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## **There is no Success without Evaluation**

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***With this letter I would like to tell you about the purpose for setting up this internet site, as well as about the goals for founding the Georgia Evaluation Association (GEA) several years ago and about the cause to the realization of which we work relentlessly.***

**Nino Saakashvili,  
President, Georgian Evaluation Association**

It was the idea of the Horizonti Foundation to establish and this organization laid foundation to the creation of the Georgian Evaluation Association. You will probably ask, so what, plenty of associations and unions have been established and disappeared without us ever knowing they even existed. A crucial issue is the goal of an organization and the benefits it can bring to a country. The work performed by GEA in Georgia is absolutely novel, so novel that there are still very few adherents, not only in Georgia, but throughout the post-Soviet area. While the developed world's government or civil organizations can not function without having the

evaluation component in place. In Western states and the developed Eastern democracies this component became a central one in the process of development of a country. The importance and necessity of evaluation is not argued, this is seen as a regular activity.

The development of evaluation, as of an independent field started in the West after the World War II, this was when the international organizations – the UN, the World Bank, etc. set the objective to determine the impact of performed activities and achieved results. Evaluation activity evolved gradually. And starting from the 1920's the development of a new



methodology of evaluation theory and practice was commenced.

International, as well as local non-governmental organizations (NGO) played a crucial role in the development of program evaluation. Horizonti Foundation, an organization of the third sector, was at the forefront of the efforts to introduce evaluation activity; this foundation was managing the projects and grant programs funded by foreign donor organizations in Georgia. It was this very foundation that started to

introduce monitoring and evaluation tools in own activities and to bring in and engage foreign experts of the field in program evaluation.

Regrettably, the wider public is not aware of either the essence or the importance of comprehensive evaluation of activities; moreover, people do not have exhaustive information about its benefits. It should be mentioned, though, that a number of scientists and practitioners in Georgia are taking measures to address this gap. Further, considering that Georgians are fast to acquire innovations, we believe that the time to widely introduce program evaluation is near and it would be desirable to be ready for necessary processes.

Why is the evaluation of program, organizational, strategies, policies needed and why do we advocate for its significance so ardently? Maybe because this is almost the only effective tool for proper, democratic development of any country and, unfortunately, in Georgia no one has ever held this tool. Or maybe because we want to show to the citizens how this tool works, what it regulates, what prospects it holds and what timeframe these cover. Let us start with the first one: evaluation enables us to ascertain whether the result of a planned activity will be efficient and desired. In other words, this means that without an evaluation system in place we will be unable to measure impact. This, in turn, means that every organization should introduce an internal system of monitoring and evaluation, it should have in place result-oriented strategic plans with indicators, simply put –“we should bring a thermometer to home and take temperature.”

It works similarly in the case of democratic governance. By introducing evaluation methodologies and tools we will measure the effectiveness of performed

activities at governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as business companies, media institutions or academic circles. In other words, evaluation is a successful management tool, without which it is impossible to measure success.

Significant changes are performed at present. Changes are always related to the development of a new thinking. In this case this is about new approaches to management and the introduction of new tools – replacement of the existing plans (mostly strategic plans) with result-oriented strategic plans and the result-oriented management systems. Currently such a system does not exist in Georgia, with the exception of a limited number of “experiments” that GEA implemented at some public and private organizations and where result-oriented management, monitoring and evaluation systems are being introduced.

The most important task at present is to establish evaluation as a sector in Georgia!

To achieve this, we need a cadre of professionals. To train professionals we should introduce the teaching of evaluation at the university level. You will probably ask: “who will teach?”, in response I will refer back again and say that at the end of the 90’s Horizonti Foundation was one of the first NGO’s to start spreading the idea of program evaluation, provision of trainings and seminars to local and foreign organizations on the topic of evaluation. As a result, firstly, civil sector players became aware of the evaluation theory, and secondly, the NGO’s accumulated the experience of monitoring and evaluation of own activities.

