

Batumi (Georgia) | PROFILE 2024

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
Internet: www.iom.int

With research and analysis by

**ECONOMIST
IMPACT**

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2025. *Migration Governance Indicators Local Profile 2024 – Batumi (Georgia)*. IOM, Geneva.

ISBN 978-92-9268-967-4 (PDF)

© IOM 2025



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

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.

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

Batumi (Georgia) | PROFILE 2024

MIGRATION
GOVERNANCE
INDICATORS

LOCAL

CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES // iv

INTRODUCTION // 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK // 4

SUMMARY // 6

CONTEXT // 9

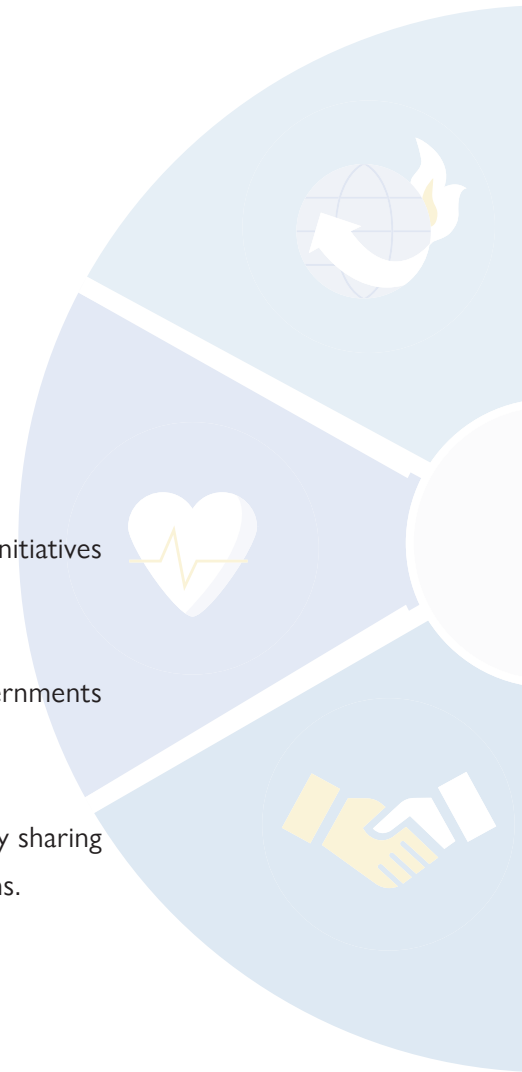
KEY FINDINGS // 14

ANNEX // 28

KEY SOURCES // 30

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.



INTRODUCTION

The Migration Governance Indicators¹

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.² 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 governance³ 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 for Migrants and Refugees, to mention a few.

¹ All terms used in the report are defined in the IOM *Glossary on Migration* (2019).

² “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.”

³ “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 MGIs⁴ 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 Batumi (Georgia) and complements the 2023 local MGI profile of Tbilisi.⁵ This report summarizes key examples of well-developed areas and areas with potential for further development of local migration governance.

⁴ The *Migration Governance Indicators* were developed in 2015 by IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact.

⁵ See *Migration Governance Indicators Local Profile 2023 – Tbilisi (Georgia)*.

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:⁶



MIGRANTS'
RIGHTS
PAGE 15

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 18

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 20

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 22

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 24

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 26

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.

⁶ 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) grants foreign nationals the right to receive health care. The Law of Georgia on Health Care (1997) prohibits discrimination based on nationality, and the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education (2015) mandates free, universal preschool education for all children. The municipality's health services provide additional budgetary support to complement national services for priority health areas. The support to these programmes is ensured by the Health and Social Protection Service of the Batumi Municipality City Hall. To support Ukrainian students, in 2022, Batumi public schools introduced a Ukrainian language division, and two additional schools for Ukrainian students were opened.

The following areas with potential for development were identified: expanding local health programmes, in coordination with the government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Adjara A/R), to include migrant populations; establishing local mechanisms to provide migrants with legal services; conducting information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at fighting xenophobia; providing assistance to individuals who wish to emigrate; and designing specific local programmes to ensure the protection of migrant children.

