

Tbilisi (Georgia) | PROFILE 2023

MIGRATION

GOVERNANCE

INDICATORS

LOCAL



The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

---

While efforts have been taken to verify the accuracy of this information, neither Economist Impact nor its affiliates can accept any responsibility or liability for reliance by any person on this information.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
17 route des Morillons  
P.O. Box 17  
1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111  
Fax: +41 22 798 6150  
Email: [hq@iom.int](mailto:hq@iom.int)  
Internet: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

With research and analysis by

**ECONOMIST  
IMPACT**

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2024. *Migration Governance Indicators Local Profile 2023 – Tbilisi (Georgia)*. IOM, Geneva.

---

ISBN 978-92-9268-808-0 (PDF)

© IOM 2024



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode).\*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes, e.g. to be included in textbooks.

Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to [publications@iom.int](mailto:publications@iom.int).

\* <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>

Tbilisi (Georgia) | PROFILE 2023

MIGRATION  
GOVERNANCE  
INDICATORS

LOCAL



# CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES // 6

**INTRODUCTION // 7**

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK // 10

**SUMMARY // 12**

**CONTEXT // 15**

**KEY FINDINGS // 20**

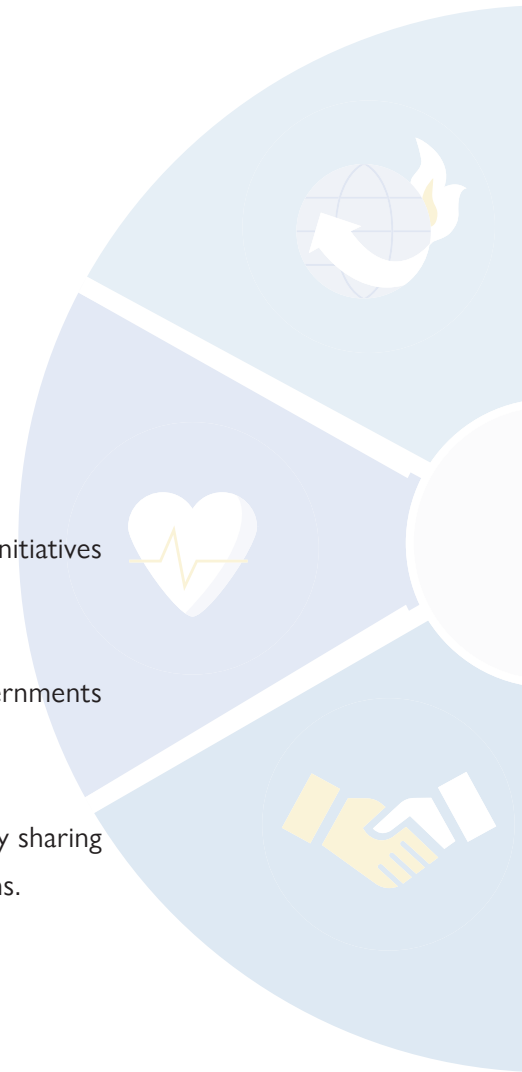
AFTER THE MGI ASSESSMENT // 34

**ANNEX // 35**

**KEY SOURCES // 37**

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Help local authorities take stock of the migration initiatives they have in place.
- 2 Foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities.
- 3 Enable local authorities to learn from one another by sharing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.



“Rapid urbanization continues to transform the demographic landscape of many countries around the world. Cities are already home to the majority of international migrants, driven by opportunity as well as necessity, and local authorities are becoming leaders in finding creative solutions for rapid social change, supporting communities through innovation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> António Vitorino, IOM Director General, [Report to the 109th Session of the IOM Council](#) (November 2018).

# INTRODUCTION

## The Migration Governance Indicators<sup>2</sup>

The need to maximize the opportunities and face the challenges that mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.<sup>3</sup> The incorporation of target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances. That same year, IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs), a set of almost 100 indicators that help States assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures.

The indicators constitute a starting point to engage governments in a consultative process that allows them to identify areas that are well developed and others that would benefit from further development, and most importantly, priorities that are in line with the specific challenges and opportunities that a given country is facing.

The MGIs are characterized by three main fundamental attributes:

1. The MGI process is a **voluntary** exercise: The MGIs are conducted in countries that have requested to be part of the process.
2. The MGIs are **sensitive to national specificities**: The MGIs recognize the different challenges and opportunities of each context, and therefore, do not propose a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather aim to spark a discussion on what well-governed migration can mean.
3. The MGIs constitute a **process**: The MGI process is not a static tool to collect data on countries’ migration frameworks. It is rather the first step of a dynamic exercise that can enable governments to identify areas of their migration policy in need of further development, or that could benefit from capacity-building.

## Migration Governance Indicators: from national to local

The role of cities and municipalities in migration governance<sup>4</sup> has grown significantly in recent decades, given the rapid pace of urbanization and the importance of cities as destinations for all forms of migration and displacement. Researchers, policymakers and international development agencies have all highlighted the crucial role of cities and municipalities in both accommodating migrants and formulating sustainable responses to migration-related matters.

The role of local governments, not only in the management of migration at the local level, but also in realizing the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, has been recognized in the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III Conference in Quito (Ecuador), the Global Compact for Migration and the Call to Local Action, to mention a few.

<sup>2</sup> All terms used in the report are defined in the IOM *Glossary on Migration* (2019).

<sup>3</sup> “The *Global Compact* is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It is a non-binding document that respects States’ sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in their territory and demonstrates commitment to international cooperation on migration. It presents a significant opportunity to improve the governance of migration, to address the challenges associated with today’s migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.”

<sup>4</sup> “Migration governance” refers to the system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants. It is used almost synonymously with the term “migration management”, although the latter is also sometimes used to refer to the narrow act of regulating cross-border movement at the State level.



To support the discussion between levels of governments on migration governance, IOM has adapted the MGIs<sup>5</sup> to the local level. The local MGIs seek to offer a more comprehensive picture of a country's migration governance landscape by juxtaposing a local dimension to MGI national assessments. The local MGIs are based on a set of about 80 indicators helping local authorities take stock of local migration strategies or initiatives in place and identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development. The aim of the exercise is to foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities and enable local authorities to learn from one another by discussing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.

While the local MGIs retain the attributes of the national MGIs, they are also anchored in the notion that cities and local authorities have different capacities, competencies and added value when it comes to governing migration. Therefore, the methodology has been adapted to reflect the fact that the degree of fiscal and political autonomy of participating cities influences the kind of migration governance they can practically and legally engage in. Furthermore, new indicators of the level of autonomy and capacities have been added to give some context to the results of the assessment.

Given the differences outlined between the MGIs at the national and local levels, the purpose of the local MGIs is to be a tool for government authorities to use in taking an introspective look at the measures they have in place to manage migration, as well as to share their experiences. Furthermore, the local MGIs recognize that good practices can take different forms depending on the division of competencies between local and national authorities. Therefore, the local MGI analysis should not be interpreted as an invitation to change the division of competencies, but rather be understood as a catalyst to open dialogues on what cities can do with regard to migration within the scope of their mandate. A comprehensive picture of migration governance can be captured only by looking at the different levels of government.

This profile is the result of the implementation of the local MGIs in Tbilisi (Georgia). This report summarizes key examples of well-developed areas and areas with potential for further development of the city's local migration governance.

---

<sup>5</sup> The [Migration Governance Indicators](#) were developed in 2015 by IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact.

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## MiGOF

IOM's MiGOF sets out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration. It seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way, a set of three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane and orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

At the basis of

### PRINCIPLES

1. **Adhere** to international standards and fulfil migrants' rights.
2. **Formulate** policy using evidence and a whole-of-government approach.
3. **Engage** with partners to address migration and related issues.

