



Review of international assistance to political party and party system development

Case study report: Georgia

Marta Foresti, George Welton and David Jijelava

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Overseas Development Institute
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7JD, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399
www.odi.org.uk

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Executive summary

Georgia's political system has been heavily shaped in recent years by the initial optimism and then growing critique – especially by national and international civil society – of the dominance of the United National Movement (UNM), led by Mikheil Saakashvili. This recent history, as well as the broader context of relations with Russia and with the West as a post-Soviet satellite, shapes the context in which party development has taken place.

In the weeks that followed Mikheil Saakashvili's first victory as President in 2004, the new Government pushed through changes to the constitution that significantly strengthened the power of the Executive and the ruling party. In both Parliamentary elections held since the Rose Revolution, the UNM has managed to gain the two thirds majority necessary to make constitutional amendments. The largest opposition party in the Parliament, which is a driving force for of the Parliamentary Minority, is the Christian-Democratic Movement, which has seven MPs. All other political parties, except the Labour Party (who are boycotting Parliamentary sittings), are represented by only one or two MPs.

It is generally accepted that political parties in Georgia are institutionally weak organisations. Parties are seen as governed more by the personality of their leaders than by ideology or a coherent set of policies. All of the parties are heavily concentrated in Tbilisi and only a few political parties are able to conduct active campaigning in the regions. The ruling party is the clear exception to this, since it has party representation in every district and is able to mobilise people for the elections throughout the year.

Other key obstacles to political party development include:

- Structures and cultural traditions inherited from the Soviet era, which mean that the division between state and party is not always respected.
- Severe constraints to party financing resulting in significant imbalances between ruling party and opposition party resources.
- Lack of internal party structures and processes resulting in personality driven parties, reinforced by limited internal capacities.
- Parliamentary dominance of the ruling party and overwhelming constitutional powers of the president.
- The limited focus on policy and programmatic issues and overall short term approach to strategies and constituency building.

Although Georgia receives a significant amount of aid from the international community, this is mostly aimed at democratisation, as well as strategic and security objectives rather than at poverty reduction as in many developing countries. Support for political parties is firmly located within a range of diplomatic and political relations rooted in the end of the Cold War and more specifically in the lead up and aftermath of the Rose Revolution in 2003, including personal relationships and the credibility of individual politicians.

A number of international donors and governments have been engaging with and supporting Georgian political parties since the Rose Revolution. However, it is important to recognise that not all forms of engagement can be described as direct support to political parties and not all provide support in financial terms. What is perhaps most important is that financial support to political parties, through services or projects, is not necessarily what political parties value as the most useful form of engagement with the international community.

By far the most significant donor supporting Georgian political parties and party system is USAID. The US has played a very significant role in Georgian politics since the end of the Soviet regime, and in the lead up and aftermath of the Rose Revolution. The US administration has since been a strong supporter of Saakashvili's presidency, regarded as an example of a successful transition from the Soviet regime to a free and democratic country. Other key funders supporting political parties in Georgia are the UK Embassy (there is no DFID presence

since 2008), a number of German party political foundations working with 'sister' or ideologically aligned Georgian parties and most recently the EC, which funds a training programme for party activists.

Although in principle most donor support is open to all parties, in practice those who benefit most have been the parliamentary opposition parties and the newly emerging parties or coalitions which require support for party building. The ruling party has sufficient levels of its own resource to access technical assistance and other forms of party support.

The international community can presently do very little to address the structural problems and incentives structures that undermine programmatic party development in Georgia. This does not imply that external actors have no roles to play. The findings of this study suggest that, provided that these actors are aware of what they can and cannot realistically achieve, they have a role to play in at least three important ways:

- They can broker relationship between parties and within parties, helping to forge and maintain alliances;
- They can initiate and facilitate dialogue among parties and between parties and external actors, which can be helpful in widening networks and overcoming complex political hurdles;
- When some of the basics are in place, they can provide useful technical knowledge and 'on the job' capacity building, which some parties find helpful for improving their strategies and techniques.

Money, however, does not seem to be a key variable to explain the success of some of these programmes. If anything, low cost activities such as political dialogue, brokering and negotiating between parties are seen as more valuable than more resource intensive projects.

1 Introduction

In theory, political parties play a central role within well-functioning democracies, aggregating and representing citizens' interests and formulating policy agendas that can respond to citizens' concerns. In practice, in many countries – especially developing countries – political parties are weak and disconnected from the policy process, and struggle to connect with or represent citizens and their interests. Despite understandable sensitivities about intervening in processes that are clearly political, donors are increasingly aware that political parties need to be part of the jigsaw of effective governance, and are in the process of working out how best to provide support for, and engage with, political parties and party systems.

This case study is part of a research project funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The overall objectives are to explore the experience of international support to, and engagement with, political parties in four countries and one regional context, to identify country-specific examples of good, bad or 'better' practice and draw out lessons going forward. This case study is based on fieldwork conducted in Tbilisi in May 2010 involving interviews with a range of relevant stakeholders including representatives from political parties, donor agencies, implementing organisations, the media and academia. A full list of interviews is available in Annex 1.

2 The political context in Georgia

Georgia's political system has been heavily shaped in recent years by the initial optimism and then growing critique of the dominance of the United National Movement (UNM), led by Mikheil Saakashvili. This recent history, as well as the broader context of relations with Russia, and with the West as a post-Soviet satellite, has shaped the context in which party development has taken place.

The current President, Mikheil Saakashvili, the country's third President since independence, was first brought to power as the result of post-election protests in 2003 against then President Eduard Shevardnadze's regime and the resulting change of power, known as the Rose Revolution

When Eduard Shevardnadze initially took over from Georgia's first President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, he was seen by many locals and the majority of the international community as a liberator and reformer. Initially, he lived up to that image, successfully marginalising many of the criminal and paramilitary elements that had first brought him to power and building strong relations with the West.

However, his inability to fight corruption gradually undermined his administration and left it unable to provide the most rudimentary of social services or social protections. By 2003 it had become apparent that Shevardnadze's government was extremely weak. His party performed catastrophically in the 2002 local elections and a number of high-profile figures, including Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze, who had once been members of his Government, became strong opponents. Other opposition groups, such as the Labour Party, the New Rights, and the Revival Party also gained ground.

