**Good Practice – Georgian Experience**

The administration of recent elections, recognized for its professionalism, contributed to the increase in public trust and improved image of the CEC, both domestically and internationally. A public opinion poll, conducted by an international organization in August 2014, highlighted the CEC as the leading state institution in Georgia when it comes to the level of public trust. Increased trust equates to increased responsibility, and the CEC will strive to maintain and surpass expectations by providing citizens of Georgia with professionally and competently administered elections. The election administration has done tremendous amount of work in the following directions to build on these achievements and deliver more.

1. Training election administration staff and other election stakeholders;
2. Informing voters;
3. Improving electoral legislation;
4. Engaging election stakeholders;
5. Ensuring equal election environment for all election stakeholders;
6. Institutional strengthening.
7. **Training election administration staff and other election stakeholders**

The CEC of Georgia conducts series of training programs and seminars for election administration and other election stakeholders, including: lawyers of local municipalities, media representatives, election Observers; representatives of election subjects, groups working on ethnic minorities and people with disabilities penitentiary system staff, general Court judges. These capacity building trainings are delivered through the CEC’s Training Center in close collaborating with various departments of the CEC.

1. **Informing Voters**

The CEC utilizes multiple mechanisms to inform voters about its activities and elections in general.One of the most efficient tools that CEC is using for its public outreach is the official website of the election administration (www.cec.gov.ge) that is being updated on a regular basis and is tailored to the needs ofvoters. Besides the website, the CEC actively engages with voters through:

* CEC hotline;
* Information campaigns:
  + Voter cards and informational stickers;
  + Informational posters;
  + Educational videos/audio files;
  + Social media;
  + Small grants program
    - Grants are issued to local non-governmental organizations via the CEC Training Center to educate voters on wide range of election related issues.

1. **Improving electoral legislation**

The Georgian election administration is actively engaged in the efforts of election stakeholders to improve electoral legislative framework. The CEC focuses on coordinated work with the Parliament and other decision makers to produce sound legislative amendments in the lead up to elections. As a result of this cooperation, series of technical and procedural amendments were submitted to the Parliament’s inter-faction group in the lead up to the 2014 Municipal Elections that was later adopted by the Parliament.

1. **Engaging election stakeholders**

The CEC has developed various formats to improve its stakeholder communication. Series of roundtable discussion formats were launched in cooperation with international organizations working in the field of elections. Currently the CEC is utilizing the following formats allowing direct communication with election stakeholders:

* Regular roundtable discussions with civil society representatives and media (IFES);
* Regular roundtable discussions with political party representatives (IRI);
* Technical Working Group meetings - TWG (EU-UNDP);
* Working Group on Ethnic Minority Issues;
* Working Group on Voters withDisabilities;
* CEC Gender Equality Commission.

1. **Ensuring equal election environment for all election stakeholders**

During the 2014 Municipal elections, Georgian election administration delivered many and improved services to voters that belong to vulnerable groups. Moreover, ensuring equal election environment is one of the strategic goals of the election administration for the next five years that is reflected in the strategic plan of the administration.

Theelection administration delivered following services to **voters with disabilities**:

* Magnifying sheetsat every polling station;
* Adapted precincts;
  + Adapted voting booths for people in wheelchairs;
  + Portable ramps;
  + Mobile group services;
  + Videos on electoral procedures targeting voters with hearing disabilities were provided in all the relevant precincts;
  + A map of adapted precincts was created and published on the CEC’s website.
* Sign Language translation services;
* Small grants program on the issues of voters with disabilities:
* CEC’s training center administered small grants program funded three NGOs with a goal to ensure the rights of voters with disabilities in the elections.

Theelection administration delivered following services to **ethnic minority voters:**

* Informational Meetings (30 meetings in 2014);
* All election materials including: voter information cards and procedural booklets were translated in ethnic minority languages and were disseminated well before the elections;
* Voters list was available in ethnic minority languages;
* The CEC 24 hour call center offered information services in ethnic minority languages.
* Specialized trainings were conducted for Precinct Election Commission (PEC) members on issues pertaining election procedures;
* All training materials were provided in their respective languages;
* Small grants program on “Informing ethnic minority voters and increasing their participation in the elections” was administered by the CEC Training Center
* In 2014 the CEC training Center financed 10 projects under the theme.

The election administration conducted the following programs supporting gender equality:

* CEC for the first time issued complete data set on women’s participation in the elections;
* CEC started analyzing its data according to gender:
  + Now we can track how many women ran in the elections, how many women were elected, how many women were in the voters list and how many women voted;
* CEC conducted series of procedural trainings for women candidates;
* CEC conducted trainings for its female DEC members on gender issues and leadership;
* CEC’s Training Center issued small grants to local non-governmental organizations working on gender issues

1. **Institutional strengthening:**

As it was noted, the last June 15, 2014local self-government elections were widely praised by local and international election observation organizations. To sustain the progress achieved, the CEC has identified new strategic goals and objectives that build and expand upon the previous strategic plan. Thus, a new strategic plan was drafted that shall become a cornerstone for Georgia’s election administration and will also serve as a road map for the country’s electoral stakeholders for the next five-year period.Institutional strengthening of the election administration was identified as one of the strategic priorities of the election administration.

The CEC’s new 2015-2019 strategic plan is available in English at the CEC’s official website [www.cec.gov.ge](http://www.cec.gov.ge).