### OBJECTIVES

1. **Advance** the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.
2. **Effectively address** the mobility dimensions of crises.
3. **Ensure** that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.



## MGIs

### WHAT THEY ARE

-  A set of indicators that offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to strengthen their migration governance structures
-  A tool that identifies good practices and areas that could be further developed
-  A consultative process that advances dialogues on migration governance by clarifying what "well-governed migration" might look like in the context of SDG target 10.7 and the Global Compact for Migration implementation\*

Which support the measurement of

### WHAT THEY ARE NOT

-  Not a ranking of countries
-  Not an assessment of policy impacts
-  Not prescriptive



Note: "The Global Compact is framed in a way consistent with target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration."

The local MGIs are composed of approximately 80 indicators grouped under the six different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:<sup>6</sup>



MIGRANTS'  
RIGHTS  
PAGE 21

Indicators in this category look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. They also examine measures to ensure integration and access to work.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT  
APPROACH  
PAGE 24

Indicators in this category assess the institutional frameworks of cities, municipalities or states for migration. This area also examines the existence of migration strategies consistent with development objectives, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in migration management.



PARTNERSHIPS  
PAGE 26

Indicators in this category focus on cities', municipalities' or states' efforts to cooperate on migration issues with the national government as well as other cities and relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.



WELL-BEING  
OF MIGRANTS  
PAGE 28

Indicators in this category assess cities', municipalities' or states' initiatives in terms of international student mobility, access to the labour market and decent working conditions for migrant workers. Aspects related to diaspora engagement and migrant remittances are also included in this domain.



MOBILITY DIMENSION  
OF CRISES  
PAGE 30

Indicators in this category examine the type and level of readiness of cities, municipalities or states to deal with aspects of mobility crises. The questions focus on the processes in place for citizens and non-citizens in relation to disasters and climate change both during and after disasters, especially whether humanitarian assistance is available for migrants and citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY AND  
REGULAR MIGRATION  
PAGE 32

Indicators in this category look at the cities', municipalities' or states' approaches to migrant safety as well as return and reintegration policies and the fight against trafficking in persons.

<sup>6</sup> IOM Council, Migration Governance Framework, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015).



# SUMMARY

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Migrants' rights

Migrants have access to Government-funded health and education services based on national-level provisions. The Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2014) states that migrants have the right to health care, and the Law of Georgia on Health Care (1997) prohibits discrimination against patients on the basis of nationality. Correspondingly, migrants have access to early childhood (e.g. preschool and kindergarten), primary and secondary education based on the Law of Georgia on General Education (2005, amended in 2017) and the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education (2015). Since 2018, the City Hall Department of Education and Youth Affairs has offered the training-to-work vocational education programme Learn and Work, which is available to migrant populations. In addition, the municipality works with local civil society organizations, such as My Lawyer, to provide migrants with ad hoc access to legal assistance, and selected return migrants can access housing assistance in Tbilisi under the national-level State Programme for Supporting Reintegration of Returned Georgian Migrants (2015).<sup>7</sup>

The development of strategies to support the inclusion or integration of migrants in education, measures to facilitate access to Government-funded health services for migrants, specific welcome or orientation programmes for newly arrived migrants and implementing local procedures to ensure the protection of migrant children are considered areas with potential for improvement.

### Whole-of-government approach

While the municipality of Tbilisi does not have an agency, department, policy or focal point tasked with engaging with the diaspora groups present in the jurisdiction, it engages with the Georgian diaspora in local-level development. Local authorities provide information to returnees on socioeconomic programmes and services provided by the State and/or non-State actors, and they facilitate access to these services through one-stop-shops called Service Hubs, established in the premises of 10 municipal governments in three regions of Georgia, along with 1 in Samgori administrative district in Tbilisi.

The municipality of Tbilisi does not have a division responsible for coordinating migration-related services. The formulation of a migration strategy defined in a programmatic document and the collection and publication of migration data on a regular basis are considered areas with potential for development.

### Partnerships

The municipality of Tbilisi participates in international networks that support exchange of knowledge and good practices in resolving migration issues: Eurocities (1986) and the Resilient Cities Network (2016). In addition, local authorities cooperate with United Nations agencies, the private sector and academia in tackling migration issues. On the other hand, there is no formal engagement with migrant associations, members of the Georgian diaspora and civil society organizations in the implementation of migration-related programmes, as well as city-to-city cooperation programmes within and outside the country addressing issues related to international migration.

### Well-being of migrants

Tbilisi has measures in place to promote gender equality in the labour force, which apply to migrants and citizens alike through its municipal Gender Strategy 2023–2025 (2023). Through the Learn and Work programme (launched in 2018), Tbilisi promotes and facilitates the inclusion of immigrant workers in the labour force.

<sup>7</sup> More information on the State Programme is available on the website of the State Commission on Migration Issues.

Local authorities collaborate with Enterprise Georgia to implement national programmes aimed at improving the financial inclusion of immigrants.

The establishment of local- and national-level assessments for monitoring the local labour market demand for immigrants and the effects of emigration on the local labour market is an area with potential for further development. There are no local programmes that promote the ethical recruitment of migrant workers, nor are there initiatives to provide support to local employers in employing foreign citizens.

## Mobility dimension of crises

The municipality of Tbilisi communicates with its population during crises through the Georgian Public Broadcasting System, mass media and alerts issued via mobile phone networks. The municipality has formulated action plans and strategies aimed at promoting sustainability and reducing human activities associated with climate change.

The development of a local-level emergency management framework, a disaster risk reduction strategy and a contingency plan to manage large-scale population movements is considered an area with potential for improvement. Tbilisi's latest development plan – the Local Economic Development Plan (2020) – does not contain measures relating to displacement. Establishing referral systems with key actors to assist migrants in emergency situations and integrating migration policies into post-crisis recovery strategies are other areas with potential for development.

## Safe, orderly and regular migration

Municipal staff in Tbilisi have received training in addressing gender-related issues and the prevention of gender-based discrimination through the Public Defender's Office of Georgia. The municipality of Tbilisi facilitates the arrival and temporary stay of refugees in the local area, and through the Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization Pilot Initiative in Communities of Return project, the local government, in cooperation with the IOM, facilitates the reintegration of migrants. All registered residents have access to legal support through My Lawyer, a free legal clinic supported by Tbilisi City Hall.

The implementation of training programmes on migration rules and migrants' rights directed to local-level public servants and the development of measures to combat human trafficking, procedures to combat the labour exploitation of migrants, and a protocol to respond to cases of disappearance or death in the migration process are considered areas with potential for improvement.