In the parliamentary elections of November 2003, it quickly became apparent that Saakashvili's party, the UNM and the Burjanadze-Zhvanias' coalition had received more votes than any other block. However, by the next morning the official results showed the ruling party as the winner. These results were disputed by a number of local and international monitoring organisations, most notably by 'Fair Elections', which detected and documented a significant number of cases of election fraud. This sparked a wave of protests and on 22nd November, the leaders of the protest broke into the parliament and interrupted Shevardnadze's first speech. On 23rd November, Shevardnadze resigned.

Saakashvili's UNM, therefore, came into office with a monopoly on power and a strong mandate for change. But in order to enact changes quickly the government was often more concerned with results than with due process. Early constitutional amendments strengthened the Presidency and many of the first major reforms to government, such as the mass sacking of the police and civil servants, or arrests of corrupt businessmen, were done with little thought for the rule of law.

While this progressive strengthening of the ruling party made many nervous, between 2004 and 2007 the Georgian opposition remained extremely weak. In the Parliamentary elections of March 2004 only one political group not connected to the ruling party gained any seats. Even though this group grew over the following three years (as individuals and parties split from the ruling coalition) the ruling party comfortably maintained the two thirds majority needed to make constitutional changes. Similarly, in spite of several scandals in 2005 and 2006, involving senior government ministers, opposition parties failed to make any gains in the 2006 local elections.

The only real challenge to the government started with protests in the autumn of 2007. These protests were triggered by government plans to change the dates of the Parliamentary and Presidential elections so that they would coincide. This was seen as a clear attempt by the ruling party to improve its prospects and galvanised opposition. At the same time, following his dismissal from government, former defence Minister Irakli Okruashvili went on the (then) opposition TV station, Imedi, owned by the oligarch Badri Patarkatsishvili, and accused the government and President Saakashvili of widespread corruption. He also criticised the government for their weaknesses in failing to resolve regional conflicts. The following day he was arrested on charges of corruption at the Defence Ministry. This sparked immediate protests and calls for his release. He was released on 9th October, having given a confession that many considered to be forced. The protests, nonetheless, continued culminating with a large rally on 2nd November.

Protests continued for several days, but seemed to be diminishing when the Government, on 7th November 2007, sent police in riot-gear to disperse the remaining protestors. In the violence that ensued, many opposition party protestors were severely beaten, the opposition Imedi TV channel was violently raided and shut down and a state of emergency was declared. This was generally criticised by the international community as a massive over-reaction by the Georgian Government and risked undermining their credibility at home and abroad. In response, the Government called snap Presidential elections in January 2008 with Parliamentary elections held in May 2008.

In the January elections, the President faced an unusually united opposition since nine of the major opposition parties (all opposition parties bar the Labour Party and New Rights) unified behind one candidate, Levan Gachechiladze. According to official results, Saakashvili won 53% of the total vote avoiding the need for a run-off. Gachechiladze received 26%, but none of the parties' leaders recognised the results and mass protests occurred until the official inauguration of President Saakashvili.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODHIR) reported what some considered to be a contradictory message that on the one hand this was 'the first genuinely competitive post-independence presidential election in Georgia' but at the same time said that 'a significant 23 per cent of counts observed were assessed as bad or very bad' (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008). The parliamentary elections on 21st May 2008 were generally seen as an improvement. However, while the international community accepted the result as democratic, it highlighted flaws that many considered significant enough to undermine that claim. Major concerns included the nature of the counting process, intimidation of opposition parties' supporters particularly in the areas outside of Tbilisi, and questions as to the independence of the judiciary (Transparency International, 2008).

On 8th August 2008, conflict broke out between Georgia and Russia. Relations between the countries had progressively deteriorated and Russia had long been involved in the two

separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After the Rose Revolution, Georgia's explicit pro-western foreign policy, and its desire to join NATO, complicated relations further. Both sides routinely engaged in inflammatory rhetoric and occasional brinkmanship. By the summer of 2008, Russia had instituted an embargo on Georgian goods (closing its largest market), had stopped providing visas to Georgians and flights between the two countries had ceased.

The exact timing of what happened during the conflict is disputed. An EU report, written by Swiss Diplomat Heidi Tagliavini, argues that though the Georgians 'triggered' the conflict, both sides were responsible as both engaged in a series of provocations that made war extremely hard to avoid (Tagliavini, 2010). The geographic scope of the war and the physical damage was fairly limited, although it initially produced 100,000 internally displaced people, 25,000 of whom have still not been able to return to their homes.

From a political point of view, the war placed opposition parties in a difficult position. No party or individual wanted to accuse Saakashvili of starting the war, as this would acknowledge Georgian aggression. Similarly, no-one wanted to call for Saakashvili's resignation while the Russians were so clearly demanding it. As a result, the second half of 2008 saw many complain about the actions of the government but with little action.

Towards the end of 2008, opposition to the government became increasingly strident and was joined by several new members. For example, former Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli started the Movement for a Fair Georgia Party. More significantly, in early 2009, Irakli Alasania, a UN Ambassador, whose father had been killed in the first Abkhazia war, resigned from his position, highlighting the government's consistent failures in its treatment of Abkhazia and South-Ossetia as key reasons for his departure. Alasania returned to Georgia and formed a new alliance with the Republican and New Rights Party called the Alliance for Georgia. As a well respected technocrat who had not been tarnished by his involvement in the Government, Alasania became the most popular member of the opposition.

His return to Georgian politics coincided with the participation of most of the major opposition parties in anti-government protests. Opposition parties accused the Government of corruption, electoral fraud and for starting and losing the war with Russia. They called for the President to resign and for new elections. Protests occurred across the city for most of April and May. Disagreement between the opposition leaders also became apparent. 'Moderates', like the Alliance, called for an end to the protests and dialogue with the government while 'radicals', like Burjanadze, swore that they would continue until Saakashvili resigned. As the protests ended, most of the opposition parties accepted the ruling party's offer to participate in discussions on a new election code. The government suggested moving local self-government elections forward to the spring (instead of autumn) of 2010 and conducting the elections based on a new code.

If anything, the protests seem to have increased support for the government as well as general apathy among Georgian citizens, increasingly frustrated with political processes. Multiple polls suggested that the majority of the population did not like the protests and the opposition leaders who led them saw their support wane (International Republican Institute, 2010). On the other hand, the Georgian Government saw a recovery in its support, both at home and abroad, for the restraint they had shown. A very significant portion of opposition parties, most notably the 'Alliance for Georgia,' now stressed that they were giving up 'street methods' and would focus instead on seeking power through elections.

