diverse groups of stakeholders from different regions of Georgia. In fact, the respondents were complementary of the efforts made by PRI in amplifying new voices and voices from the regions, which are generally not heard in such a centralized country as Georgia.

The project was generally effective in reaching out to public authorities, to seek their support and ideas for monitoring efforts. Thus, prison monitoring was conducted in close cooperation with the PDO's NPM department, which allowed the PDO to focus on specific issues of concern that perhaps were not as fully covered as part of the NPM monitoring. This said, some of the roundtable and public discussions were not attended by the relevant public authorities, which made policy dialogue impossible. The availability of public authorities for these and other activities organized by the action were greatly determined by the political will of the relevant institutional leaders. Not surprisingly, the Office of the Public Defender was singled out as the most helpful public institution for CSO efforts to access the system. It is important to consider that the unwillingness of the MoJ and the agencies under its supervision to work directly with civil society often forced the PDO to serve as a connecting link between CSOs and other public institutions, which put an additional and unnecessary burden on the already overstretched Office of the Public Defender.

Virtually all respondents credited PRI for its open engagement and readiness to share information. PRI encouraged and ensured that regular meetings among the stakeholders took place, using different formats, such as *ad hoc* meetings, roundtables, and public discussions. These meetings were instrumental in identifying common challenges encountered by CSOs

¹⁴ Since its revival, the Alliance managed to issue only 2 common statement. However, its Service Providers' working group, with initiative from PRI, did issue an important compilation of common recommendations on different aspects of rehabilitation and re-socialization efforts in the Georgian penitentiary and probation systems.

working in the field and in developing common recommendations and advocacy action plans to address these challenges. In fact, it was noted by several respondents that without the meetings organized by PRI, many EU-funded projects awarded under the same call for proposals would not have been able to avoid duplication of effort, given some of the same target groups and regions they planned to serve. Furthermore, the respondents underscored the different advocacy methods brought to the table by the project partners, noting the importance of PRI's expertise and neutral but firm stance on penal and probation system reforms, which kept the closing door of communication ajar and fostered civil society participation in policy dialogue. Several respondents noted a missed opportunity of utilizing the clout of PRI's penal reform achievements around the world for advocacy in western capitals, both to press the GoG for more transparent and accountable reforms and to underscore the importance of international funding for Georgian CSOs working in this field.

The project's visibility was very good, achieved through various activities, including blogs, newspaper inserts, radio programming, student competitions, media awards, trainings and workshops, presentations, etc. This was to be expected, given the project's Outcome 4 – Raising public awareness and outreach on the project themes. Field phase interviews confirmed that the project contributed to EU visibility. The evaluation also looked into the extent to which the implementers followed the compulsory requirements for all contractors, as provided in the Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Visibility Actions.¹⁵ The evaluator confirmed that the project followed the requirements and guidelines for written materials, press conferences, and presentations, so as to highlight EU participation. In fact, the project's communication plan was developed shortly after the launch of main activities, which ensured targeted communication with relevant stakeholders throughout the intervention.

Project management

The evaluator was asked to evaluate the general administration of the project, identifying lessons to be learned for future interventions. Overall, PRI did a good job in managing the project, which in great part is attributable to the participatory way in which PRI developed the action. Furthermore, while the original project document did not fully differentiate the roles and responsibilities of project partners, the field phase interviews demonstrated that the implementing partners were very clear about their own leads and this clarity was conveyed to the beneficiaries and stakeholders. Indeed, virtually all respondents knew which organization was to be a lead under which component; this is a rarity for projects of this nature and points at PRI's inclusive and open project implementation practice and good outreach.

PRI did well in identifying possible risks at the project design stage, by ensuring that the action was largely in line with the GoG strategies and declarations. Participatory design of the intervention also contributed to better risk management. In spite of this, the project was still confronted with significant unforeseen developments, such as the transfer of prisons under the purview of MoJ's Special Penitentiary Service (SPS) and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even in case of unforeseen developments, PRI was able to act effectively. Considering the fact that civil society actors will increasingly have to operate in fast-changing political, social, and public health environments, it may be useful for PRI to consider instituting a practice of conducting formal assessments of the post-award environment and to include such assessments

¹⁵ See at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/visibility_requirements_near_english.pdf (last accessed on November 4, 2020).

in the project proposal. The post-award environment assessments could be very useful in re-evaluating the situation once the grant is awarded, in order to determine whether there is a need to revise the initial project implementation plan, so that it is reflective of the context on the ground.

As for the project's financial management, the evaluator did not attempt to audit or assess the financial reports of PRI. However, the evaluator reviewed the logframe breakdown of activity costs against the submitted budget and found that the activity matrix lacked information on the real costs of each activity cluster, as it only provided an overall budget breakdown for the entire action. Providing a detailed breakdown of means and costs per activity would have provided the project partners a better picture of inputs it took to achieve the projected outputs, which in turn could have influenced their decision on what to include in the final project proposal. For example, the submitted budget allocated EUR 30,000 for 10 sub-grants to be issued to local CSOs, so that they could engage in policy-relevant thematic research. At the same time, the submitted budget had allocated EUR 15,000 for the preparation of a documentary film on penal and probation reforms, which as the logical framework projected would be viewed 5,000 times. Already on the surface, EUR 15,000 for one movie and EUR 30,000 for 10 sub-grants and research reports would have shown a relative disbalance between inputs and outputs.