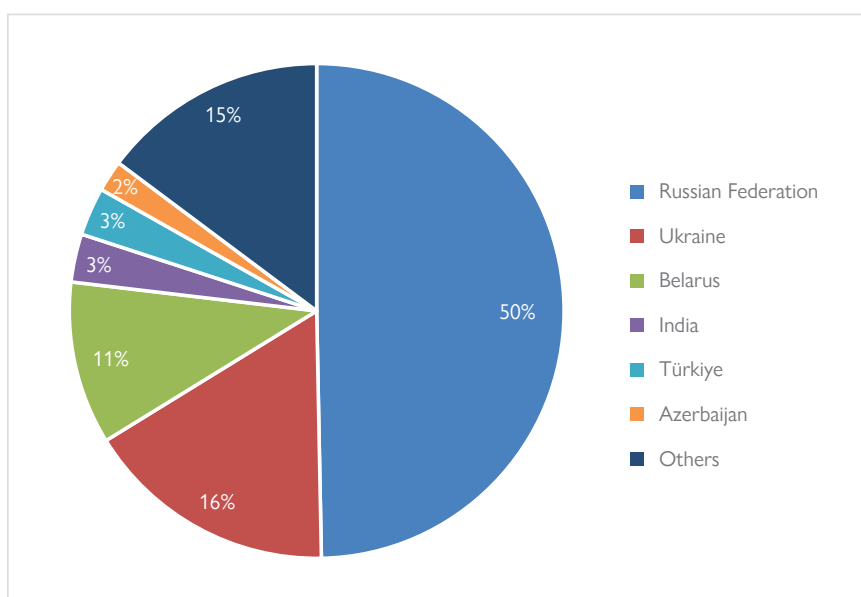


CONTEXT

## Migration trends

Georgia experienced relatively stable immigration and emigration patterns over the decade prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over this period, the immigrant flow varied between 39,890 (2012) and 42,386 (2019), while the flow of emigrants varied between 90,584 (2012) and 105,107 (2019). Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated mobility restrictions, emigration dropped to 74,264 in 2020 before rising again to 99,974 in 2021 and 125,269 in 2022, while immigration increased 26.4 per cent, from 34,482 immigrants in 2021 to 125,373 in 2022, resulting in the highest net migration rate recorded of 54,509.<sup>8</sup> Figure 1 shows that the main countries of origin of migrant populations in Georgia are the Russian Federation (50%), Ukraine (16%), Belarus (11%), India (3%) and Türkiye (3%).

**Figure 1.** Countries of citizenship of the immigrant populations flows in Georgia in 2022



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (2021).

As a major urban centre, Tbilisi has experienced steady and significant population growth, some of which is due to both internal and international migration. According to the Survey of Business Demand on Skills (Government of Georgia, 2022a), as of 1 September 2022, 8 per cent of enterprises employ 17,851 foreign nationals, equivalent to 2 per cent of the total number of employees; in comparison to 2021, the employment of foreign citizens increased by 78 per cent. Most of the employees work in Tbilisi, with 69 per cent of the total number of workers, followed by Ajara (9%), Imereti (6%) and Kvemo Kartli (5%).

Tbilisi is an important destination for internal migrant workers, yet there is limited statistical information available on the scope of internal movements. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia are highly concentrated in Tbilisi, with around 40 per cent of IDPs registered in 2021 resettling in Tbilisi. In contrast, 11.5 per cent of IDPs from Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) were resettled in Tbilisi in the same year. Persons displaced by ecological circumstances or climate-related events, referred to as “ecomigrants” in Georgian State documentation, are generally displaced to other regions. Of the 5,659 ecomigrant families registered and resettled in 2021, only 4 families were resettled in Tbilisi.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See the National Statistics Office of Georgia's data on the [number of immigrants and emigrants by age and sex \(2021\)](#).

<sup>9</sup> This information is from the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.



## Administrative structure

Georgia is split into nine regions and two autonomous republics. These administrative divisions are further disaggregated into 69 local self-governing units or municipalities, 5 of which are considered self-governing cities, while the rest are self-governing communities. Tbilisi is a self-governing city comprising 10 districts. Districts are not self-governing units but are administrative divisions within a city that are in turn divided into structural units. These structural units represent specific work sectors (e.g. social services and sanitation) and provide services to the local community in line with instructions provided by the district administration.

Tbilisi and its constituent districts are the local administration analysed as part of this assessment.<sup>10</sup> In January 2023, Tbilisi's total population was 1,241,709,<sup>11</sup> representing 33.2 per cent of the total population in the country.<sup>12</sup>

## Competencies of the city

### Level of decentralization of local authorities

Georgia is a decentralized country. The Organic Law of Georgia on the Local Self-government Code (2014) provides explicit grounds for municipalities, also described as local self-governing units, to decide on local issues within the framework of Georgian legislation through elected officials. Elected officials execute their decision-making power through the Sakrebulo, a city council that is elected every four years. As defined in Article 16 of the Local Self-government Code, municipalities have powers related to drafting, approving and dispersing the municipal budget; managing local natural resources; spatial and territorial planning; imposing and abolishing local taxes; improving and maintaining public territory; municipal waste management and water supply; establishing preschool and extramural educational institutions; managing local motorways; protection and development of local cultural monuments, heritage sites and handicrafts; developing appropriate infrastructure in local facilities for children, the elderly and less abled persons; and the provision of homeless shelters. In addition, municipalities may support a wide range of activities that promote better lives and livelihoods, including those relating to employment, agriculture, tourism, social assistance and health care, public education, innovative development and gender equality.

In line with Article 24 of the Local Self-government Code, the municipal Sakrebulo is responsible for, among other activities, monitoring the executive bodies of the municipality, discussing and approving the municipality's budget, and making decisions related to the powers defined above that rest with municipalities.

<sup>10</sup> See the National Agency of Public Registry's [registry of municipalities](#).

<sup>11</sup> See the National Statistics Office of Georgia's data on the [population as of 1 January by regions and urban–rural settlements \(2022\)](#).

<sup>12</sup> See the National Statistics Office of Georgia's data on the [population as of 1 January by 5-year age groups and sex \(2022\)](#).

### The competencies of the municipality in relation to migration

According to the Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2014), the responsibility for migration management and policymaking generally falls under the remit of national authorities, particularly those related to defining and implementing measures to support entry and stay in the country, establishing the criteria for accessing services, and determining the requirements for accessing the labour market or entrepreneurial activities.

The labour activity/employment of regular migrants in Georgia is regulated by the Law of Georgia on Labour Migration (2015) and the Labour Code of Georgia (2010).

The Local Self-government Code does not identify any migration-specific areas in which local authorities have the right to act. As per Articles 8 and 9 of the Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons, municipalities, as local self-governing units, may have the following powers delegated to them: the receipt of documentation needed to issue an immigration visa and/or the placement of a visa in a travel document (delegated from the Legal Entities under Public Law (LEPL) Public Service Development Agency, which operates within the Ministry of Justice of Georgia) and the receipt of documentation to support the extension of specific classes of immigrant visa (also delegated from the LEPL Public Service Development Agency).

Local self-government units have the authority to support and promote activities that contribute to livelihoods and quality of life, such as those relating to employment, education, health care and social assistance.<sup>13</sup> These delegated responsibilities also extend to migrants, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria to access such services, such as acquiring Georgian citizenship.<sup>14</sup>

*The Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030* (2020) is considered the central strategic document providing guidance on the development of migration-related policies and programmes. The action plans<sup>15</sup> to the *Strategy*, developed annually, contain certain objectives that should be delivered by unspecified municipalities, but the responsible party for implementation is a designated national agency.

The Action Plan for 2023<sup>16</sup> particularly sets as an objective the facilitation of capacity-building of local self-government authorities and increasing the extent of their involvement in migration management. These are planned through the awareness-raising workshops with the municipal government staff and the implementation of a number of projects as related particularly to the field of reintegration of return migrants. The responsibility is designated to the national government agency in charge of the implementation of the State reintegration programme and to the partner international organizations.

<sup>13</sup> See the Organic Law of Georgia on the Local Self-government Code (2014).

<sup>14</sup> Visit the website of Tbilisi City Hall for a list of the 2023 programmes under the City Service of Health and Social Services.

<sup>15</sup> See the action plans on the website of the State Commission on Migration Issues.

<sup>16</sup> See the 2023 Action Plan of the 2021–2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia (State Commission on Migration Issues, 2023).