Although, this is still not sufficient for university programs but it is absolutely sufficient for us to move ahead, talk to foreign friends in this field and set up university programs in evaluation, in order to train evaluators in Georgia jointly with and with the assistance of foreign colleagues. It is one of the principal directions of GEA to establish and tighten contacts among evaluators, share existing experience and support their professional growth.

For the implementation of evaluation it is necessary to have a necessary legislative base, raise public awareness about the importance of evaluation, and introduce evaluation standards. It is highly important to develop the culture of evaluation in Georgia and any organization that has this quality finds it very easy to see every way and path towards success.

## **DONORS IN GEORGIA HOLD DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATION AND MONITORING IN GEORGIA**

On July 21, 2010, at the initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) a meeting of the donor organizations in Georgia was held at the United Nations (UN) Tbilisi office. Since the objective of the meeting was to share experience in the field of M&E, GEA participated in this meeting not just in the capacity of a participant, but also as a host. Three members of GEA and the representatives of leading international organizations in Georgia took active part in the presentations as well as the discussions of the meeting.

Every topic of the Donors' Meeting on M&E issues was around the implementation, development and the future of M&E in Georgia. The representatives of donor organizations and M&E experts made presentations about each step taken in Georgia in this direction. They talked about specifics identified in this field, successes and problems.

The issue of institutionalization of M&E in public sector was given special attention. The issues of democracy and management were addressed as well.

Nino Saakashvili, president of the GEA stated that it is time for Georgia to pay special attention to and develop an approach to M&E, with its broad content and objectives. The first Georgian Foundation of NGO's – the Horizonti Foundation has been working in this direction since the beginning of the century, but processes moved ahead very slowly because this organization was the first to tackle this issue and it was addressing these matters alone. "Now it is really the time when without having a rigorous monitoring

and proper evaluation the development of any field, even the development of the country can not be imagined. Therefore, every strong and donor organization should take steps to support the development of this field; further, the Country's civil society and the government should set evaluation and monitoring as one of the priorities, says Ms. Saakashvili.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATION (What GEA has done to develop the field?)**

***Ketevan Chomakhidze, Executive Director, GEA***

The idea to establish GEA belongs to the Horizonti Foundation, a third-sector organization. Over years GEA, in addition to performing other activities, was active in monitoring and evaluation of the projects implemented by the organization's grant recipients, provided trainings in M&E to the above-mentioned grant recipients, and performed evaluation of programs and projects implemented by various international and local organizations.

Despite ten years of operation in the field of M&E it became obvious to Horizonti that for resolving the problems with evaluation across the country the efforts of just the Foundation were not sufficient and there was a need to establish an organization which main direction would be addressing the issues in the evaluation field and the development of this field in Georgia.

With this aim the Foundation supported the founding of the Georgia Evaluation Association (GEA). The organization was registered on July 8, 2008. Professionals working at GEA attach special attention to the democratic development of the country, expert monitoring and evaluation of political, economic, social processes, reforms, programs and projects underway in the country; the development of evaluation criteria, establishing the frameworks and indicators that will enable all three sectors to measure not only performance results, but also those oriented on successful activities.

Since its founding GEA has been supporting the introduction and development of the evaluation field in Georgia, training and professional development of expert evaluators, development and introduction of evaluation standards, as well as the development of the evaluators' code of conduct, establishment of the institutional system of evaluation and raising public awareness about this field.



GEA set the analysis of situation in terms of evaluation in Georgia as its primary task. It conducted a survey, identified individuals and organizations interested in the development of the M&E field across the country; Gathered information about the evaluation component and the mechanisms for its implementation in completed or ongoing projects, programs and reforms.

To develop standards in M&E and evaluators' code of conduct GEA formed and facilitates the operation of working groups. It also promotes the cooperation of each interested entity throughout the process.