Whole-of-government approach

The responsibility for migration management generally falls under the remit of national authorities. At the local level, the Municipal Services Agency is the local office responsible for providing information on services available for all residents, including migrants, through its representation office in each of Batumi's 14 districts. The Gender Equality Council within the municipality of Batumi is responsible for promoting gender equality and integrating gender considerations across the municipality's policies. The government engages the local population in the local governance process, through the Civilian Advisory Council, which provides opinions on draft legal acts, workplans, and agendas of the City Council and submits policy solutions to problems identified in the municipality.

Areas with potential for further development include establishing a local-level coordination mechanism on migration issues, developing a local migration strategy in Batumi in coordination with the government of Adjara A/R and the National Government, providing specific and relevant information for migrants through a centralized website and in languages accessible to migrants, and regularly collecting local-level migration data.

Partnerships

Batumi is a member of international networks that promote the exchange of information and best practices on topics related to sustainable growth, local governance and the promotion of human rights. For example, in 2018, Batumi joined the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), an initiative that promotes training, capacity development and knowledge-exchange activities related to the development of local spaces to further future resilience. The municipality of Batumi actively cooperates on migration issues with United Nations agencies, such as IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The following areas with potential for development were identified: formally engaging with civil society, the private sector and members of the diaspora in policy agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related programmes; establishing cooperation programmes with other cities in Georgia to address issues related to international migration; and participating in networks that support specific knowledge and good practices exchange on migration issues.

Well-being of migrants

Gender equality in the workforce is promoted in the municipality through the Gender Equality Council, which includes measures such as training campaigns for local employers on gender issues and promoting women's access to entrepreneurship opportunities in its 2023–2024 Action Plan (2023). In addition, in 2024, a new working space for start-ups was established in Batumi under the Stimulation of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Development subprogramme. The goal of this business start-up space is to support the establishment of a new entrepreneurial ecosystem in Batumi.

Areas with potential for further development include implementing assessments to monitor the labour market demand and the effects of emigration, creating programmes to attract migrant workers into Batumi's labour market, supporting migrants' access to private-sector employment, supporting international students to integrate into the labour force in line with labour market needs, and promoting the financial inclusion of migrants and their families.

Mobility dimension of crises

The Municipal Policy Planning, Risk Management and Monitoring Division of the Batumi City Hall is responsible for monitoring risk management policies, collecting information and offering assistance to municipal bodies. The municipality transmits information during emergencies through the Georgian Public Broadcasting System and electronic communication media such as alerts issued via mobile phone. In 2011, Batumi joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; and in 2019, the *Batumi Green City Action Plan* (2019) was published, focusing on interventions to promote climate-related resilience.

In 2024, the Municipal Policy Planning, Risk Management and Monitoring Division began developing Batumi's Municipality Safety Passport, a document assessing the risks in the municipality, linked with prevention mechanisms. Batumi's government is part of the Joint Governmental Commission for the Liquidation of Damage Caused by Natural Disasters within the Administrative Borders of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, which is responsible for determining relocation assistance for persons displaced by natural hazards.

The following areas have the potential for further development: including specific gender-responsive measures in the municipality's emergency framework to provide assistance to migrants, developing a disaster risk reduction strategy with provisions for preventing and addressing the displacement impact of disasters, and incorporating human mobility considerations into local climate change and environmental policies.

Safe, orderly and regular migration

Migrants have access to legal advice through the Public Service Hall based in Batumi, run by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, those who have experienced discrimination can submit a report to the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, which is responsible for providing legal remedies. The Batumi Municipal Services Agency staff have participated in training provided by IOM on how to support returning migrants. Returning Georgian migrants can request assistance from the Integration and Reintegration Service within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

Areas with potential for further development include training the local police and local-level public servants in migrants' rights, including cultural sensitivity; establishing local measures to combat the labour exploitation of migrants; and developing a local policy or protocol to respond to cases of disappearance or death in the migration process.