<p>Local financing mechanisms and the restrictions on their use</p>	<p>According to Article 24, Section 1.d.a, of the Local Self-government Code, Sakrebulo are responsible for discussing and approving the municipality's budget. Local programmes are financed from a combination of national and local government financial resources. The annex of the Budget Code of Georgia (2014) identifies that at the local level, revenues may be derived from certain forms of personal income and asset taxes (e.g. entrepreneurs' income or the sale of material assets), property taxes, private-sector profits, the sale of natural resources extracted from a local area, income from transfer of lands managed by local authorities and fees associated with the delivery of local services or permits.</p> <p>Tbilisi's designation as a self-governing city implies that it has the right to collect and use taxes for local programmes. About 80 per cent of the municipality's finance pool is derived from its own taxation sources, and 20 per cent of its budget is derived from the central budget. Under the Budget Code of Georgia, the allocation of resources to programme budgets is determined by priorities and subprogrammes (Article 9), but municipalities may also have unmarked budgets that can be freely spent (Article 82). The priorities and subprogrammes supported by earmarked budgets change annually and are announced by the ministers/deputy ministers of each specific line ministry and the Minister/Deputy Minister of Finance (Article 39).</p> <p>Budgeting and financing of local programmes are under review given the ongoing delegation of more powers to local authorities. The Decentralization Strategy 2020–2025 (2019) recognizes that progressively greater financial resources should be delegated to local self-governing authorities, and that local authorities should have greater competence and autonomy to define and administer instruments of non-tax revenues (such as fees and permits), given the transfer of some responsibilities to local governments.<sup>17</sup></p>
<p>Local participation in the formulation of migration policy</p>	<p>Local authorities are not involved in the consultation or development process of the national migration strategy or related policies. The State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) guides decision-making at the national level regarding migration management and coordinates discussions on migration-related issues among national bodies. However, local authorities are not included in the composition of the SCMI member agencies.<sup>18</sup></p>

<sup>17</sup> See: MRDI, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> For more information, visit the State Commission on Migration Issues' [About us](#) page and its [organigram](#).



KEY

FINDINGS



## 1

## ADHERE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFIL MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

### 1.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Migrants in the municipality of Tbilisi have access to Government-funded health services based on national-level provisions. The Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2014) explicitly recognizes the right of foreign nationals in the country to receive health care (Article 30). Additionally, the Law of Georgia on Health Care (1997) prohibits discrimination on the basis of nationality against patients in health-care institutions. Emergency health-care services are available for all populations, regardless of documentation or registration status, whereas some forms of health care may require a minimum period of registration within the municipality, which can limit access for foreign migrants with irregular status.<sup>19</sup> Individuals who have received any form of international protection status,<sup>20</sup> whether temporary or permanent, have the same rights as Georgian citizens to access the Universal Health Care Programme, the country's public health insurance scheme introduced in 2013. At the local level, the municipality of Tbilisi provides financial support for health services to the general population. This support is aimed at covering the costs associated with treating rare or severe diseases, which individuals may struggle to afford. However, non-citizens are not eligible for this support.

All migrants residing in the municipality of Tbilisi, regardless of migration status, have access to early childhood (e.g. preschool and kindergarten), primary and secondary education based on national-level provisions. In line with the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education (2016), the Kindergarten Management Agency operates at the municipal level and is responsible for ensuring that residents are provided with regular access to early childhood education. The Law places responsibility for the delivery of preschool education services at the municipal level and states that municipalities must “ensure the delivery of equally available and inclusive preschool education” (Article 10.1.b). The Law of Georgia on General Education (2005) specifies that “[e]veryone shall enjoy equal rights to acquire a complete general education in order to fully develop his/her personality and acquire knowledge and skills necessary for equal opportunities to be successful in private and social life. Acquisition of a primary and basic education shall be mandatory” (Article 9). Primary and secondary education are competencies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth at the central Government level. However, the municipal government of Tbilisi has a specific mandate to support informal education (i.e. non-accredited continuing education) and vocational education. Since 2018, the City Hall Department of Education and Youth Affairs has offered Learn and Work,<sup>21</sup> a training-to-work vocational education programme available to migrant populations. It allows people registered in Tbilisi aged 18 and over, who have proof of completing basic education, to participate in training courses offered by local colleges and training institutes in cooperation with the private sector.

The municipality of Tbilisi provides migrants access to legal support on an ad hoc basis through collaborations with local civil society organizations, such as My Lawyer. At the national level, the Law of Georgia on Legal Aid (2007) specifies that “[e]veryone has the right to take advantage of consistent and qualified legal advice and legal aid at the expense of the State” (Article 1.2) and that beneficiaries of legal aid can include stateless persons and foreign citizens in addition to citizens of the country. To be eligible for State-provided legal aid, individuals (except asylum-seekers and those requesting international protection) must demonstrate an inability to pay for legal services (Article 5). The Ministry of Justice provides legal aid through the Legal Aid Service, including representation, document drafting and translation services.

<sup>19</sup> As per Order No. 98 on the approval of the procedure for registration and deregistration of Georgian citizens and aliens residing in Georgia and issuance of identity (residence) cards, passports, travel passports and travel documents (2011), to register in a municipality, an individual needs to present a copy of their residence permit, an 11-digit personal identification number issued by the Ministry of Justice and proof of ownership or renter status of accommodation.

<sup>20</sup> Examples are registered asylum-seekers, persons with recognized stateless status, refugees and humanitarian status holders.

<sup>21</sup> Visit the website of the [Learn and Work](#) programme to know more.

Under the national-level Programme to Support Reintegration of Returned Migrants (2015), selected return migrants can access housing assistance in Tbilisi. The administration of this Programme falls under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, and since 2017, it has included a temporary housing support element, exclusively implemented in Tbilisi. Through the Programme, Georgian nationals who have been involuntarily returned<sup>22</sup> and do not have immediate access to accommodation are eligible to receive financial support to cover food and housing. Additionally, the municipality has established a property fund for the homeless, along with social services, which support the development of properties for use by homeless people, which may include migrants. For one to be eligible for housing assistance, they are required to possess Georgian citizenship, register in the municipality, and demonstrate having low income and no access to housing or land.<sup>23</sup>

## 1.2. Areas with potential for further development

The municipality of Tbilisi does not have targeted strategies or programmes to support the inclusion or integration of migrants in general education. One element of integration and inclusion is language, and while the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education states that the default language of instruction in preschool education is Georgian, it does allow individual institutions to provide educational services in the native language of children or a “non-official” language of Georgia. While individual institutions may adopt inclusive language policies, there is no evidence of a municipal strategy or programme that promotes this. On the other hand, the Law of Georgia on General Education identifies limited facilitation for the inclusion/integration of migrant pupils in general education, noting that the language of instruction in general education institutions should be in Georgian, except for those Georgian citizens for whom Georgian is not a native language (Article 4).

Implementing measures to facilitate access to Government-funded health services for migrants is an area with potential for development. The social and health-care programmes offered by the Tbilisi municipal Department of Healthcare and Social Services are available only to Georgian citizens. Additionally, as mentioned before, only migrants with international protection status are eligible for Georgia’s Universal Health Care Programme.

The municipality does not have welcome or orientation programmes available to newly arrived migrants. Migrants may go to the City Hall in person or access information via the City Hall website. While there is no specific desk or information centre for migrants, the City Hall staff are responsive to questions on access to services.

Providing assistance to those who wish to emigrate is another area with potential for further development. While the local government does not offer pre-migration services, programmes are provided within the municipality, albeit without the explicit collaboration of local authorities. For example, IOM offers pre-migration information and counselling through Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in four cities in Georgia, including Tbilisi.<sup>24</sup> Within the MRCs, prospective migrants can be informed about the visa liberalization agreement between Georgia and the European Union and how it affects their opportunities for legal migration.<sup>25</sup> The MRCs also provide individualized consultations to prospective migrants, addressing topics such as legal migration opportunities to and beyond the European Union, the risks associated with irregular migration (e.g. trafficking and labour exploitation), and documentation needs and processes for regular migration.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> These are individuals who have been (or returned) to Georgia following a decision from their country of residence.

<sup>23</sup> See Resolution No. 25–28 on the approval of the rules for registration of the homeless and provision of shelter/housing in the territory of Tbilisi Municipality (2023).