However, it is clear that the actual input for the grantmaking component would be significantly more than the total amount to be disbursed to the CSO, as sub-granting requires staff time to develop RFPs, to make selection, and to monitor and then closeout the sub-grants. Similarly, the actual costs of the movie would be more than the cost of the service contract, but given the nature of the activity, it would require significantly less staff input to deliver the projected output. The logframe's activity matrix should provide this level of information under each activity cluster, so that the implementers have a birds-eye view of the project to decide whether there is a reasonable relationship between project inputs and outputs. The evaluator learned that this omission did not have a significant impact on the project's efficiency, as PRI considered the relationship between the project inputs and outputs during the implementation stage. Thus, it issued 9 grants for the total amount of EUR 30,000 (plus additional input), which yielded one alternative and eight desk reports on problematic issues of penal and probation system reforms, while EUR 9,900 was spent on a documentary movie about the system, which was viewed 2,278 times.

With the total expenditure of EUR 511,301, the action completed 8 desk research reports, 9 alternative progress reports, and 2 prison monitoring reports; issued 9 sub-grants that resulted in 9 thematic reports; conducted 2 media and student competitions, as well as 4 roundtable and 5 public discussions; developed 26 blogposts, 5 radio broadcasts, 10 newspaper inserts, and 1 documentary movie; and trained 198 CSO and media representatives on advocacy and issues of penal and probation reforms. This allows the evaluator to conclude that the broader breakdown of costs in the project budget was reasonable and consistent with prevalent practices in Georgia and internationally. Despite the fact that the budget included head office costs, they were negligible and did not create burden on the project. The donor also confirmed that in their view it was a well-managed and efficient project.

3. Impact

The impact can be seen on both micro and macro levels. On the level of the target groups and wider beneficiaries (micro level), impact is mostly manifested in the improvement of the target groups' situation through the provision of better services, more enabling environment or strengthening of their skills and potential. Projects can also have policy level (macro level)

impact that may include changes in the existing legal framework, introduction of new approaches and mechanisms, etc. The reviewed project envisioned impact on both levels.

Micro level impact

It is the opinion of the evaluator that on the micro level the project achieved adequate level of impact, which was mainly due to the fact that the action was designed with participation of future beneficiaries and implementers and employed appropriate methods and approaches. One of the results achieved by the project was the establishment of a permanent network of CSOs – the Alliance on Penal and Probation System Reforms. This network was initially created as part of the previous-EU funded project, but was revived during the evaluated intervention with its longer-term sustainability in mind. Indeed, 13 additional members joined the Alliance in the past two years, with a majority of members actively participating in the work of the Alliance. PRI, while serving as the Alliance’s secretariat throughout the project, consistently positioned the network as a common achievement of its members, urging them to utilize its strength in their advocacy and fundraising efforts.

The field phase interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries confirmed that the Alliance on Penal and Probation System Reforms succeeded in creating an enabling environment for civil society participation in the sectoral policy dialogue, by bringing together a diverse group of CSOs in support for positive changes. According to the respondents, their work in the Alliance allowed them to see “how we, the civil society organizations can be involved in opening the system ... and to synchronize our projects toward a common goal.” Several members of the Alliance and some of the external stakeholders underscored the importance of such a thematic network for joint policy advocacy. Yet, they also noted that they have a hard time imagining the work of the Alliance without PRI’s stewardship, given the diversity of voices, low institutional capacities and funding shortages experienced by the majority of its members, and the reticence to serve a leadership role among the member CSOs. Indeed, to the chagrin of the watchdog CSOs, the Alliance has managed to issue only two common statements and one set of common recommendations, which were followed up by the members. This means that more time and support is needed before the Alliance can become a viable interlocutor in policy dialogue.

Virtually all members of the Alliance interviewed for the evaluation noted its importance for meeting new and previously unknown actors in the field. This included both meeting relatively new CSOs, as well as well-established CSOs that operate in the regions of Georgia. In this respect, they were most complementary of the PRI’s choice of RIVG as a project partner and the latter’s work in the Alliance, given its staff’s unmatched understanding of the workings of the penitentiary system and their openness to share this knowledge and experience. The respondents also noted that the Alliance membership created multiple opportunities to meet with likeminded actors, learn about their expertise, and develop project proposals with new partners.¹⁶

The interviewed media and civil society representatives credited the project for their improved knowledge and skills. For the journalists targeted by the project, improved capacity was mostly connected to learning about the most pressing issues of penal and probation reforms and getting to know civil society actors capable of providing expert commentary for media stories on the

¹⁶ At the time of the evaluation, none of the developed projects had been funded, thus, the evaluator is unable to provide additional information in this report.

subject matter. According to the interviewed journalists, the research and assessment reports issued by the project were helpful in both increasing their understanding of the issues, as well as in providing evidence for their stories. However, they wished for the reports to be written in a more accessible language. In addition to improved thematic capacities, the evaluator noted increased media coverage of problems in penal and probation systems, which were beyond the project, but still directly attributable to the work of the implementing partners. A good example of this is the story about Georgian thieves-in-law, which aired on the national broadcaster Formula TV and which cited the criminal subculture report issued by the project.¹⁷ This said, the general increase in covering penal and probation reform issues seem to be related to other EU-funded projects awarded under the same call for proposals, which also envisaged public awareness activities.

When the targeted CSOs were asked about the project's contributions to strengthening their capacities, most highlighted improved knowledge in developing advocacy campaigns. Virtually all interviewed CSO representatives mentioned supporting the Alliance's advocacy initiatives, by attending meetings and public discussions and adhering to the Alliance's statements. Several respondents discussed strengthened thematic and institutional capacities of their respective CSOs. For some, it was due to the learning that took place while implementing the sub-grant project, while for others it was due to improved fundraising, resulting from proactive information sharing about the available opportunities by PRI. It is important that the project partner CSOs have also noted increased institutional capacity, as they have been able to grow an additional cadre of researchers and prison monitors, who can support future monitoring efforts of these organizations.