### **IMPLEMENTED AND ONGOING PROJECTS UNDER THE US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM PROGRAM**

The projects implemented by GEA under the USAID PAR program envisaged technical support to public institutions, namely, in the development of three-year (2009-2011) strategic plans and one-year (2009) action plans; the above-mentioned support was provided to the Ministry of Justice of Georgia (MOJ), Ministries of Finance and Economy, Agriculture, Health and Social Protection of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

The project also envisaged the introduction of internal monitoring system and the elements of evaluation plan at the ministries that would enable the staff to independently undertake the monitoring of their strategic plans.

To support the ministries in the development of internal monitoring systems and evaluation plans GEA provided a number of trainings on the essence and importance of monitoring. Meetings and individual consultations were held with the leadership and the employees of the ministries. Main framework for the monitoring of strategy implementation and the evaluation plan was developed.

Ongoing project of GEA, Supporting Institutionalization of Transparency and Civic Accountability Frameworks in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (AAR), is especially important in terms of institutionalization of the M&E system in Georgia. The project is implemented with the financial support of the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF). The goal of the project is the institutionalization of internal monitoring system in line ministries of the AAR by providing a relevant legal and financial/budget

framework. The following activities are carried out under the project: a) introduction of the external monitoring system at the level of the government of the AAR with the involvement of civil society and donor organizations; b) development of the M&E model on the basis of piloting internal and external monitoring system and lobbying for its introduction on a national level.

Among the activities carried out by GEA cooperation with the Chamber of Control of Georgia under the memorandum concluded between the Chamber of Control and GEA, is to be noted. Main purpose of the memorandum was the introduction of the M&E system in public institutions and strengthening capacity of the Chamber of Control, to enable it to conduct the evaluation of public sector institutions in an efficient manner. Strategic plan of the Chamber of Control and one-year action plans have already been developed under the Memorandum.

The same can be said about institutional strengthening of children and youth community center under the Gory Municipality. The project involves the development of a strategic plan, development and operation of internal monitoring system, as well as intensive training of teachers.

Based on the above-mentioned, it can be regarded the achievement of GEA in the development of the M&E field in Georgia that M&E as effective management tool has already been tested in public as well as civil sector organizations. This process is the so-called know-how, the novelty that will enable these organizations to better perform their duties and provide high quality services to the citizens. It can be said that GEA has made significant steps towards institutionalization of its principal goal, M&E field in Georgia.

### **LEGAL ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE M&E SYSTEM**

*Vano Tavadze, GEA Programs Director*

Institutionalization of the M&E system implies the changes in the approaches to public sector administration as well as the development of relevant capacity in public administration. The process of institutionalization depends, firstly, on the legislative or regulatory framework which the M&E system is based on and secondly, the efficiency of the relevant regulatory system. This is a long-term process. The experience of Western countries demonstrates that the adoption and introduction of an efficient system can take more than ten years.

The example of successful countries suggests that one of the most important favorable factors for the introduction of the system is secured constitutional and legal support. Various factors influence the process of system institutionalization at the legislative level, including political and socio-economic stability, consensus among political forces on the need for the introduction of an efficient system. Frequent changes in the government usually have a negative impact on the institutionalizing process, for the newly appointed key officials of the executive government have to master many issues over, understand the effectiveness and nature of the M&E system, which requires relevant time.

Monitoring and evaluation of performance, programs, achievements of public administration and its institutions is part of state policy, which is reflected in relevant laws of sub-legislative statutory acts. Further, in a number of countries (Switzerland, Columbia) the introduction of the M&E system is conditioned by the constitution, a supreme legislative act of relevant countries. The constitution stipulates the system to be part of the state's administration and government system; obviously, the constitution can not set forth the details concerning the elements of the M&E system, or the issues related to the implementation of the process itself; these are to be prescribed under the laws and sub-legislative statutory acts.