<sup>24</sup> The MRCs were initially created and operated within the European Union-supported project *Reinforcing the Capacities of the Government of Georgia*, which ran from 2012 to 2017 and had the objective to improve State capacities to reduce irregular migration and prevent cross-border crime and trafficking in human beings.

<sup>25</sup> For more information on the agreement, visit the European Council and the Council of the European Union web page on [European Union relations with Georgia](#).

<sup>26</sup> For more information, visit IOM Georgia’s web page on [Migrant Resource Centres](#).

There are no specific procedures and measures aimed at ensuring the protection of migrant children. The powers of municipal bodies related to children's protection are identified in the Law of Georgia on the Code on the Rights of the Child (2019). This includes legal, administrative and other measures to introduce the legal status impact assessment of the child in the process of drafting a legal act of local significance and/or making a decision on any issue that may have a direct or indirect impact on the rights of the child; ensuring the introduction of principles of child-friendly justice in administrative procedures; and the development, coordination of implementation, and monitoring and assessment of municipal programmes for the protection of children's rights, among others (Article 96). The Code also stipulates that all children – regardless of national origin, ethnicity and race, among other considerations – have the right to equal treatment, respect and regard for their protection needs by any organization or individual making decisions or taking actions concerning children (Article 7).



## 2

## FORMULATE POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

## 2.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Tbilisi municipal Department of Economic Development coordinates with the Georgian diaspora for the development of specific activities. For example, in November 2022, this Department organized the Local Economic Development Forum, which focused on local economic recovery and engaged two highly skilled Georgian diaspora members as speakers (Tbilisi City Hall, 2022). The event also had a side session on migration, where diaspora members could meet with the Mayor of Tbilisi. At the national level, the Department for Relations with Diaspora within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tasked with systematic coordination and cooperation with Georgians living abroad.<sup>27</sup>

Since 2021, the municipality has participated in the IOM-led Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization Pilot Initiative in Communities of Return project,<sup>28</sup> which provides information about services to returnees, such as those offered by the Service Hub.<sup>29</sup> The latter is a one-stop shop that gives the residents of Samgori District of Tbilisi information on labour, social, and health services and national programmes available to the local population. In addition, the Mayor gives an address every Wednesday, intended to apprise the population of new initiatives or programmes. The details are then published on the website of the City Hall and promoted in television spots. The released material is in Georgian and English.<sup>30</sup> District administration staff also hold consultation meetings with the population in their districts, two to three times per week, which may include the provision of information on new services. While migrant populations are not explicitly targeted in these consultations, they may freely participate in the meetings. However, language barriers may prevent participation as the consultations are held in Georgian.

## 2.2. Areas with potential for further development

The municipality does not engage with the State Commission on Migration Issues – a national-level consultative body for migration-related issues, which meets at least twice a year (although additional special sessions and working group meetings may occur as needed). The *Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030* (2020) states that local authorities may be the first point of contact for migrant populations, particularly in the integration domain, but it does not describe specific competencies that should be shifted to local authorities; and local authorities were not included in the development of the *Strategy*.

Similarly, Tbilisi does not have an agency or department specifically responsible for coordinating the management of services for migrants, nor is there a coordination mechanism among local agencies and departments to address migration issues. At the municipal level, departments are generally structured around thematic policy or service areas, such as health care and social services, culture, education, sports and youth affairs, and economic development. While migrants may benefit from services provided by these departments within their respective thematic areas, there is no dedicated unit that focuses explicitly on offering migration-related services.

<sup>27</sup> For more information, visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia's web page for the [Department for Relations with Diaspora](#).

<sup>28</sup> For more information, visit IOM Georgia's web page on the [Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization Pilot Initiative](#).

<sup>29</sup> Service Hubs are established at the premises of 10 municipal governments in three regions of Georgia. There are plans for the expansion of the Service Hubs to 12 municipalities in four additional regions of Georgia, as well as for their establishment in Batumi and Tbilisi City Municipality.

<sup>30</sup> Visit the [Tbilisi City Hall homepage](#) to know more.



Mainstreaming migration in the Tbilisi City municipal development strategy as an integral part of this programmatic document, in alignment with national and international development agendas, is an area to be addressed. As of November 2023, the municipality of Tbilisi is working on its development strategy, but it is unclear whether it will explicitly address migration. *Resilient Tbilisi: A Strategy for 2030* (2019), developed by the Resilience Office of Tbilisi City Hall with support of the 100 Resilient Cities initiative, discusses migration in the context of how local development is shaped by population flows, but it does not contain any strategic objectives, goals or activities explicitly related to migration. At the national level, the *Migration Strategy of Georgia* guides strategic goals and objectives related to the development of migration management. It recognizes the importance of increased coordination between national and local authorities on migration issues, given the direct interaction between local authorities and migration-affected populations and the role of local authorities in informing the local population about the different aspects of migration. The *Strategy* also describes how local authorities can assist in the development of more tailored and targeted interventions at the local level. The Migration Strategy Action Plan for 2023 further identifies several activities to which local authorities may contribute.

The municipality provides information to the general public through the City Hall website; however, it does not contain any headings or sections that address the rights and obligations of or services for migrants specifically. Consequently, the provision of clear and transparent information on the rights and obligations of migrants and their access to local public services, including through information campaigns in a language understood by the majority of them, is an area that could be further developed.

The regular collection and publication of data related to migration/migrants by the local government is another area with potential for development. Migration data, including data disaggregated at the local level, are typically collected and published by central authorities through the national census, which takes place every 10 years (the last census was conducted in 2014). Data on the distribution of internally displaced persons are available at the local level but are based on data collated and published by the National Statistics Office of Georgia and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

## 3

## ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

## 3.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

The municipality of Tbilisi participates in international networks that support the exchange of knowledge and good practices in resolving migration issues. Tbilisi is a member of Eurocities, a network established in 1986 that aims to foster closer cooperation between cities and the European Union on issues such as inclusive development.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, in 2016, Tbilisi joined the Resilient Cities Network, established in 2013 with the goal of supporting cities in enhancing their resilience and responsiveness to shocks and stressors, particularly those related to climate events and hazards.<sup>32</sup> The Network recognizes the importance of factoring migration into resilience approaches and has supported the municipality of Tbilisi's Resilience Office in developing a city resilience strategy, *Resilient Tbilisi: A Strategy for 2030* (2019).

The Department of Economic Development of Tbilisi cooperates with United Nations agencies in addressing migration issues. For example, the municipality is working with the United Nations Development Programme on a midterm development document, reviewing the municipality's progress in strategically reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, including the ones pertaining to migration. Additionally, the municipality collaborates with IOM on a community stabilization and revitalization programme that involves the establishment of the Multifunctional Service Centre, which aims to establish accessible services for the community in the field of repair and construction; enhance entrepreneurial and professional competencies for beginners, particularly the local youth and/or unemployed artisans living in the community; and create a "library of things", which allow community members to borrow repair and construction equipment/tools at an affordable price.

Local authorities cooperate with the private sector and academia to implement programmes targeting the general population, including migrants. For example, the Learn and Work initiative (launched in 2018), spearheaded by the City Hall Department of Education and Youth Affairs, aims to provide (re)training and skills in up to 50 specializations, including priority sectors for local economic growth – such as information technology, construction, tourism and health care. The training courses are offered by local universities and training institutes, in cooperation with the private sector.

## 3.2. Areas with potential for further development

While there are no systematic engagements between the municipality and civil society organizations (CSOs) related to the implementation of migration-related policies and programmes, the municipality does cooperate with CSOs in the development of policy processes. Tbilisi City Hall is engaged in the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international initiative to increase government transparency and the inclusion of civil society in governance processes. As part of its participation in OGP, the municipality devised an Open Governance Action Plan for 2018–2020 (2018) through a consultative process between the City Hall and civil society, with representatives from CSOs included in working group meetings. It contained several commitments, such as those related to open data, increasing access to information on municipal services through a one-window principal, participatory budgeting, and greater participation and feedback from citizens in municipal governance.