Macro level impact

Despite many challenges, the project made notable strides toward effecting macro level impact, by putting many important issues on the policy agenda. Thus, the evaluator noted that the project's findings with respect to the working conditions and morale of prison staff successfully put this issue on the agenda of relevant public institutions, namely the MoJ and the PDO. The latter noted that the evidence gleaned from desk research and prison monitoring efforts allowed the PDO staff to see the work of prison personnel from a new angle. While before the NPM only focused on inmates and looked at personnel as only instruments that keep prisons running, following the prison monitoring exercise of December 2018, they started to realize that poor working conditions and low staff morale greatly impact the overall human rights situation in the Georgian prisons. Thus, during its future NPM visits, it is likely that the PDO will review the prison staff's working conditions in more detail. In addition, it has been noted by some of the respondents that since 2019, prison staff's working conditions have improved to some extent, especially as it concerns better salaries, more capacity building opportunities, and improved recruitment procedures. These changes are clearly attributable to the reviewed project.

The evaluator noted that the monitoring and assessment efforts of the project can be credited for the current efforts within the National Bureau of Probation toward unification of risk assessment instruments for juveniles, so that one instrument is used to assess the individual's risks for diversion, treatment, recidivism, etc. The recommendations issued by the project also resulted in a decision to identify those sections of the reports that should be shared with judges

¹⁷ This story is available at <https://www.facebook.com/TVFormula/videos/668346637417887/> (last accessed on November 5, 2020).

and prosecutors, in an effort to improve efficiency of judicial proceedings. Additional developments that could be attributed to the project involved improvements in rehabilitation and resocialization practices, ranging from contracting additional social workers and psychologists to work with inmates to increasing individual case management.

Several recommendations on rehabilitation and resocialization services that were developed by the Service Group of the Alliance have been reflected in the 2019-2020 Penitentiary and Crime Prevention Systems Development Strategy and its action plan.¹⁸ For example, the recommendation about adopting a more effective methodology for individual assessment and utilizing the psycho-social rehabilitation approaches that are based on international best practices have been reflected under Outcomes B1 and B2 of the Action Plan. Furthermore, Outcome D2 – Creation of relevant systems and infrastructure for employing inmates and providing them with increased opportunity to receive education – is also reflective of joint recommendations issued by the Service Group members of the Alliance. Given that many Alliance member CSOs were at the time also implementing their own EU-funded projects that provided rehabilitation and resocialization services to the inmates and probationers, it is difficult to attribute these changes solely to the reviewed action.

Lastly, the project must be credited for putting the issue of criminal subculture and its impact on prison management on the policy agenda. While the existence of informal hierarchies among the prisoners and their influence of prison management has been reported by both the PDO as well as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), political authorities have firmly denied the existence of criminal subculture in Georgian prisons. The project research on the actual workings of the penitentiary system and the influence of certain prisoners on prison management provided an additional rich layer of information about the subject matter, despite the fact that the researchers were denied access to the system. According to the stakeholders, the findings of this report, while not surprising, are alarming, and necessitate further analysis both to fully understand the phenomenon of criminal subculture in Georgian prisons and to develop evidence-based approaches to addressing the problem. In fact, the draft report on prison subculture was utilized by the EUD when designing the next phase of EU's Technical Assistance (TA) project, which will include an additional research on the influence of criminal subculture on managing prisons, this time with full cooperation of relevant public authorities.

4. Sustainability

Sustainability remains the most difficult issue to be addressed by the EU grantees, not the least because of short timelines, low budgets, and lack of political will to improve. However, achieving sustainable results is less of a challenge when the action of the grantee is in line with government policies and priorities or it is a follow-on of the previously implemented successful intervention. The evaluated project was both in line with several strategic documents adopted by the Georgian authorities and a follow-on of another EU-funded project that was implemented by PRI in the same field. Consequently, it has been better able to achieve results that will contribute to improvements in penitentiary and probation systems in Georgia.

The project utilized a well-tested approach of coalition building to achieve sustainability of results. Indeed, creating a thematic coalition that unifies and amplifies the voices of CSOs

¹⁸ See at <http://www.sps.gov.ge/images/temp/2019/05/30/9ea9d3366ac754cda904733deb28301e.pdf>, last accessed on November 8, 2020.

working on penal and probation system reforms is an excellent approach to sustaining the achieved results. However, the length of the project was too short for the evaluator to see impacts and to comment on the likelihood of sustaining these impacts. It is important for future sustainability that there is a general appreciation of the Alliance among the members and external stakeholders, but it is unclear whether this appreciation will translate into the Alliance's long-term viability, especially given the scarcity of funding experienced by the majority of its member CSOs. It bodes well that PRI is committed to the Alliance and plans to continue its support as a secretariat for some time and as PRI's own funding allows.

A contributing factor for the sustainability of the project's results might be the recent concerted efforts of local and international actors to promote public administration reforms (PAR) in Georgia and to ensure enhanced civic engagement in national and local policy making. As a result of the PAR advocacy efforts supported by the EU and other donors, the GoG has adopted a new Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Handbook that obligates ministries and local authorities to ensure meaningful CSO participation in policy planning and implementation. The Alliance and CSOs working in the criminal justice reform field could rely on this recently adopted document, as they push for CSO participation in penal and probation system reforms in the context of diminished political will.