3 What problem does support to political parties address?

This section analyses the nature of the context for political parties in Georgia, and the extent to which the stated aims and objectives of international assistance seem to respond to this context. It firstly examines the historical development of political parties in Georgia, in light of

the country's recent history and it draws out some of the key features, and weaknesses, of parties today. It then looks at the aims of international assistance.

3.1 Political party development

In the weeks that followed Mikheil Saakashvili's first victory as President, the new Government pushed through changes to the constitution that adopted the position of a Prime Minister. This allowed the three main political leaders of the Rose Revolution to divide the three key political positions among themselves; Mikheil Saakashvili as President, Nino Burjanadze as Chair of the Parliament, and Zurab Zhvania took the position of a Prime-Minister.

Although this form of government is formally 'semi-presidential', the Georgian version is often referred to as 'super-presidential' system as it provides the President with extremely strong formal and informal influence. In particular, the President appoints the cabinet and can fire the Prime Minister and dissolve Parliament. As a result, the largest check on the President occurs if the Prime Minister and the Speaker are powerful political figures in their own right. This was the case when Zhvania was Prime Minister, but after his death, in February 2005, none of the subsequent Prime Ministers were considered independent political figures.

The Parliament of Georgia is elected based on a combination of majoritarian candidates for particular geographic territories and a party list based on a proportional vote. In parliamentary elections since the Rose Revolution, the United National Movement (UNM) has managed to gain the two thirds majority necessary to make constitutional amendments. Currently, the UNM has 115 seats in Parliament. The Minority, with 14 Members of Parliament, consists of two factions – the Christian Democrats and Strong Georgia. All other political parties, except the Labour Party who are boycotting Parliamentary sittings, are represented by only one or two MPs in the Parliament.

Television is by far the most popular source of information in Georgia and one of the biggest hurdles to opposition parties. There are three nation-wide news TV channels in Georgia, two commercial and one public. All of them are closely associated with the Government. Tbilisi, where the majority of population is concentrated, there are two small opposition channels, though their popularity is low.

3.2 Parties in Georgia today

It is generally accepted that political parties in Georgia are institutionally weak organisations. Parties are seen as governed more by the personality of their leaders than by ideology or a coherent set of policies. All of the parties are heavily concentrated in Tbilisi and only a few political parties are able to conduct active campaigning in the regions.

The ruling party is the clear exception to this, as it has party representation in every district and is able to mobilise people for elections throughout the year. The situation is worse in ethnic minority regions, where opposition parties have almost no representation. Historically, such regions would secure most votes for an incumbent party, and therefore opposition parties' strategies have de-prioritised these areas. Moreover, it is often the case that political parties are better represented in the region where their leader comes from. For example, Natelashvili's Labour Party enjoys strong support in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, the core team of the New Rights consists of people from Racha, and the Republicans were popular in Adjara when the party was headed by Davit Berdzenishvili.

Substantial inequities in financing are considered to be one of the key hurdles to a more level playing field in politics in Georgia, as the ruling party has access to vastly better finances than opposition parties. As an indicator, the ruling party spent GEL 20 million in the 2008 Presidential Election. The candidate representing all of the opposition parties combined spent around GEL 0.5 million. Political parties receive a mixture of public and private funding in Georgia. Parties which have passed the threshold of 4% of the votes in parliamentary elections are eligible to receive state funding. As public financing is awarded on the basis of prior election performance, the ruling party naturally receives more than other parties.

However, the biggest discrepancy between party financing reflects differences in private support. Georgian law allows for individuals to donate up to GEL 30,000, while legal entities can donate GEL 100,000. At the present time, the ruling party receives considerable donations from business and private individuals, while opposition parties receive little or no financing of this kind. Opposition parties argue that the main reason for this discrepancy is that the government can use a combination of inducements and threats to encourage businesses to support its own party and discourage the support of others. Central to this is the power of the tax police and lack of trust in the judiciary to act as an independent arbiter of disputes.

Since the Rose Revolution, the tax police have been given significant powers to investigate businesses for non-payment of taxes. As these investigations can be selectively applied, there is a strong sense that they are used to target the ruling party's political enemies. At the same time, the judiciary continues to be one of the least trusted institutions in Georgia and there is little confidence that the courts can be used to balance the exercise of this power.

The current political environment in Georgia is therefore marked by a range of complicated and cross-cutting relationships and challenges for parties. In order to simplify the analysis, four main 'groups' can be identified. The first group is comprised of the ruling party, the United National Movement, led by President Mikheil Saakashvili. This party currently holds a near monopoly on political power as they have both the Presidency, a majority in Parliament, the Mayor of Tbilisi, all regional governors (which are selected by the President) and all 69 municipal councils (which are directly elected).

The second group are the Christian Democrats, led by former TV news-anchorman Giorgi Targamadze. The Christian Democrat Party was formed in February 2008, after snap Presidential elections but before the parliamentary elections, and are the only opposition party of any size to have taken their seats in parliament. This is the one party within the Georgian opposition who have consistently avoided street protests.

The third group are a coalition of three parties collectively called the Alliance for Georgia.¹ This is led by Georgia's former UN Ambassador Irakli Alasania² and his newly formed Our Georgia, Free Democrats (OGFD), the Republican Party and the New Rights Party. This group has no real parliamentary representation because it was not formed at the time of the parliamentary elections; the Republicans and New Rights parties refused to take their seats after the last parliamentary election.

These three groupings are defined by a generally centre-right ideology and a strong instinctive inclination to the West.

The fourth group are often called the 'radical' opposition because of their refusal to engage with the government, and their natural inclination for street protests as a strategy for change. Among them there are three significant sub-groups. The National Council, led by ex-Prime Minister Zurab Nogaideli, are largely defined by their desire to reject aspirations to NATO membership and re-engage with Russia. In Georgia it is generally assumed that they have Russian backing, if not actual financial support.