<sup>31</sup> Visit Eurocities' web page on [Tbilisi](#) to know more.

<sup>32</sup> Visit the Resilient Cities Network's [member cities](#) page to know more.

The municipality of Tbilisi does not formally collaborate with migrant associations, members of its diaspora and expatriate communities in the implementation of migration-related policies and programmes. Within the framework of the Local Economic Development Forum (2022), attended by two highly qualified members of the Georgian diaspora, the Tbilisi municipal Department of Economic Development expressed its desire to involve the Georgian diaspora more systematically in local development initiatives.

The establishment of national bilateral city-to-city cooperation programmes within the country and international city-to-city cooperation programmes focusing on issues related to international migration is an area with potential for development. The municipality of Tbilisi participates in a number of international town-twinning/sister-city initiatives, but these focus on trade, tourism and private-sector development. For example, in 2021, Tbilisi signed a memorandum of understanding with Baku, Azerbaijan, to become twin cities, focusing on cooperation in tourism, culture, arts, urban planning and information technology.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> More information is available in this 2021 article on [Tbilisi and Baku becoming twin cities](#) from *Agenda.ge*.



## 4

## ADVANCE THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

## 4.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

There are local measures in place to promote gender equality in the labour force that apply to migrants and citizens alike. The municipality's Gender Strategy 2023–2025 (2023), coordinated and implemented by the Gender Equality Council, aims to support women's equitable access to employment and public services. As part of the Strategy, the municipality has committed to developing programmes that promote women's participation in entrepreneurship, including through identifying women's unique needs in creating small and medium-sized enterprises, and supporting the consolidation of skills and competencies related to starting and sustaining businesses among women. The Strategy emphasizes the need to create the conditions for women to become more competitive in the local labour market, which could include evaluating the gender dimension of legal acts and improving the monitoring and enforcement of legal norms against gender-based discrimination in hiring and pay.

Through the Learn and Work programme, local authorities promote and facilitate the inclusion of immigrant workers in the labour force. One of the programme's objectives is to enhance inclusion in the local labour market by supporting the development of in-demand skills. Upon completion of the programme, participants receive a certificate issued by the State in Georgian and English, which aids mobility in the labour market by acknowledging their qualifications. In line with this, the National Strategy 2019–2023 for Labour and Employment Policy of Georgia (2019), developed by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, recognizes the need for municipal governments to offer services and support for jobseekers, such as professional counselling and career planning, and to ensure coherence between local social protection programmes and employment policies. It also aims to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market, explicitly noting the need for municipalities with large shares of ethnic minority populations to tailor support, such as Georgian language courses, for such groups.

The business development division of Enterprise Georgia<sup>34</sup> offers two entrepreneurship promotion and support programmes in Tbilisi, and these address access to finance and financial inclusion: the Credit Guarantee Mechanism, launched in 2019;<sup>35</sup> and the Subsidized Mortgage Loan, launched in 2021.<sup>36</sup> The Credit Guarantee Mechanism supports entrepreneurs by providing guarantees on loans, covering a portion of the default risk for businesses operating in specific sectors; the Subsidized Mortgage Loan programme subsidizes the interest on mortgage loans for families with newborns or multiple children. The latter also supports loans for purchasing or building apartments/houses. Both programmes are available to potential beneficiaries residing in the municipality of Tbilisi. For the Subsidized Mortgage Loan programme, if the beneficiary is the family, at least one of the spouses should be a Georgian citizen; if the beneficiaries are single parents, they should be Georgian citizens.

## 4.2. Areas with potential for further development

The establishment of assessments for monitoring the local labour market demand for immigrants (e.g. shortage occupation lists) and the effects of emigration on the local labour market is an area with potential for further development. The responsibility for conducting such assessments lies with the Labour Market Analysis Division of the Department of Economic Policy, along with the Labour Market

<sup>34</sup> Enterprise Georgia is an agency within the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development that offers existing and prospective entrepreneurs support through divisions that cover business creation and expansion, export expansion, and investment promotion.

<sup>35</sup> Visit Enterprise Georgia's web page on the [Credit Guarantee Mechanism](#) to know more.

<sup>36</sup> Visit Enterprise Georgia's web page on the [Subsidized Mortgage Loan](#) to know more.

Information System (LMIS),<sup>37</sup> both under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development at the national level. Established in 2016 as a one-stop portal for labour market data, the LMIS provides updated information on labour market trends, career guidance and occupational profiles for different stakeholders (e.g. pupils, students, jobseekers, research institutions, governmental bodies and the private sector), including information on employment, unemployment, and immigrant and emigrant flows. It can be considered as an information bank gathering labour market indicators that are visualized and easily understandable for users. It does not include information about the labour market demand for immigrants or the effects of emigrants on the labour market, either at the national or local level. The *Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030* (2020) acknowledges that the demand for workforce with varying skill levels is expected to increase. As a result, it emphasizes the importance of implementing a monitoring system for labour market needs to facilitate the recruitment of labour accordingly.

There are no local programmes that promote the ethical recruitment of migrant workers. Such recruitment is the responsibility of both the national-level Division of Labour Migration Issues (under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs) and the State Employment Support Agency (SESA). Cooperation with local authorities in this regard has occurred only in terms of the recruitment of Georgian nationals into circular labour migration schemes with Germany.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, with regard to general labour recruitment, the Law of Georgia on the Labour Inspection Service (2020) states that the Labour Inspection Service may engage in joint inspections with municipal authorities (Article 17).

The implementation of measures by the local government to support employers in employing foreign citizens is an area with potential for further development. When a local employer seeks to recruit qualified personnel, they can utilize the specialized tools and services provided by national-level entities, specifically SESA, within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. SESA supports the matching of potential employers with jobseekers who are registered in the Worknet portal.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> The LMIS integrates data provided from multiple line ministries and national agencies, namely the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

<sup>38</sup> More information is available in this 2023 article on the [Georgian Interior Ministry saying that the German migration deal is to “align with best interests” of Georgian citizens](#) from *Agenda.ge*.

<sup>39</sup> More information is available in this 2013 article on how [Georgia is responding to unemployment through the Worknet portal](#) from *Agenda.ge*.



## 5

## EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

## 5.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Assistance to the general population during and after emergencies is delivered by a network of actors, including national, regional and local authorities. Under the Law of Georgia on Public Safety (2014), the head of the local self-government unit (the Mayor) should establish a local emergency management operations centre that includes immediate response forces of national agencies represented at the local level, the response forces of local municipal bodies and representatives of the Emergency Management Agency – the legal entity for public law created under the Ministry of Internal Affairs that organizes emergency response (Article 11).

One of the goals of *Resilient Tbilisi: A Strategy for 2030* (2019) is to develop an initial disaster response and recovery plan for the city, one that involves district authorities, the Emergency Response Committee of City Hall (a body that should be created as part of the Resilience Strategy) and the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Strategy refers to the development of emergency preparedness plans in order to identify evacuation routes and temporary shelters for displaced populations, and it also addresses the need to develop relocation plans, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children. In addition, the Strategy highlights the creation of an Emergency Response Committee for Tbilisi, tasked with developing and regularly updating disaster response and recovery plans for the municipality. As of November 2023, Tbilisi is developing an emergency response framework in line with the national disaster risk reduction approach.