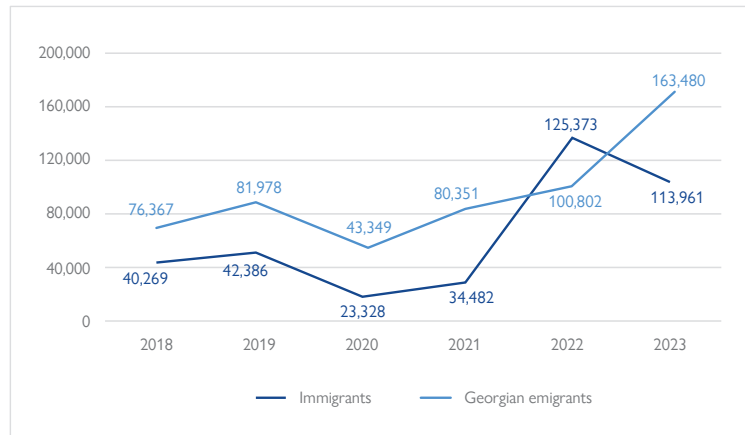


CONTEXT

Migration trends

According to data from the National Statistics Office of Georgia,⁷ the country has seen an increase in immigration flows over the past five years. As illustrated in Figure 1, the number of immigrants rose from 40,269 in 2018 to 113,961 in 2023, accounting for 3.1 per cent of the country’s population. The highest peak occurred in 2022 with 125,373 individuals, marking a 363 per cent increase from the previous year. Similarly, emigration flows have also risen, reaching a record high in 2023 with 163,480 Georgian citizens departing the country, which constitute 4.4 per cent of the national population.

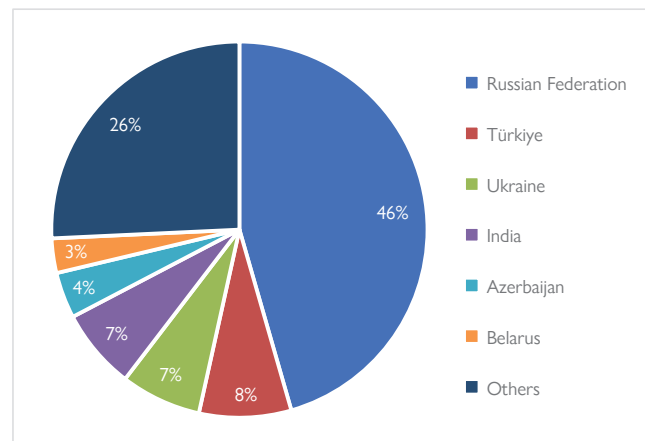
Figure 1. Immigration and emigration flows in Georgia (2018–2023)⁸



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (2018–2023).

In 2023, the main countries of origin of immigrant population flows in Georgia were the Russian Federation (46%), Türkiye (8%), India (7%) and Ukraine (7%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Countries of citizenship of the immigrant populations flows in Georgia in 2023



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (2023).

⁷ The National Statistics Office of Georgia receives migration flow statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, based on border crossings recorded by the Border Police. Entry data do not capture the intended place of stay or settlement, and similarly, exit statistics do not record the place of previous residence.

⁸ Data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Border Police include Georgian citizens under immigration statistics, and non-Georgian citizens under emigration statistics. The graph's immigration figures exclude Georgian citizens from the calculation of the total immigrant count, whereas the emigration figures exclusively represent Georgian citizens.

There is no migration data available for Batumi.⁹ At the regional level, according to the Migration Profile of Georgia 2021 (2022), the majority (76%) of foreign nationals who entered the country in 2019 for labour purposes worked in Adjara and Tbilisi (17%).

Administrative structure

Georgia is split into nine regions and two autonomous republics, one of which is the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. 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.¹⁰ Batumi is the administrative centre of Adjara, and it is defined as a self-governing city comprising 14 districts.¹¹ 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.

Batumi and its constituent districts are the local administration analysed as part of this assessment. It is the second-largest municipality in Georgia by population size, with 183,200 inhabitants as of January 2024, representing 4.9 per cent of the country's population.¹²

Competencies of the city

Level of decentralization of local authorities

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; establishing preschool and extramural educational institutions; developing appropriate infrastructure in local facilities for children, the elderly and less abled persons; and the provision of homeless shelters, among others. 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.