High level of sustainability is being achieved through creating evidence for the needed reforms and putting salient issues firmly on the policy agenda. The latter has been achieved through different means, such as (1) forging strong partnerships with the PDO, (2) including CSO recommendations in the relevant GoG action plans, and (3) raising stakeholder awareness of the problems facing penitentiary and probation systems. As noted above, the PDO representatives have seen the value of updated prison monitoring instruments, which were developed based on PRI's detention monitoring tools, and plan to utilize the questionnaires in their future NPM monitoring visits. Furthermore, the evaluator is confident that the evidence created by the project on the existence and impact of criminal subculture on prison management will eventually translate into multi-stakeholder advocacy that will lead to additional reforms in the penitentiary field. There are several reasons for this confidence, one of which is the commitment of RIVG to keep the issue of criminal subculture in Georgian prisons on the policy agenda. RIVG's advocacy will be supported by HRC's future prison monitoring efforts. Lastly, increased interest in the problem of criminal subculture is noted among the donor community, which bodes well for effecting reforms in this area.

Challenges to sustainability

One obvious challenge to sustainability of results is continuous funding of CSO monitoring efforts focused on penal and probation reforms, as it is extremely unlikely that Georgian public authorities will ever fund such interventions. However, scarcity of funds is likely to become an issue even for service provider CSOs. While the rehabilitation and resocialization services provided by these CSOs are greatly appreciated by the relevant agencies under the MoJ, the latter is not planning to fund their work due to the changed budgetary priorities in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, many interviewed members of the Alliance are hopeful that they can continue cooperation with PRI, as they believe that the latter's good past performance references and excellent institutional capacity to manage large-scale projects will be the only source of continuous funding in this area. It is in part due to the need to attract additional funding for the sector that the interviewed CSO representatives have urged PRI to use its clout for international advocacy to put Georgia's penal and probation reforms on the agenda of European policy makers.

Low levels of funding will also deter the targeted media to continue covering the penal and probation reform issues in Georgia. Thus, while the project succeeded in increasing the media's interest in this issue area, it is unlikely to have sustained impact. As noted by the respondents, the media outlets, especially those in the regions, operate on such low margins that they will be unable to afford covering penal and probation reform stories without drawing additional funds from the civil society sector.

Lastly, sustainability of results may be undermined by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Parliamentary elections, which may be used as reasons for further closing the system or for delaying the promised reforms. However, the outcomes of the elections and the ensuing changes in the Government could also create an opportunity for PRI, its partners, and the Alliance at large, as they may be able to get a fresh start with a new political figure in charge of the Ministry of Justice.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the evaluation and the feedback of the implementers, beneficiaries and external stakeholders, the evaluator would make the following recommendations:

A. Recommendations with respect to relevance

- PRI continue with its excellent practice of engaging stakeholders and future beneficiaries during the project development stage, but try to enhance the design by more critically evaluating the needs of the action's implementing partners and target groups and setting goals that do not exceed their potential. If goals have to be set beyond the target group's potential, consider provision of additional expert advice (e.g. provision of additional support to compensate for low academic research and writing skills in the sector).
- In future projects that aim at increased civil society participation in policy dialogue, PRI is encouraged to create more learning-by-doing opportunities for CSOs, so that they are empowered to apply their skills in practice. This can be done by providing both research and advocacy grant support to CSOs, so that they engage in evidence-based advocacy to effect positive changes.

B. Recommendations with respect to effectiveness and efficiency

- The grantee is recommended to further hone the project's systemic approach to CSO capacity building in policy dialogue and advocacy, which recognizes the importance of inter-organizational networks and learning for addressing multi-dimensional problems that cannot be tackled by a single organization. Civil society actors are increasingly more involved in policy development in Georgia and worldwide and require significant support in this effort. Given PRI's thematic expertise and experience, it is well-positioned to provide such support to local CSOs, so that they strengthen sectoral cooperation and improve their independent and collective capacities in waging evidence-based advocacy campaigns.

- The evaluator recommends that PRI take a more critical look at the activities suggested by partner organizations, keeping in mind the duration of the project and the types of outputs and outcomes to be achieved by its partners.
- Since civil society actors increasingly operate in fast-changing political, social, and public health environments, it may be useful for PRI to consider instituting a practice of conducting formal assessments of the post-award environment, to determine whether there is a need to revise the initial project implementation plan, so that it is reflective of the context on the ground.
- PRI is recommended to provide a detailed breakdown of means and costs for each activity cluster in the logframe's activity matrix, so that the implementers have a birds-eye view of the project to determine whether there is a reasonable relationship between project inputs and outputs. Since the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results is one of the evaluation criteria for the EU-funded projects, this practice should improve PRI's fundraising efforts.

C. Recommendations with respect to impact and sustainability

- The PRI team should consider raising funds for a follow-on project that will build upon the results achieved through the evaluated intervention and deepen both micro and macro level impact. When it comes to enhancing local capacities, PRI is recommended to follow its original approach and to augment it with more learning-by-doing opportunities, so that CSOs are encouraged to put their knowledge to practice. The vast majority of Georgian CSOs working in the criminal justice field have a high regard for PRI, given its expertise and neutral but firm stance on penal and probation system reforms, which according to them keeps the door for policy dialogue open for local actors. Continuous involvement of PRI in penal and probation sector reforms in Georgia would lead to positive and sustained impact in this area.
- Even without larger funding, PRI should continue its stewardship of the Alliance and promote its growth as a viable interlocutor in policy dialogue. To maintain and build on the results achieved, PRI should continue serving as the Alliance's secretariat and start grooming other member organizations, including the implementing partner RIVG, to take over this role. Even during the pandemic, when in-person meetings are restricted, supporting the Alliance requires funds, most especially for creating evidence for policy dialogue and advocacy. Thus, PRI should continue empowering the Alliance membership to consider the Alliance in their fundraising efforts.