The second element in this group is the Labour Party, led by Shalva Natelashvili. The Labour Party is a strongly leftist organisation that won a significant proportion of the vote prior to the Rose Revolution. They tend to encourage significant increases in government support and are fairly ambivalent on the issue of Russian/Western orientation. Third, the National Forum, co-run by the popular Guba Sanikidze, have distinguished themselves from the rest of the opposition by refusing to engage in elections (until electoral reforms have been passed) and failing to engage in street protests (until opposition parties gain more popular support). Unlike other opposition parties, they are seen as actively trying to build up party structures.

¹ The Alliance for Georgia has split-up following the 2010 local government elections.

² Since the research was conducted Alasania has left the Alliance for Georgia.

Finally, there are a range of parties and individuals who have been central to politics in Georgia for a while, but, if the polls are to be believed, have very little popular support at present. These include Nino Burjanadze, Irakli Okruashvili and Levan Gachechiladze.

Nino Burjanadze was one of the three key players in the Rose Revolution, along with Saakashvili and former Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania. She was the Speaker of Parliament since 2004 and stepped down from that position in the run-up to the parliamentary elections. She was a leading figure behind the April 2008 protests. Together with former prime-minister Zurab Noghaideli, she is seen as a pro-Russian force, who has visited the Kremlin a number of times since the war and supports restoring good relations with Russian without preconditions.

Irakli Okruashvili is the former Defence Minister whose dramatic accusations of corruption while in government triggered the protests that ended in violence in November 2007. He is known for his hawkish rhetoric and 'toughness', which initially gained him popularity in Georgia. Okruashvili is currently living in France as he faces charges of corruption in Georgia. Finally, Levan Gachechiladze was the unified opposition candidate for President in 2008 and a leading figure in the April 2008 protests. He is seen as the radical wing of the opposition, although he has softened his stance on a number of occasions. While these three do not appear to have wide popular support, they continue to influence Georgian politics.

A number of constraints to political party development have been identified in this analysis, including:

- Structures and cultural traditions inherited from the Soviet era, which mean that the division between state and party is not always respected.
- Severe constraints to party financing resulting in significant imbalances between ruling party and opposition party resources.
- Very limited presence in the regions resulting in weak constituency base beyond Tbilisi.
- Lack of internal party structures and processes resulting in personality driven parties, reinforced by limited internal capacities.
- Parliamentary dominance of the ruling party and overwhelming constitutional powers of the president.
- The limited focus on policy and programmatic issues and overall short term approach to strategies and constituency building.

These challenges are interrelated and they particularly affect opposition parties. However, they also represent the symptoms of a very weak party system where long term opportunities for party building and meaningful programmatic approaches are limited. Against this complex background, it is important to assess the role and effectiveness of international assistance to political parties.

3.3 Aims and objectives of international assistance

While Georgia receives significant amounts of aid from the international community, this is more explicitly aimed at democratisation, strategic and security objectives rather than at poverty reduction (whereas the latter is more common as the explicit objective in many developing countries). Support for political parties in Georgia is therefore firmly located within a range of diplomatic and political relations rooted in the end of the Cold War and more specifically in the lead up and aftermath of the Rose Revolution in 2003.

Overwhelmingly, rationales for supporting parties in Georgia are grounded in a stated democratisation agenda, specifically promoting democratic transitions in formerly Soviet controlled countries. Multi-party democracy is considered a pillar of democracy support, including the development of a capable and vocal opposition. For some donors, like the US, the emphasis on democracy and governance is the main rationale for political parties support. For others, like the UK and to some extent the EU, democracy support is an important component of a security and stability agenda, especially since the 2008 war, which reinforced the view

that despite significant democratic progress in Georgia since 2003, volatility and instability still constitute serious threats in the region. Moreover, some Western Governments, especially European ones, have very direct interests in maintaining stability in Georgia and the wider region, for example in terms of controlling Georgia's borders, preventing regional conflict, managing relations with Russia, and securing access to gas and oil pipelines. This is reflected in the way in which support for parties is organised and managed by the Embassies.

The main objectives of support to political parties specifically include (i) encouraging a more programmatic approach to party politics, (ii) mitigating the dominant personality driven approach, and (iii) strengthening political professionalism by improving party members skills and knowledge base. Some donors, like USAID focus on developing party structures and processes, while others, like the UK and the EU, fund projects more narrowly focused on skills development.

The above analysis reveals a number of key factors which any engagement with, or support to, political parties will need to address. This includes the continued dominance of the ruling party, including access to funding, and the resulting de facto state party fusions which have occurred. Combined with this, is a recent history of divided opposition parties, characterised by shifting alliances, dominant personalities and wide divergences on key issues, including the use of public protests. Any support to political parties needs to engage with the realities of these incentives and dynamics. Overall, external support for Georgian political parties appears to be grounded in these challenges, and the broader context of Georgian political structures, processes and dynamics. Although external actors are keen to maintain a neutral and independent role in relation to national politics, it is also clear that the nature of the engagement with parties is of a political nature.

Interestingly, most donors are very aware of the hurdles and incentives that currently limit the capacity and reach of many opposition parties. These are often of a political rather than technical nature, and they are grounded in the historical legacies of the Soviet era as well as in the current constitutional, economic and political power of the ruling party. However, most donors seem to fall back onto fairly technical and at times narrow approaches to political party support, reliant on general rather than tailored activities such as training and surveys. Where there seems to be more room for flexibility and adaptation is regarding 'non project' initiatives, such as political dialogue or high level brokering.

Nonetheless, there are two remaining challenges which the assumptions and objectives of assistance of parties seem to struggle to engage with. Firstly, there is the reality that external actors can do little to mitigate some of the structural problems affecting political parties, such as financing or lack of party structures outside the capital city. This is in part because of their lack of leverage to fundamentally alter the incentives that parties and party leaders respond to.

Secondly, in a context where new parties are often created around individual leaders and linked to short term electoral prospects, external actors may be very limited in their contributions to party building, especially for non parliamentary, small and extremely weak parties with almost no internal structures, resources or capacity. In this context, much of the technical support falls on deaf ears and stands very little chance of actually making a difference. This may imply the need to consider engagement with political parties as one part of engagement with the overall political system, rather than establishing programmes only targeted at strengthening parties in these areas. Current approaches do not seem to pay enough attention to these challenges.

The next section of the report provides an overview of the main modalities and approaches of international assistance to Georgian political parties and assesses their relevance and effectiveness against the key factors and challenges identified in this section.

4 How have external actors supported political parties?

A number of international donors and governments have supported and engaged Georgian political parties since the Rose Revolution.