Obviously, a state can enact and put into effect an individual legislative act, which would set forth the structure of the M&E system, its elements and procedures of operation, although, most frequently the state M&E system is reflected in various legislative or sub-legislative statutory acts. This can be a legislative act about the general structure and rule of activities of the executive government, as well as the regulations of ministries or other institutions of the executive government, other legislative or sub-legislative statutory acts. It is desirable for efficient implementation of the M&E policy that a country's legislative body enact a framework law that would set forth basic elements of the system, including its purpose, goals and objectives, public institution/structural unit responsible for the implementation of the system, mechanisms, stages, etc. for obtaining, analyzing and using information throughout the M&E process.

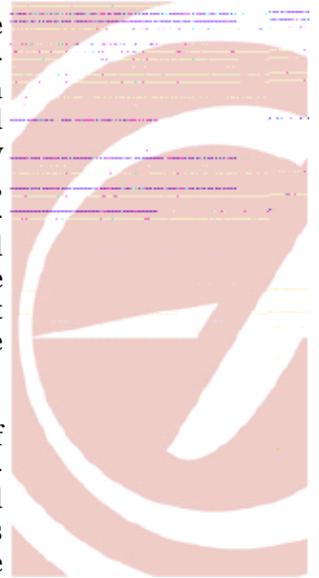
Currently the legislation of Georgia does not envisage a systemic approach towards efficient and results-oriented M&E policy. Specifically, the government has not determined specific responsibilities of the bodies that have to undertake evaluation of institutional efficiency of public institutions. Further,

the country's legislative framework does not envisage compulsory evaluation of activities, programs and initiatives implemented by the public sector entities, that would enable to ascertain whether the expected results projected during the planning stage of relevant activity or program have been achieved or not.

Institutional evaluation of public institutions and diagnosing the problems related to their performance is mainly done at the initiative of international donors, whose interest in each case is related to the implementation of specific programs or initiatives. It should be mentioned also that recently the Government of Georgia has already implemented certain activities that can be considered first steps in the process of the introduction of evaluation, its impact and effect on the public sector. Namely, the modifications to the Law of Georgia on the Chamber of Control of Georgia stipulate an essentially new responsibility of the Chamber of Control – conducting efficiency audit, which, unlike financial audit, is not limited to a traditional function of the Chamber of Control, that of the examination of the legality of the use of public funds. It comprises the study of specific outcomes, effect and impact achieved by implementing a specific public budget-funded program.

The granting of the above-mentioned authority to the Chamber of Control is obviously a positive step and indicates that the government strives to ensure higher effect with the public funds. Although, this can not be regarded a perfect M&E system of Western standards for the several reasons listed below:

- National M&E system is a much broader and complex mechanism and with its essence goes beyond the evaluation of a specific program or initiative by just one public institution. Moreover, a complete system is a combination of all bodies and institutions equipped with the authority to plan and evaluate, that ensure regular evaluation in each field, provision of relevant information to users and the use of evaluation results for planning and implementing future activities; Human and financial resources of the Chamber of Control are certainly not sufficient to perform activities to evaluate efficiency of all fields of the public sector in general; supposedly, on an annual basis the



Chamber of Control will select several programs to perform the evaluation of its efficiency against the indicators defined under the program; further, currently there is a need for the development of institutional skills and training of the Chamber of Control staff.

Moreover, there are the issues of primary importance, on which the reflection of the M&E system in the state's legislative framework directly depends. Firstly, we have to emphasize the introduction of long-term and/or medium-term planning and program budgeting in the public sector. In Georgia the majority of public institutions operate under annual budgets. Such budget is developed for a relevant fiscal year for performing activities by the institution. The cases of program planning/budgeting are quite rare, where institutional or field priorities would be identified the next couple of years.

**See the continuation of this topic in the next issue.**

Although a number of regional or central public institutions have developed mid-term strategic plans and respective action plans (in many cases, also M&E plans as well), the process of mid-term planning is not institutionalized and equally importantly, during the strategic planning process due attention is not attached to the issues of funding strategic plan from the budget.

Strategic planning initiatives are mostly implemented with the funding of the international donors and a sustainable organization structure is lacking in public institutions which would be in charge of the strategic planning in general, monitoring the implementation of and updating the designed plans.