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

Introduction

Penal Reform International’s South Caucasus Office is seeking a Georgia-based evaluation consultant to conduct an external end of project evaluation of the EU-funded project *Promoting and Monitoring Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of Civil Society Organisations*, which has been implemented by PRI from 14 March 2018 to 13 May 2020. The evaluation aims to assess the impact of the project, the outcomes achieved and PRI’s contribution towards these as well as identify lessons learned and recommendations to inform future work.

About Penal Reform International

PRI is a pro-democratic independent NGO that promotes the rights of detainees to fair and humane treatment and campaigns for the prevention of torture and the abolition of the death penalty. For 30 years, PRI has been working in the field of criminal justice and penal reform at national, regional and international levels. PRI provides practical assistance to national policy-makers and civil society to reform legislation, policy and practice. Results achieved at an institutional level, changes to laws and policies for example, take time to reach and change the lives of beneficiaries, suspects, defendants, prisoners and former prisoners.

PRI’s Head Office in London leads and coordinates cross-regional programmes, international policy and advocacy activities, and is responsible for organisational and financial management. There are also regional programmes in the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus that implement practical projects at a national and regional level.

PRI has been working in the South Caucasus region since 2001 and has an office in Tbilisi, Georgia. Current PRI projects in the South Caucasus focus on improving public and civil society oversight of the penal and justice systems, especially torture prevention, adherence to international standards, supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of people in prison and people who have served sentences. PRI is an independent organisation, with no religious, political or governmental affiliations.

About the project

The 26 month project “Monitoring Government’s Commitments and Promoting the Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of CSOs” aims to promote the increased engagement of CSOs in the penitentiary and probation reforms through enhanced advocacy, improved networking, influencing policy-making and monitoring of completed and ongoing stages of reforms. Specific objectives of the project are to monitor and review progress against sectoral strategies, action plans, legislation, practice in view of the European best practices, to provide recommendations and to enhance policy dialogue and advocacy with relevant stakeholders related to penitentiary and probation reforms.

More about the project

Project Title	Promoting and Monitoring Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
Timeframe of the Project	March 2018 – May 2020

Funding partner	European Commission
Goal	Promoting engagement of civil society in penitentiary and probation reforms through enhanced advocacy, improved networking, influencing policy making and monitoring of completed and ongoing stages of reforms
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress against sectoral strategies, action plans, legislation, practice and process, in view of European best practices is monitored and reviewed 2. Increase in the capacity of CSOs and media organisations for policy monitoring and advocacy, and creation of a regional network in the sector 3. Enhanced policy dialogue and advocacy with relevant stakeholders related to penitentiary and probation reforms 4. Awareness of public raised and increased outreach on the project's themes
Activities	<p>Related to Outcome 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing 9 alternative progress reports; • Monitoring of 4 prisons; • Elaborating Recommendations on specific improvements required in actual policy documents; • Sub-granting through the support to third parties for conducting thematic monitoring researches. <p>Related to Outcome 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting trainings for CSOs on monitoring and advocacy (2 training workshops) and (12) workshops on the penitentiary and probation system themes; • Conducting Informative/training workshops for media representatives (12 workshops) about topical issues in the penal sector; • Arranging activation of the network of CSOs. <p>Related to Outcome 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting dialogue with target state agencies through meetings (6 planned meetings and ad hoc meetings) and organising roundtable discussions (in total 4 roundtables) to discuss identified shortcomings, recognise key progress and define fields for joint actions; • Hosting Public discussions (5 meetings) with the NGOs, ombudsman's office, state authorities and other partners on the project themes. <p>Related to Outcome 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing posters, leaflets for direct and indirect beneficiaries; • Producing and airing analytical-documentary film on penitentiary and probation reforms; • Arranging 5 radio broadcasts in the national/regional radio channels; • Preparing 10 (English-Georgian) newspaper inserts; • Creating English-Georgian active Blog on penal reforms of Georgia and uploading news/articles on monthly basis.
Project Budget	EUR 511,301
Project partners	Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups The Human Rights Centre

Other stakeholders	EU Delegation to Georgia (Donor) Ministry of Justice Special Penitentiary Service National Probation Agency National Prevention Mechanism Journalists NGOs receiving subgrants Members of the Alliance on Penal and Probation System Reforms Other NGOs active in the field
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Purpose of the evaluation

The final evaluation of the project aims to assess the overall impact of the intervention done within the project timeframe while looking at a) the relevance of its design, b) efficiency and c) effectiveness of the implementation, and d) the sustainability of its impact and e) lessons learned and recommendations for ongoing and future projects.

The final evaluation should build upon the mid-term evaluation, providing an opportunity for more in-depth analysis and understanding on why certain intended or unintended outcomes are/are not occurring, thus linking it to the overall contribution to the impact of the project. Moreover, this final evaluation will provide the opportunity for accountability towards the project stakeholders, as well as important learning for the project teams and partners.

In order to achieve this, the evaluator should respond to the following specific questions:

Accountability: have planned objectives and outcomes been reached? What has been the impact on the main project stakeholders? Will the impact be sustained? What has been PRI's contribution to the achievement of outcomes? Is the project relevant to the current justice reform landscape in Georgia?

Learning: Were the activities appropriate and effective for reaching the objectives? What was the quality of PRI's implementation? What should PRI change for future project designs and implementation?