4.1 Main funders of party assistance

By far the most significant donor supporting Georgian political parties and party system is USAID. The US has played a significant role in Georgian politics since the end of the Soviet regime, and in the lead up and aftermath of the Rose Revolution of 2003. The US administration has been a strong supporter of Saakashvili's presidency, regarded as an example of a successful transition from the Soviet regime to a free and democratic country. George Bush publicly supported Saakashvili during the 2008 war and praised the Georgian government in national and international fora. Despite some signals that the new US administration might be less supportive (or less publicly so) due to emerging concerns over Saakashvili's authoritative style, there is no evidence to suggest that US support (and aid) will diminish in the near future.

USAID has supported the Georgian political party system since 1998, with a specific focus on political parties since 2006. In the main, it funds approaches which focus on training and technical assistance, as well as some more targeted tailored support. The US has also played a role in high level guidance and brokering between parties.

The main funding modality is through multi-year funding agreements with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). In 2007 a division of responsibility was introduced between IRI and NDI, with IRI's programme specifically focused on providing support to political parties, whilst NDI's work funded by USAID focused on parliamentary strengthening³. However, in reality the work of IRI and NDI is very complementary and they offer similar kinds of programmes and services (see Box 1 below).

In addition, USAID offers a grant making facility for organisations that want to apply for small levels of funding that can be used for political party support. The current budget for the three year funding agreement with IRI is \$3 million which is entirely devoted to political party support and focused on training and technical assistance. A similar budget is provided through NDI. Although it was extremely difficult to gather evidence about the volume of funding that individual donors provide for political party support, it appears that the level other donors' support is significantly smaller than USAID: the UK⁴ and EU current budgets are in the region of \$200,000-400,000 over 18-24 month periods.

Both NDI and IRI have been working with Georgian political parties since the end of the Cold War and played major roles in the transition to multi party democracy following the Rose Revolution of 2003. In the early nineties, their main focus was on youth and women's participation in political parties, in line with USAID priorities. Since 2006, their strategy has shifted towards a more comprehensive approach to political party support, including a focus on the party system as a whole. Although the two institutes are associated with the Democratic and Republican parties in the US, in Georgia they work across the spectrum of political parties. Despite their party political affiliations, they are not perceived as ideologically driven/based, although they are perceived by some to be the operational arm of USAID in the country.

³ NDI has some political party support programmes (e.g. surveys and polling) funded by SIDA and some of its initiatives including political parties (such as electoral reform dialogue and political debates).

⁴ The UK budget was larger until 2009, when a number of UK sponsored projects and programmes terminated, including funding for NDI polling. Since then the UK budget has been further reduced and current activities are likely to be interrupted before the planned completion date. These figures do not include the DFID GTF funded programme by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. The EU programme has only just started.

Box 1: NDI and IRI polling

One of the main forms of party assistance provided by NDI and IRI in Georgia is the use of polling and research surveys. These are generally conducted in the lead up to local and national elections. They have two main objectives. The first is to provide a more accurate evidence base of actual support for political parties in Tbilisi and, crucially, in the regions. This is seen as critical in challenging the personality driven politics which characterises Georgian political parties, by providing more accurate information about the popularity of the parties beyond the usual, often Tbilisi based, circles. The second objective is to help shift the electoral debate from personalities and parties towards issues, by focusing on the problems that the electorate actually cares about. This aims to facilitate a more informed and content-rich political debate which, according to many, remains very limited and rarely reaches audiences beyond Tbilisi today. The ultimate aim of polling is to help parties develop more accurate campaigning strategies and, in turn, to support the development of more programmatic approaches.

Although they share similar objectives and features, there are some differences between IRI and NDI polling. These include different technical approaches to the formulation of questions, the length of the survey (IRI is committed to leave the field 2 weeks before the elections) and, most importantly, in the way in which the information about individual parties' ratings are disclosed. Until recently, individual parties' ratings were meant to be seen by the interested parties only and were not meant to be disclosed. However they have been systematically leaked in the national media and as a result have undermined the credibility of the polling process and results as a whole. Indeed concerns were expressed by some opposition parties and other commentators about the credibility of the field pollsters used by NDI and IRI and more generally on the ways in which the questions were formulated and the surveys administered. As a result NDI has recently started to make its polling data available to the public while IRI continues to provide only individual data to parties.

In line with other major donors, the UK government has been supporting Georgian political parties and the party system since 2005 through a number of programmes⁵, which focus on training and technical assistance, including election monitoring, parliamentary strengthening, public awareness, exchange visits, surveys, research and focus groups (with a particular focus on the regions). Most of these UK funded programmes ended in 2009. DFID's presence in Georgia ended in 2008 and all political parties support is currently funded by the FCO through the British Embassy in Tbilisi.

The main initiative currently supported by the UK is a training programme for political party staff, implemented by a Georgian think tank, the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS). This programme seems to provide a rather academic and issue-based agenda, focusing on general knowledge, political theory and sociology and involving the rather intensive participation of parties. This approach is designed to complement the more practical and skills oriented training provided by other donors through organisations such as IRI and NDI. The training is offered to all political parties, both at junior and senior levels. The budget for the GFSIS training was originally set at £138,533, as part of a larger budget of £400,000 for parliamentary strengthening. However, following spending cuts within the FCO last year, the overall budget has been reduced to £100,000 and, unless an alternative source of funding can be found, the GFSIS programme will terminate in June 2010.

In 2009, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) received a grant from DFID (through the Governance and Transparency Fund) to conduct parliamentary support and media work in four countries including Georgia. Although at present the project does not directly fund party support, it is planning to do so in the next few years. Coordinating the objectives and activities of the WFD implemented project with the UK broader engagement with political parties and more generally on political dialogue in Georgia is going to be a key priority for the Embassy, especially since there is no DFID local presence to directly work with.

Traditionally the European Commission has been reticent regarding involvement in political party support, mainly because it prefers to avoid being seen as taking partisan positions in national politics. However, under the recent Action Plan approved under the 'instrument of

⁵ For more details on UK support see the DFID/FCO questionnaire completed by the UK Embassy in Tbilisi

Stability', which aims to support the increased transparency of parliamentary and regional elections, the EU agreed to fund a training programme for political party activists covering five main topics: programmatic approaches, market economy, public relations, communications and campaigning, electoral monitoring and internal party democracy. Friedrich Naumann Stiftung is the implementing agency for this programme, which will run over a period of 18 months with a budget of €300,000.