The municipality of Tbilisi has formulated action plans and strategies aimed at promoting sustainability and reducing human activities associated with climate change. For example, in 2011, Tbilisi City Hall developed a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), which described the city's commitments to increasing use of renewable energy resources and improving energy efficiency in the building, transportation, waste and lighting sectors. The SEAP also addressed urban planning measures, including those on land use, environmental protection, cultural preservation and social infrastructure. Additionally, Tbilisi's Resilience Strategy is structured around three core areas: risk communication, response and mitigation; economic diversification and inclusion; and strengthening infrastructure and ecosystems. The Strategy acknowledges the influence of human mobility on Tbilisi's development and resilience. It recognizes the historical challenges faced by the city in relation to providing emergency and long-term shelters for displaced populations.

The municipality of Tbilisi has communications systems in place to transmit information during emergencies through the Georgian Public Broadcasting System,<sup>40</sup> which shares information on the nature of a threat, the areas affected, the impact of a hazard on individuals and the environment, measures for the protection of individuals, and the code of conduct during emergencies. In addition, other forms of electronic communication and mass media are used, including alerts issued via mobile phone networks. Under the Law on Civil Security (2014, amended in 2018), local authorities are part of a unified emergency response system that also includes national authorities, regional governance bodies, and organizations working in the domain of civil security. Additionally, the municipality publishes civil security rules on its website in Georgian, including the code of conduct to follow in emergency situations. In case of general emergencies, individuals are encouraged to contact the State emergency services via the emergency number, which connects to the State Public Safety Command Centre. The Centre includes the police, fire/rescue services and ambulance

<sup>40</sup> The System operates with public financing but is a legal entity under public law.

dispatch. Since 2015, the services can be contacted either via a mobile/fixed telephone or SMS and video-calling. The emergency dispatch service is prepared to handle calls in multiple languages, such as English, Russian, Turkish, Armenian and Azerbaijani.<sup>41</sup>

## 5.2. Areas with potential for further development

The development of an emergency management framework with specific measures to assist migrants before, during and after crises, a disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions to prevent and address the displacement impacts of disasters, and a contingency plan to manage large-scale population movements is considered an area with potential for improvement. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Georgia 2017–2020 (2017) recognized the responsibility of local-level authorities in developing emergency response measures at the local and departmental levels. In line with this, as of November 2023, local authorities in Tbilisi are developing emergency management approaches and protocols, addressing evacuation planning in particular.

The Tbilisi Local Economic Development Plan (2020) does not include specific measures related to displacement – either for internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees and asylum-seekers. Nonetheless, at the national level, *Vision 2030: Development Strategy of Georgia (2022)* identifies activities and objectives linked to internal displacement and ecomigrants. Within the goal related to strengthening the social protection system, the *Strategy* commits to improving the living and socioeconomic conditions of ecomigrants and IDPs. Additionally, the *Regional Development Programme of Georgia 2018–2021 (2018)* is a medium-term government plan developed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, and it established strategic objectives for the development of Georgia's regions. The document included a specific objective that aimed at enhancing the living conditions and promoting the integration of IDPs and refugees in their places of reception.

The establishment of referral systems with key actors to assist migrants in emergencies is an area with potential for development. At the national level, there is a network of civil society/non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations working on disaster management and response. For example, the Georgia Red Cross Society and organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund, Oxfam, Save the Children, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, World Vision and Mercy Corps are involved in disaster risk management and disaster response activities. Many of them are part of humanitarian response networks that have supported populations during times of displacement and have also contributed to COVID-19 response efforts, often working directly with municipalities.<sup>42</sup>

As the national strategy is still under development, and so is the local-level response, it is unclear to what extent migrants will be explicitly identified in strategies or plans relating to post-emergency or post-crisis recovery. Therefore, the inclusion of migration issues in post-crisis recovery strategies at the local level is another area with potential for development.

<sup>41</sup> Visit the 112 Public Safety Command Centre's [frequently asked questions](#) page to know more.

<sup>42</sup> More information is available in this article on [non-State actors meeting in Tbilisi on 20 September 2018](#) from the Red Cross/Red Crescent DRR–South Caucasus website.



## 6

## ENSURE THAT MIGRATION TAKES PLACE IN A SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MANNER

## 6.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Municipal staff in Tbilisi have received training in tackling gender-related issues and the prevention of gender-based discrimination. The Public Defender's Office (PDO) of Georgia acts as an independent anti-discrimination mechanism, and it addresses both the prevention of discrimination and the provision of legal remedies for those who have experienced discrimination. As part of this mandate, the PDO organized training for representatives of local authorities in 2019 and 2020, focusing on women's rights, gender equality (including women's involvement in decision-making) and sexual harassment (Council of Europe, 2022). At the national level, between 2019 and 2022, staff from the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in training in international migration law and intercultural communication provided through the Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Armenia and Georgia (EMERGE) project, implemented by IOM.

The municipality of Tbilisi facilitates the arrival and temporary stay of refugee populations under its jurisdiction. For example, between March and July 2022, the Department of Economic Development of the municipality supported and directed the temporary resettlement, accommodation and compensation of food costs for around 5,000 Ukrainian refugees. Additionally, Tbilisi provided shelter, food and free municipal services (e.g. public transport, kindergartens, and art and sports schools) to displaced Ukrainian citizens in its territory.<sup>43</sup>

The local government, in cooperation with IOM, facilitated the reintegration of return Georgian migrants through the Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization Pilot Initiative in Communities of Return project, which ran from 2020 to 2023. The project included activities such as employment and business development support for returnees through the creation of a social enterprise called the Multifunctional Service Centre. The Centre was established in selected districts of Tbilisi to provide services to local households for housing renovation and reconstruction services, as well as employment opportunities in the construction sector. Along the same line, the Service Hub at the Samgori District government/Gamgeoba building assists returnees who need additional information or access to services as part of their reintegration trajectories.

All registered residents in Tbilisi have access to legal support through the My Lawyer project, a free legal clinic supported by Tbilisi City Hall. The legal clinic offers complimentary legal consultations, legal representation and assistance with legal documentation. To use the services, a resident of the municipality can either visit the organization's offices for an in-person consultation or submit questions and request legal advice through an online form, without requiring a referral. The website does not specify any eligibility criteria for accessing the services, and it is primarily available in Georgian, with a few limited elements offered also in English.<sup>44</sup>

## 6.2. Areas with potential for further development

The implementation of specific programmes to train local-level public servants in migration rules and migrants' rights is an area for development. As mentioned before, municipal staff in Tbilisi have received some training in the past in relation to addressing gender-related issues and the prevention of gender-based discrimination, but there is no evidence of training related to migrants' rights, including cultural sensitivity.

<sup>43</sup> More information is available in this 2022 article on [Tbilisi City Hall completing a support programme for Ukrainian citizens from Agenda.ge](#).

<sup>44</sup> Visit the website of [My Lawyer](#) to know more.



Local authorities do not have an officially recognized mandate related to preventing anti-trafficking activities, nor is there a local-level strategy to combat human trafficking. At the national level, the Criminal Code (1999) criminalizes human trafficking and introduces punishments for the crime (Articles 143(1) and 143(2)). The Ministry of Justice is responsible for implementing anti-trafficking measures, and it chairs the Interagency Coordinating Council for the Implementation of Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings, which was established in 2006 and is responsible for developing proposals, policies and legislative frameworks, including action plans, for combating and preventing trafficking in human beings, and for protecting and assisting the victims. However, local self-government representatives do not sit on the Coordinating Council.<sup>45</sup>

The design and implementation of local-level measures to combat migrant labour exploitation is another area with potential for development. Under the Law of Georgia on the Labour Inspection Service (2020), the Labour Inspection Service under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs is empowered to inform businesses and the public regarding compliance with labour norms, review complaints related to violations of labour norms, conduct inspections related to conditions of employment, and provide recommendations on the improvement of labour legislation and its implementation in Georgia (Article 5). The Labour Inspection Service has implemented some actions to combat labour exploitation for the general population – for example, in 2019, the Service conducted public awareness training that covered information on forced labour, labour exploitation and labour trafficking. Additionally, in 2018, the Labour Conditions Inspection Department within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs conducted consultations with business associations, employers' associations and local authorities in Tbilisi regarding the enforcement of safety regulations, the registration of hazardous and dangerous jobs, and insurances required to cover workplace accidents.