Proposed methodology

The evaluator is expected to develop their own evaluation methodology. However, is should be expected to include:

- A desk review of relevant project and other relevant documentation (will be provided by PRI);
- Key informant interviews in country with relevant PRI project staff, donors and stakeholders including those involved directly and indirectly in the project (key line ministries, CSOs, implementing partners, journalists) for each of the key activities undertaken as part of the project.

Deliverables:

- Inception report in English outlining the evaluator's approach, proposed methodology and initial desk review due before the field work takes place
- Evaluation report, plus executive summary, in English setting out the findings against the key evaluation questions, lessons learned and recommendations to PRI and the EU for future programming design and implementation.

Timetable

The evaluation is expected to take place from September 15, 2020 to October 31, 2020 with the final report due by 17 November, 2020.

Budget: 5000 EUR GROSS

Management

The evaluator will report to the Regional Director of PRI's South Caucasus Office. Support and quality assurance will also be provided by PRI's Strategy and Impact Manager based in London.

Qualification and skills

PRI is looking for individual consultants/organizations to propose an evaluation team with the following required skills and competences:

- At least a Master's or professional qualification relating to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning specifically for policy advocacy projects for the lead evaluator (Essential);
- A proven record in delivering effective and professional evaluation results in policy advocacy projects (Essential);
- Excellent communication, analysis, writing and report presentation skills in English and Georgian (Essential);
- Capacity to carry out field research in Georgia (Essential);
- Knowledge and awareness of criminal justice and/or penal sector of Georgia (Desirable);
- Knowledge of the international criminal justice reform landscape particularly international standards (Desirable)
- Knowledge of PRI and its work (Desirable).

How to apply

The proposal from individuals/organizations shall contain the following sections:

- CV of evaluator(s);
- Proposal outlining how the assignment will be tackled as well as a budget breakdown and proposed work schedule (maximum 3 pages);
- Names and contact details of two references;
- Example of 1 evaluation report or similar conducted in the recent past;
- In case of organizations, registration document of the legal entity and the portfolio containing information about similar projects and staff resumes.

Note: The Project is VAT exempted; therefore no VAT costs will be accepted as eligible under this assignment.

Please send the application to Mrs. Tsira Tchanturia, Regional Director of Penal Reform International's South Caucasus Office tchanturia@penalreform.org by 31 August 2020.

**Evaluation of Penal Reform International’s EU-Funded Project:
Monitoring Government’s Commitments and Promoting the Reforms in the Penal
Sector through the Engagement of CSOs**

Inception Report
September 25, 2020

1. Introduction

The following report outlines the methodology proposed for the evaluation of the Penal Reform International’s EU-funded project *Monitoring Government’s Commitments and Promoting the Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of CSOs*, based on the Terms of Reference (ToR) drawn up by PRI South Caucasus Office and on the consultant’s own experience of working with civil society organizations (CSOs) implementing human rights and rule of law projects in Georgia, South Caucasus, and the Balkans. It also takes into account the rules and policies of the EC, in particular as they relate to project cycle management and M&E requirements.

This note contains the following sections:

- Brief overview of the evaluation ToR
- Outline of the proposed evaluation approach and methodology
- Presentation of the proposed work plan
- Output format and presentation

This note is submitted to ensure that the client is presented with and agrees to the proposed approach and work plan. The consultant has discussed the methodology and sample selection with PRI representatives and their invaluable insights are considered and woven into the methodological approach described below.

2. Aims and Objectives of the evaluation

The ToR issued by PRI concerns the evaluation of a single, multi-partner project implemented by PRI’s South Caucasus Office in partnership with two Georgian CSOs: Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups (RIVG) and the Human Rights Center (HRC). According to the ToR, the ultimate goal of the exercise is “to assess the impact of the project, the outcomes achieved and PRI’s contribution towards these as well as identify lessons learned and recommendations to inform future work.”¹⁹

2.1. Comments on the Objectives defined by the ToR

Apart from the global objective identified above, the ToR asks several specific questions²⁰ that can be grouped under one of the five DAC evaluation criteria. Thus, under the **Relevance** criterion, PRI seeks the consultant’s assessment of the extent to which the objectives of the project were congruous with the priorities of the call. In addition, PRI is interested in an external assessment of whether the project design was relevant to the development context

¹⁹ Terms of Reference for an External Evaluation issued by PRI South Caucasus Office, p.1.

²⁰ The ToR groups these questions under the subheadings of accountability and learning, p.3

(justice reform landscape in Georgia) and in line with the needs and priorities of the project's target groups. Lastly, the consultant is to assess the quality of the project design, in order to draw lessons learned for future interventions.

Under the **Effectiveness** and **Efficiency** criteria, the consultant will review the extent to which the project's objectives have been reached and whether the project was implemented as envisaged in the original proposal. In the areas, where the project outputs have not been achieved, the consultant will ascertain the reasons (both external and internal) for lackluster performance. In addition, the consultant will check the procedural and organizational aspects of project implementation, including general administration of the project and roles, responsibilities, and communication between the project partners. Given that this is a single project assessment, the consultant will not be evaluating whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives. Consequently, the issues of effectiveness and efficiency will be dealt with in parallel.

Following the ToR, the consultant will ascertain the **impact** by assessing to what extent the realization of the project's outcomes has had an impact on the specific problem to be address and on the Action's beneficiaries. In addition, the consultant will look into whether the project is likely to have catalytic effect and whether there is potential that it could be **sustained** over time. A part of the sustainability review will be identification of systems and processes that are likely to support continued impact and an assessment of the likelihood of the involved parties to continue the project activities on their own.