A number of German foundations run programmes that support Georgian political parties. In the main they are associated with the sister party approach, and involve specific German political parties working with ideologically aligned parties in Georgia. The two main foundations for this are the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, associated with the German Christian Democrats and working with the Georgian Christian Democratic Party and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung associated with the German Free Democratic Party and working with the Georgian Republican party. However, the programmes run by these foundations, especially training, are not always tailored only to specific parties as all parties are often invited to participate. In particular, the Naumann Stiftung has recently been appointed to run a project funded by the EU delegation to Georgia, which will provide a series of trainings for ten political parties in four regions.

The main activities organised by Adenauer and Naumann are training and capacity building initiatives. These range from issue-based educational programmes on basic political concepts and theories (such as democracy, liberalism) to more skills-based programmes aimed at improving political party activists 'know how' on party structure and organisations, campaigning and leadership skills. The budgets for the foundations' programmes are relatively small (Adenauer for example has a budget of €100,000 for its training programmes), although the recently approved funding by the EU is slightly more substantial (in the region of €300,000 over an 18 month period).

Another key component of the foundations' approach, which is specific to the 'sister model' way of working, is to facilitate networking between Georgian and European political parties, and especially with political party groups within the European Parliament (for example the European People Party, EPP). This takes the form of visits and exchanges with European party leaders both in Georgia and in Europe. This is reportedly highly valued by Georgian political parties, as it is seen as providing an opportunity to gain visibility and act as a platform to contribute to an emerging and important debate in Georgia about EU membership.

4.2 Main methods of party assistance

Donors adopt different approaches and methods in their support for political parties. These are based on a range of different types of engagement with parties, from very direct collaboration between the funders and the parties, to very indirect forms of support which are entirely mediated and managed by implementing partners.

Most bilateral and multilateral donors work through implementers, in some cases providing multi-year funding agreements which support a programme of work and a variety of activities (such as USAID). In other cases, donors fund very specific or short term projects, mostly training and other forms of technical assistance (such as the UK and the EC). Direct collaboration with parties only happens when the support is provided by foreign political parties, as in the 'sister model' of engagement.

Across this spectrum, there are six main models of support to political parties funded by donors in Georgia. In reality many programmes offer a combination of these activities, although there are some distinctions between approaches, as shown in Table 1 below.

First and foremost, support involves a number of training initiatives aimed at developing the weak capacity of Georgian political parties, especially the opposition parties. The focus of capacity development and training varies from more issue based knowledge development, aimed at nurturing a more sophisticated level of political culture and dialogue among party activists, to more practical skills development on campaigning techniques and

communications. Training programmes tend to be generically designed to suit the broad needs of all parties, although some organisations are able to offer some tailor made forms of support.

Technical assistance on campaigning skills (for example on door-to-door techniques) communication and research (such as opinion polling and political party ratings) are also available to Georgian political parties, mainly through the work of IRI and NDI. Again this kind of assistance tends to be generically designed and it is aimed at all political parties, though there are some examples of more tailored support provided on demand by individual parties (for example, IRI can offer specific skills workshops on aspects of campaigning).

The sister model involves political parties in donor countries directly supporting or engaging with ideologically aligned political parties in Georgia. In some cases this is through direct engagement/interaction between the parties (for example the UK Liberal Democratic party works with the Georgian Republican party), in others the relationship is mediated through foundations which are also politically aligned and work with specific political parties in the countries of origin (for example the Konrad Adenauer foundation working with Georgian and German Christian Democratic parties or the Nauman Foundation working with liberal parties).

Tailored support is increasingly made available to specifically suit the needs of individual parties. A popular form of this kind of support are focus groups, carried out in Tbilisi but also crucially in the regions to gather the views and perceptions on specific parties and their leaders, with the aim of adjusting and reinforcing party messages and strategic choices.

Most party support initiatives have the implicit or explicit aim of fostering networking between the political parties, between opposition parties and the ruling party and between the Georgian political parties, their European counterparts and the international community more broadly. In some cases networking, like in the sister model or exchange visits, is an objective in its own right. In most cases, political parties see networking as one of the key benefits of participating in supported initiatives, especially if it gives them the opportunity to build relationships with senior foreigners and Embassies more generally.

In some cases parties develop some kind of peer support and on-going engagement with other political parties. This appears to be more common under the sister model, whereby two ideologically aligned parties agree on a series of initiatives or other forms of engagement. For example, the UK Liberal Democrats and the Georgian Republican party collaborated for some time on issues of common interest and the Christian Democrats are in contact with the British Conservatives, the German Christian Democrats and the European People's Party. One of the advantages of this form of engagement is that it allows parties to exchange experiences and views on the substance of their political messaging.

There is a final model of engagement, which is not very common in the current political landscape in Georgia but which was mentioned as a key feature in the lead up to the Rose Revolution and the establishment of Saakashvili's government. This involves high-level guidance and brokering, whereby individual trusted advisers engage over a sustained period with a party or leader to design strategies and facilitate negotiations with other parties or actors. The support that UNM received from US advisers in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution was mentioned during interviews as an example of very effective support, not only for supporting the Revolution but also, and perhaps most critically, for helping the three key players in the UNM stay united. Therefore, some actors, especially the US and to a less extent the UK, have long been engaged with Georgian national politics and play a recognisable and important role in brokering meetings between leaders, establishing fora for political dialogue and so on. This type of engagement goes beyond the funded projects to support political parties, but it is as important, if not more so, than the provision of funds alone.

Most of the above examples of support, with the exception of initiatives dedicated to ideologically aligned parties, are in principle offered to all political parties in Georgia, including the ruling party, parliamentary and extra parliamentary opposition parties. In practice not all parties are involved and benefit from these programmes in the same way. Firstly, the ruling party is comparatively well resourced and, crucially, it has direct access to its own resources

for capacity building and technical assistance.⁶ It therefore does not rely on party assistance (although it benefits from the high level brokering and engagement discussed above).