The municipality of Tbilisi does not have a policy, protocol or guideline in relation to deaths or disappearances that occur during the migration process. The Central Criminal Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for investigating cases involving missing persons, identifying bodies, and preventing and detecting irregular migration.

---

<sup>45</sup> The Coordinating Council includes 10 members representing national bodies (e.g. the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secretariat of the Government of Georgia for Human Rights Protection tasked with maintaining relations with the Parliament, and the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking) as well as non-governmental bodies (e.g. the European Union Delegation to Georgia, the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Children's Fund and IOM).

## After the MGI assessment

IOM would like to thank the local authorities of Tbilisi for their engagement in this process. IOM hopes that the results of this assessment can feed into the local authorities' internal reflection on migration governance and contribute to positive policy change. In particular:



The MGI report can be used to inform policy work with the support of IOM (if desired).



The findings can feed into capacity-building activities, which may connect to other IOM initiatives.



A follow-up assessment can be conducted after three years to verify progress.



Governments can exchange best practices and innovative solutions with other governments that have conducted the MGI process.



ANNEX

## The MGI process



### **1** **Launch of the local MGI process**

The first step of the process is to explain to key national and local government officials what the local MGIs entail, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in at both levels.



### **2** **Data collection**

The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data based on adapted indicators from the MGIs. A draft local migration governance profile based on analysis of the findings is then shared with the government counterparts.



### **3** **Multi-stakeholder discussions on the results of the MGIs**

The third step of the process is to convene a consultation where local and national government officials and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main gaps identified in the draft local migration governance profile. It is also an opportunity for them to comment on and provide suggestions to the draft profile.



### **4** **Final report**

The last step is to finalize the local migration governance profile, obtain final validation from the local authorities, and publish a printed version of the report as well as an online version on the [Migration Data Portal](#) and upload it on the [IOM Publications Platform](#).



## KEY SOURCES\*

*\* All hyperlinks were working at the time of writing this report.*

## Council of Europe

- 2022 *Preventing and Combatting Sexism at the Local Level in Georgia: A Guide for Women and Men in Local Politics.* Strasbourg Cedex.
- 2023 Georgia: Round-table discusses progress in combating human trafficking. 25 April.

## East European University (EEU)

- n.d. Memorandum of understanding signed between the EEU Center for Migration and Diaspora Studies and the Georgian Parliamentary Research Center.

## European Union and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- 2019 Implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia, 2014–2020: progress, challenges and recommendations as to future approaches.

## Gender Equality Council

- 2021 *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations.* Updated edition, Part II.

## Government of Georgia

- 1996 Organic Law of Georgia on the Public Defender of Georgia (2015 consolidated version).
- 1997a Law of Georgia on State of Emergency.
- 1997b Law of Georgia on Health Care (2015 consolidated version).
- 1999 Criminal Code of Georgia.
- 2001 Law of Georgia on Medical and Social Examination (2014 consolidated version).
- 2005 Law of Georgia on General Education (2017 amended version).
- 2006a Law of Georgia on Psychiatric Care (2015 consolidated version).
- 2006b Law of Georgia on the Elimination of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, and the Protection and Support of Victims of Such Violence (2020 consolidated version).
- 2007 Law of Georgia on Legal Aid (2017 consolidated version).
- 2010a Law of Georgia on Gender Equality.
- 2010b Ordinance No. 314 on the establishment of the State Commission on Migration Issues and approval of the statute.
- 2010c Joint Order No. 152/N–No. 496–No. 45/N of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the approval of child protection referral procedures (2017 consolidated version).
- 2010d Labour Code of Georgia (2021 consolidated version).
- 2011 Order No. 98 on the approval of the procedure for registration and deregistration of Georgian citizens and aliens residing in Georgia and issuance of identity (residence) cards, passports, travel passports and travel documents.
- 2014a Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia: Georgia 2020.
- 2014b Law of Georgia on Civil Security (amended in 2018).
- 2014c Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination.
- 2014d Law of Georgia on Public Safety.
- 2014e Organic Law of Georgia on the Local Self-government Code.
- 2014f Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2020 consolidated version).
- 2014g Budget Code of Georgia.
- 2015a Law of Georgia on Labour Migration (2018 consolidated version).
- 2015b Law of Georgia on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination.
- 2015c Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education.
- 2016 Resolution No. 70 on the approval of the regulation of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.
- 2017 National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Georgia 2017–2020.
- 2018 Law of Georgia on Vocational Education (2019 consolidated version).
- 2019 Law of Georgia on the Code on the Rights of the Child.
- 2020 Law of Georgia on the Labour Inspection Service.
- 2021a *Georgia's 2030 Climate Change Strategy.*

- 
- 2021b [Government of Georgia: Program for 2021–2024 – Towards building a European State.](#)
- 2022a [Survey of Business Demand on Skills.](#) Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.
- 2022b [Vision 2030: Development Strategy of Georgia.](#)
- 2023 [Resolution No. 25–28 on the approval of the rules for registration of the homeless and provision of shelter/housing in the territory of Tbilisi Municipality.](#)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- 2022 [Georgia 2023 IFRC network country plan.](#) IFRC Country Cluster Office for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Tbilisi.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- 2020 [Returning migrant reintegration system in Georgia: challenges and solutions.](#) Not available online.
- 2021 [Immigrant integration policy and practice in Georgia: achievements, challenges and the way forward.](#)
- 2022a [IOM conducts training of trainers on irregular migration for the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.](#) 21 July.
- 2022b [Operational framework for developing a foreign migrant integration policy in Georgia.](#) Not available online.
- 2022c [Training about forced labour and labour exploitation for Georgian labour inspectors.](#) 8 April.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Youth
- 2022 [2022–2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia.](#)
- Ministry of Justice
- 2022 [2023–2024 Action Plan on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.](#)
- Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
- 2016 [Labour market information system: annual report 2016.](#)
- 2019 [National Strategy 2019–2023 for Labour and Employment Policy of Georgia.](#) Not available online.
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI)
- 2018 [Regional Development Programme of Georgia 2018–2021.](#)
- 2019 [Decentralization Strategy 2020–2025.](#)
- National Bank of Georgia
- 2022 [National Strategy for Financial Education of Georgia 2023: from informed decisions to financial well-being.](#)
- National Statistics Office of Georgia
- 2019 [National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia 2020–2023.](#)
- Resilience Office of Tbilisi City Hall
- 2019 [Resilient Tbilisi: A Strategy for 2030.](#)
- Social Justice Center
- 2022 [Labour Inspection Service Assessment 2021.](#)
- State Commission on Migration Issues
- 2020 [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030.](#)
- 2021a [Migration Profile of Georgia.](#)
- 2021b [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030: Action Plan 2021.](#)
- 2023 [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030: Action Plan 2023.](#)
- Tbilisi City Council
- 2023 [Resolution No. 22-7 on the approval of the Gender Strategy of Tbilisi Municipality.](#)
-

Tbilisi City Hall

- 2011 Sustainable Energy Action Plan. Not available online.
- 2020 [Tbilisi Local Economic Development Plan](#).
- 2022 [The 12th Tbilisi Local Economic Development Forum is being held. 1 November](#).
- n.d. [Rules of civil security](#).

Tbilisi Municipal Government

- 2018 [Ordinance No. 18.816.1189 on the approval of Tbilisi Action Plan for 2018–2020 within the frames of Open Government Partnership](#).







[www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi](http://www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi)

#migrationgovernance

 @IOM

 @UNmigration

 @UNmigration

 MGI@iom.int