The following comments may be made, which affect the way the evaluation will be conducted:

- The main user of the evaluation will be PRI South Caucasus Office. However, the assessment of "lessons learned for future projects" will also be useful for the project's partner CSOs – Rehabilitation Initiative for the Vulnerable Groups and the Human Rights Center, as they continue their work toward human rights protection and better criminal justice in Georgia. Considering the overall objective of the intervention, the recommendations on future actions may also be useful for the members of the Georgian Criminal Justice Reform Alliance as well
- Given that this is a project-level evaluation, it is appropriate that the ToR requires the assessment to focus on all five DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. However, it is expected that the recommendations to be provided will help feed the strategic-level thinking of the implementers.

2.2. Constraints and Opportunities

One of the key limitations facing the consultant is related to COVID-19 pandemic, as worsening of public health situation may lead to enactment of additional restrictions by the GoG or to a complete lockdown. This risk can be mitigated by careful planning and constant communication with PRI team during the inception and field phases. Another key limitation for this evaluation may be the respondents' willingness to talk. The consultants previous experience in evaluating justice sector reform interventions in Georgia²¹ leads her to believe that this will be a minor risk, even if most interviews take place using online tools due to the

²¹ Most recently, the consultant worked on a Mid-Term Evaluation of Justice Programme in Georgia (2015-2018), which also looked at the PRI project under review, and the team did not encounter any issues reaching stakeholders or beneficiaries.

pandemic. However, if this assumption will not materialize, the consultant will take time to explain the importance and methodology of the assessment at the beginning of each interview, underscoring that the identity of the respondents will never be revealed or connected in any way to the comments they make. This should ensure maximum level of openness.

Staff turnover at the targeted government institutions could be a significant constraint of this evaluation, considering some of the changes in leadership that took place in the past several years in various criminal justice institutions targeted by the Action.²² In Georgia, high rates of staff turnover are generally associated with a loss of institutional memory, which creates hurdles both for project implementation and for impact evaluations. This limitation, while important, may be mitigated with support from PRI's South Caucasus Office, given its long-term involvement in criminal justice reforms in Georgia.

A key opportunity is for the evaluation process to help bring lessons from past interventions to bear on future programming. It will be important in this respect for the consultant to adopt an open, constructive, and participatory approach by (1) being open to the views of those who have carried out the project and of other stakeholders (beneficiaries in particular), (2) conveying a sense that she is appreciative of good practices and that she avoids passing unnecessary value judgments, and (3) ensuring that she hears an appropriate variety of views in the course of the evaluation and that these views are adequately reflected in the evaluation report.

The above-discussed constraints and opportunities have been taken into consideration in the methodological design of the evaluation provided below.

3. Description of the Proposed Methodology and Indicative Timeline

To undertake the evaluation, the consultant will initially conduct desk research looking at the project implementation in detail, mostly through reviewing the project proposal, the reporting provided to the donor, publications and other project-related documents, such as shadow reports, training modules, grant RFPs, media coverage, etc. In addition, the consultant will review the content of most recent country-level evaluations commissioned by the EU Delegation, in an attempt to put the findings of this project evaluation within the broader context of EU assistance to Georgia. As referenced in the ToR, the consultant will review the project's own mid-term evaluation report, both to learn about its findings and to mark concrete changes in the original project design that were made based on its findings.

Secondary data gathered from desk research will be complemented with primary data from fieldwork. In order to collect the data from primary sources, the consultant will use a combination of two non-probability sampling methods – purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is well-suited for undertaking an assessment of this type, as the method allows the consultant to select each sample element for a purpose, usually because of its unique position. This method also allows the consultant to target individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the issues under investigation. Although there are no strict rules to follow, the consultant will keep in mind the “Rubin criteria” for selecting informants when designing the purposive sampling strategy for this evaluation: (1) informants should be knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied, (2) they should be willing to

²² Most notable might be the 2018 merger of Ministry of Corrections and Probation with Ministry of Justice.

talk, and (3) they should be representative of the range of points of view.²³ The consultant will complement this method with the use of snowball sampling, to identify the underlying and invisible connections between different members of the target population.²⁴

Following the sampling approach described above and given the objectives of the evaluation, the consultant will ensure that she interviews not only the project implementing partners, but also the project's direct beneficiaries and stakeholders. Based on the ToR, informants are to be found within the following groups:

1. Project implementers and partners (PRI, RIVG, HRC).
2. Public authorities, namely representatives of Special Penitentiary Service (Ms. Inga Sarjveladze), National Probation Agency (Ms. Nino Tkeshelashvili), the Center for Crime Prevention (Mr. Lado Javakhishvili), and the Office of Public Defender (Deputy PDO – Mr. Giorgi Burjanadze, Head of the NPM – Mr. Nika Kvaratskhelia).
3. Civil society organizations – sub-grant recipients, members of the Alliance, and others that work in the field. When selecting a sample of respondents from this group the consultant considered the following criteria: (a) membership in the Alliance and degree of activism within it, (b) regional coverage, (c) involvement in the project, (d) mission and constituency of the organization, and (e) demonstrated experience in criminal justice reform work, including through EU funds. The following are the CSOs that the consultant considers interviewing:
 - a. GCRT and GCRT Kutaisi
 - b. Institute of Democracy
 - c. IDP Women's Association Consent
 - d. Association Women in Business
 - e. Center Tanadgoma
 - f. ASB
 - g. CHCA
 - h. Initiative for Social Changes
 - i. Georgian Professional Psychologists Association
 - j. Institute for Democracy and Safe Development
 - k. GYLA
 - l. GDI
 - m. CSSP
4. Journalists and media representatives targeted by the project, and
5. The EU Delegation task manager for the project (Mr. Peter Danis), as well as other donors or projects working on criminal justice reforms in Georgia.