Secondly, the extra-parliamentary opposition (such as the Conservative Party), although involved in some of the training, media activities and survey research, is fundamentally sceptical of any attempt to engage in political dialogue with the government and parliament on issues such as electoral reform, (which are often those mediated by donors and implementing agencies). In some cases, like NDI, the parliamentary support mandate may also imply that the opportunities to reach out to extra parliamentary parties might be limited. Finally, the most ideologically extreme and populist parties, such as the Labour Party, are not interested in the technical nature of much of the assistance offered by external actors.

As a result, perhaps the most proactive and effective users of funded programmes are the parliamentary opposition parties, and principally the Christian Democrats. The Christian Democrats were commonly mentioned as the party that is best able to use the technical support provided, but also to seize the networking and dialogue opportunities on offer, both within Georgia and in Europe. Another group that has benefited from donors' support are emerging parties, such as the Alliance for Georgia, which are involved in the initial development of party structures.

The table below summarises the key features, objectives and results of the different models of donors' support to political parties in Georgia, clustered around the main typology of support. It is important to note that in reality these are not necessarily alternative models and that as much there are similarities in donors' approaches, there are also significant differences in the way these models work in practice.

Table 1: Summary typologies of models of support

Models of support	Objectives	Expected results	Main donors and implementers
Sister model, peer support and ongoing engagement	To strengthen ideologically similar parties and create opportunities to network between parties (especially in Europe)	Improved mutual knowledge between participating parties; Improved ability to compete effectively in elections: Participation in European networks and opportunities to exchange experiences/peer support	All UK Parties y Swedish (WFD) Christian Democrats German parties through Foundations European PPE
Training and technical assistance	To build technical skills and capacities of all political parties	Strengthened multi-party system and democracy by improving specific outcomes: more effective campaigning, clearer programmatic messages, greater awareness of policy issues and constituencies	NDI (USAID) IRI (USAID) EU Delegation UK Embassy Sida through NDI

⁶ For example, the UNM commissions its own polling survey to a well known (and expensive) US based survey company that advises major European and America parties and leaders.

		preferences	
Tailored support	To assist parties on specific needs and identified gaps	Improved political and campaigning messaging; greater understanding of electorate and constituency building	NDI (USAID) IRI (USAID)
High level guidance and brokering	To support parties in their strategic positioning and political negotiations	Greater cohesion within parties and between allies: improved dialogue between opposition and ruling parties	Mainly the US in the lead up and aftermath of Rose Revolution Informally, most bilateral donors

4.3 Approaches to results

Perhaps not surprisingly, evidence on what works and why in party assistance is scarce, for a number of reasons. Firstly, in some cases, like the Naumann Foundation/EU funded project and the UK funded GFSIS project, projects have not been running for long enough and donors and implementers are not in a position yet to discuss results or progress. However reviews and evaluations are planned and would hopefully be made available in due course.

Another limitation to genuine assessment of the effectiveness and impact of donor support is that the key activities funded are often training, seminars and workshops, which are most easily monitored in terms of immediate outputs and activities (for example the number of participants, feedback from participants and so on) rather than on how useful they are in relation to broader party system development objectives. For USAID, for example, until recently all internal reporting procedure and incentives focused on direct outputs and accounting rather than outcomes and results.

Moreover, where evaluations are carried out, they are not necessarily in the public domain or shared between funders. For example, USAID has recently completed a review of its three year IRI and NDI agreements but was not in a position to share this, reportedly because it was not edited for public distribution. Given the highly politically sensitive nature of this work, it is hardly surprising that evaluations are seldom shared and this is likely to remain a challenge for building a shared knowledge base of experiences in this domain.

As a result of all these limitations, during the field visit in Georgia it was not possible to access any evaluation reports or formal assessment of support for political parties. However, based on the interviews with donors, political party representatives and external observers with in-depth knowledge of the Georgian political context, it is possible to formulate an initial assessment of which approaches appear to work better, why and the main limitations of current support to parties, with a view to improving its effectiveness in the future. However, this initial assessment will need to be further corroborated by more formal reviews or evaluations, bearing in mind the limitations that do exist in this domain.

In the main, training sessions are reportedly well attended and when the results of the surveys and poll are made available, most parties reportedly attend briefing sessions to hear the results, and they are keen to find out their relative positioning in the polls. However, in general, parties do not think that generic, non-tailored and short term engagement works. This is typically a problem with training but also with some surveys and other forms of structured research that fail to explore what lies behind people's perceptions and understandings of party support.

Moreover, it is unclear whether these forms of technical assistance contribute to achieving the medium and long-term expected results, mainly related to parties' capacity to apply the

knowledge and skills acquired in practice or to use the information that surveys provide. This is clearly a matter of incentives, which are often lacking, as well as the relative weakness of many party structures and membership which limit their ability to shift attitude and priorities.

For example, it is difficult to assess the extent to which IRI and NDI polling is making progress towards achieving their objectives. There is some evidence that some of the information about issues that matter to the electorate has had some effect. Therefore, in terms of party messaging, it appears to have focused parties on issues of employment and infrastructure, over security and relations with Russia. However, it is not clear that opposition parties in particular have the capacity and incentive structures in place to use this information in meaningful ways.

Some respondents commented that it is only when parties have some of the basic structures, resources and capacity in place, as well as an overall strategic direction that they can benefit from these forms of training and capacity building support. The Christian Democrats may be a case in point, as they are seen by many as the only opposition party currently benefiting from programmes of assistance, in part because they have a certain level of capacity and capability in place.

Focus groups and other forms of tailored support, designed to address issues of specific importance to individual parties or leaders, are considered more helpful. However, doubts remain as to whether political parties have the knowledge, capacity and human resources to use the results to improve their strategic long-term approaches rather than just feeding into short-term electoral priorities. For example, there is very little evidence that focus groups or survey results have informed any party programmatic choices and positioning, and in some cases (for example regarding the Alliance) they only appear to have helped to shape some campaigning messages.

All parties favour longer term engagement and more 'on demand' support. One-off training is not considered useful and the fact that external actors rarely commit to a longer term programme of engagement and support is considered a major limitation. This is a particular problem given that very few donors, with the notable exception of USAID (through NDI and IRI), are able to commit to multi-annual programmes of engagement. In some cases, like the UK Embassy, the funding for political party support has been subjected to significant cuts resulting in even shorter programmes.

Party to party support gets mixed reviews. In some cases parties find it genuinely helpful, mainly because it allows for a form of engagement on political priorities and partisan choices rather than technical or neutral advice. For example the Christian Democrats in Georgia and in Germany and the Republican party in Georgia and Liberal Democrats in the UK have long established relationships which allow them to focus on ideological similarities and issues of mutual interest. However, it was also clear that the advantages can be fairly short term and not very strategic. One interviewee suggested that one of the reasons why exchange visits are useful is because they increase the motivation of party officials to improve their English.

Overall, it appears that forms of engagement other than projects between donors and political parties tend to be more responsive to the actual political realities of the Georgian party system. NDI, for example, is seen as an important mediator and dialogue broker between opposition parties and government and has contributed to initiating and moderating important fora on issues such as electoral reform. Although not all necessarily successful, these are important initiatives that can play a significant role in facilitating a constructive dialogue in what is perceived as a stalemate or standoff between opposition and ruling party.

Finally, despite the rhetoric about the importance of results, there is very little sign of this being high on the agendas of external actors in this particular area of work. On the one hand, this could be interpreted as a worrying sign, but on the other hand, it may be based on a more realistic understanding that the role of external actors in supporting political parties is inevitably limited. Thus its potential may derive not so much from the effectiveness of individual projects, but rather from the overall approach international actors adopt in their

engagement with the domestic political context, of which parties are an important, but by no means the most important, dimension. It may therefore be more helpful for efforts to assess results to consider these initiatives in the wider spectrum of activities that the international community supports in relation to political governance in Georgia, rather than a narrow focus on funded projects to support parties per se.

5 What are the emerging lessons from Georgia?

A number of key lessons can be drawn from the above, in terms of the need to respond to context and to think and act in different ways in order to seriously engage with political parties and political processes. Despite the limitations outlined above, feedback from political parties and other interviewees provided some useful pointers regarding the potential for more effective approaches.

The most important feedback from independent observers (other than donors, international organisations or political party circles), is that the international community can presently do very little to address the structural problems and incentives structures that undermine programmatic party development in Georgia. These are firmly rooted in historical legacies and past dependency with the Soviet era, where the 'big man' model and the 'party as state model' of managing power were and still are considered the norm. These are still the real causes of 'personality politics' in most Georgian parties and shifting incentives towards more programmatic and issue based politics will take time and can hardly be supported by training or surveys.

This does not imply that external actors have no roles to play. The findings of this study suggest that, provided that these actors are aware of what they can and cannot realistically achieve, they have a role to play in at least three important ways:

- They can broker relationship between parties and within parties, helping forging and maintaining alliances
- They can initiate and facilitate dialogue among parties and between parties and external actors, which can be helpful in widening networks and overcoming complex political hurdles
- When some of the basics are in place, they can provide useful technical knowledge and 'on the job' capacity building, which some parties find helpful for improving their strategies and techniques.

Money, however, does not seem to be a key variable to explain the success of some of these programmes. If anything, low cost activities such as political dialogue, brokering and negotiating between parties are seen as more valuable than more resource intensive projects.

What would make a real difference is the 'serious money' that would be needed to fund long term engagement through high level strategic advice with Western or regional experts. While there are good reasons why external actors are not willing to supply this form of support, the fact that in many people's minds this is what actually happened in the lead up and aftermath of the Rose Revolution remains significant. This form of support is also considered to have been a critical factor in helping Saakashvili not only come to power, but to effectively hold on to power ever since. In addition, the UNM still has access to this kind of resource and they are still seen as in a strong position to access the strategic level of advice needed to maintain power.

Many interviewees commented that donors may be most useful as brokers of dialogue and negotiation, between opposition parties and government and, perhaps most crucially, between opposition parties to attempt to build alliances and bridges. These may, in the medium and longer term, help opposition parties to stay together and devise more effective strategies to counter the UNM monopoly of power.

For example, it is clear that NDI has been particularly active at playing this role over the years, including in the run-up to and aftermath of the Rose Revolution. There are likely to be some prerequisites for this role to work in practice. First, it needs to be a trusted figure that different parties can relate to. Secondly, and most challenging, in order to broker or negotiate positions between parties, there needs to be sufficient agreement on the basic terms of the negotiation and the possible outputs. International actors can only be effective when this agreement exists, and this is not often the case with Georgian political parties. This may be one of the reasons why the middleman or honest broker role has only worked in a select number of cases.

All of the above suggests that external actors seem to face some inevitable trade-offs between their desire to remain impartial or to not be seen as directly involved in domestic politics and the need to find ways of engaging with the political context and political actors if they want to be effective. Furthermore, Embassies are mandated to establish and maintain political relations between their countries of origins and the government in power. Most funders of party assistance address these tensions by adopting an arm-length approach, often operating through an intermediary or implementing organisation. They also try to distinguish between technical interventions and political engagement, even though our analysis suggests that adopting purely technical approaches to what are fundamentally political endeavours does not seem to work. The reality is that these arrangements only partly address the fundamental tensions at the heart of international assistance to political parties.

It is important to recognise that it can be difficult in practice for the same actors to reconcile a fundamentally political role, involving brokering and negotiating political relations and dialogue, with the incentives and rules that come into play with funding arrangements and relations. This reflects matters of principles related to maintaining neutrality and, more substantially, the kinds of skills, knowledge and networks required to engage in political negotiations, which can be quite different. In practice, this means that organisations or individuals within organisations inevitably end up specialising in one role or the other, trying to navigate a balance between the two which does not always go hand in hand. Working through partners or distinguishing between technical and political priorities cannot be a solution here. What is needed is a much more strategic approach that has politics at its heart, and that allows donors and other actors to be flexible and adapt to the political realities, incentives and capacities of the countries where they operate.

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Annex 1: List of interviews

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- Archil Gegeshidze, GFSIS
- Ketii Jikia, NDI
- Ketii Tsikhelashvili, Friedrich Nauman
- Andrea Keerbs, IRI
- Nina Khatiskatsi, Transparency International
- Tamuna Khidasheli, Head of Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)
- Kaka Kukava, Conservative Party
- Bidzina Lebanidze
- Michelle Logsdon, USAID
- Gia Nodiah, CIPDD
- Helga Pender, EU Delegation
- Giorgi Rukhadze, Christian-Democratic Party
- Eka Siradze, ISFED
- Davit Usupashvili, Republican Party
- Levan Tsutskiridze, NIMD
- Thea Kentchadze, WFD
- Irakli Kavtaradze, Secretary for International Affairs, UNM