The consultant will depend on the project team to support the identification of individuals from the above-noted groups. The initial list of interviews will be determined in the inception report and discussed with PRI by October 2, so as to have enough time to solidify the field phase schedule.

The data will be gathered mostly through semi-structured interviews following a common interview guide, which will be developed and discussed with PRI during the inception phase. The focus of each interview will depend on the actor interviewed. The consultant plans to

²³ Herbert Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, p. 66.

²⁴ When using the snowball sampling method, a researcher initially identifies and interviews one member of the target population. During the interview the researcher asks this person to identify others in the population and speaks to them. These steps are then reiterated at the researcher's discretion.

mostly conduct individual interviews. However, the use of focus groups is a possibility, particularly, with individuals who benefited from the Action’s capacity building efforts.²⁵ Given that this is an advocacy and not a service provision project, the consultant does not see a need for a field visit outside Tbilisi. However, the sample of respondents is developed with broad regional coverage in mind, which will allow the evaluator to ascertain views from various types of actors. By October 20, the consultant will have conducted a critical mass of interviews, which will allow her to gauge whether further interviewing will be useful for the evaluation.²⁶ Once the data is collected, the consultant will engage in strategic and programmatic synthesis, in order to try and identify lessons learned and best practices for the future and where possible, make suggestions for how to support dissemination of project results. The consultant envisions the initial draft report to be ready by November 11, which will give PRI enough time to comment on it, so that the finalized report is submitted on November 17, 2020.

Implementation Timeline

Project Phases (in weeks)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Inception and desk phase, including the preparation of the Inception Report and questionnaires for interviews									
Data collection									
Synthesis, debrief, draft final report writing									
Finalization of the report									

Evaluation Questions Template and Interview Guide

The table in Appendix 1 sets out the questions and adds an overarching synthetic question under each evaluation criterion. It is not proposed to disseminate these questions to informants, because experience shows that such questionnaires generally elicit too few replies to be significant. It is understood that the template will not necessarily be followed in a sequence provided, as many interviewees will likely prefer to speak in a less structured way that is reflective of their priorities rather than those of the evaluator. However, the template will form a useful checklist for the consultant, helping to ensure that all key issues are covered by each interviewee.

4. Output Format and Presentation

The final report will contain the following sections:

- Executive summary (to be provided with the final report, after PRI comments on the draft final report)
- Introduction (background, ToR, methodology, constraints and limitations)
- Context
- Project evaluation findings along the criteria provided in the ToR
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Annexes (ToR, inception report, list of people met)

Appendix 1: Evaluation questions template

²⁵ The need for FG discussions will be discussed with PRI during the IR review.

²⁶ In making this decision, the Consultant will again follow the “Rubin criteria,” according to which, for interviewing to end, the researcher should feel that she achieved completeness and saturation in responses. The completeness test is passed when the data gathered by the researcher provides an overall sense of the meaning of a concept, theme, or process. Saturation, on the other hand, is achieved when the researcher gains confidence that with each new interview she is learning little that is new from previous interviews.

Criteria	Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities of EIDHR? b) Did the project reflect the Call for Proposal and Guidelines? c) Did the project design take account of other donor-supported projects and programme in similar fields? d) Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? e) Were risks appropriately identified by the project? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? b) To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? c) Was the project's duration sufficient to achieve the expected results? d) Were the project activities adequate to make progress toward the project objectives? e) What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this? f) To what extent were the EU monitoring mechanisms and structures appropriate and effective?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? b) Did administrative and organisational structures ensure efficient implementation, cost-effectiveness and accountability? c) Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? e) Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? f) To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? g) Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? b) Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)? c) How can the sustainability of project be improved?

ANNEX 3: List of People Interviewed

1. Tsira Chanturia, PRI
2. Elene Gabelaia, PRI
3. Anton Kelbakiani, RIVG
4. Natalia Tsagareli, RIVG
5. Aleko Tskitishvili, HRC
6. Nino Tsagareishvili, HRC
7. Peter Danis, EUD
8. Nana Gogokhia, IDP Women's Association Consent
9. Tamar Ghlonti, Guria Youth Center
10. Nino Elisbarashvili, Georgian Association of Women in Business
11. Tamar Khurtsilava, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB)
12. Giorgi Burjanadze, Deputy PDO
13. Ivrita Gogua, Journalist
14. Nino Lortkipanidze, Georgian Professional Psychologists Association
15. Nino Tkeshelashvili, National Bureau of Probation
16. Vazha Kasrelashvili, Centre Tanadgoma
17. Nino Demetrashvili, Initiative for Social Changes
18. Jaba Ananidze, Journalist
19. Tamar Nergadze, Journalist
20. Manana Purtskhvanidze, Anti-Violence Network of Georgia
21. Tinatin Uplisashvili, EU TA Project at the MoJ
22. Maia Gigineishvili, Institute for Democracy and Safe Development
23. Natia Imnadze, Institute for Democracy and Safe Development
24. Nino Khachidze, Institute of Democracy
25. Nikoloz Kvaratskhelia, National Preventive Mechanism at the PDO
26. Tea Panchulidze, GCRT Kutaisi
27. Tamar Bochorishvili, GYLA
28. Lado Javakhishvili, National Probation Bureau
29. Gavin Slade, CSSP
30. Sophio Asatiani, Open Society Georgia Foundation