According to the Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2014), the responsibility for migration management and policymaking

⁹ Regionally or municipally disaggregated data are only available through the national census, which is conducted at very long intervals.

¹⁰ See the National Public Registry Agency's [Registry of Municipalities](#).

¹¹ See the Organic Law of Georgia on the Approval of the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (2008).

¹² See the National Statistics Office of Georgia's data on [population by regions and self-governed units](#) (as of 1 January 2024).

The competencies of cities in relation to migration

– particularly 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 – generally falls under the remit of national authorities. Limited powers related to migration management are delegated to local authorities; the Local Self-government Code and the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons do not explicitly grant local authorities the right to develop policy related to non-national populations.

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 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.¹³ These delegated responsibilities also extend to migrants, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria to access such services, such as acquiring Georgian citizenship.

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 relating 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.¹⁴

The 2024 Action Plan for the above-mentioned Migration Strategy 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 awareness-raising workshops with the municipal government staff and the implementation of a number of projects relating to the field of reintegration of return migrants. The responsibility is delegated to the national government agency in charge of the implementation of the State reintegration programme and to partner international organizations.

¹³ See the Local Self-government Code of Georgia (2014).

¹⁴ Visit the State Commission on Migration Issues website to read more on the [migration strategies and action plans](#) of Georgia.

Local financing mechanisms and the restrictions on their use

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.

Batumi's designation as a self-governing city implies that it has the right to collect and use taxes for local programmes. The 2024 Batumi Municipality Budget (2023) provides an overview of expected expenditures and the source of financing by programme area. No transfers from State budget funds are anticipated in the 2024 budget, and municipal costs are borne entirely by the municipality, primarily from sources such as property taxes, licensing fees and permit fees.¹⁵ 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).

The Decentralization Strategy 2020–2025 (2020) 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 responsibilities to local governments.

Local participation in the formulation of migration policy

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 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 Commission's member agencies.

¹⁵ See the Resolution of the Municipal Council on the Approval of the 2024 Budget of the Municipality of Batumi (2023).



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 Batumi have access to Government-funded health services, as governed by national regulations. The Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons (2014) explicitly grants foreign nationals the right to receive health care (Article 30). Furthermore, the Law of Georgia on Health Care (1997) prohibits discrimination based on nationality in health-care institutions. Emergency health-care services are available to all, regardless of documentation or registration status. However, certain health-care services may require a minimum period of registration within the municipality, potentially restricting access for foreign migrants with irregular status.¹⁶ Individuals granted any form of international protection status, temporary or permanent, enjoy the same rights as Georgian citizens regarding access to the Universal Health Care Programme, the country's public health insurance scheme introduced in 2013.

At the local level, access to health-care services is facilitated by the Health and Social Protection Service, a structural unit of the Batumi Municipality City Hall. The municipality's health programmes aim to complement national services, providing additional budgetary support for priority areas such as the diagnosis and prevention of oncological diseases, psychosocial support for persons with mental health issues, provision of medicines and foods for the socially vulnerable, dental and orthopaedic services, community-based mobile clinical services, and assistance for those in need who are not covered elsewhere. However, these programmes are not available to non-citizens of Georgia.

All migrants in Batumi, regardless of their migration status, have access to early childhood (e.g. preschool and kindergarten) as well as primary and secondary education, in accordance with national provisions. The Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education (2015) mandates free, universal preschool education for all children¹⁷ of relevant age (Article 4) and assigns competencies to municipalities to ensure the provision of accessible 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). While primary and secondary education fall under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth at the Central Government level, municipalities have the authority to establish vocational education institutions, as per the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education (2018).

At the local level, the 2024 Batumi Municipality Budget (2023) prioritizes providing universal and inclusive preschool education and services. Measures to facilitate migrants' access to education exist, primarily through national provisions. For instance, in 2022, Batumi public schools introduced a Ukrainian language division to accommodate displaced Ukrainian students, allowing them to continue their education in Georgia following the Ukrainian curriculum, in the Ukrainian language, and under the instruction of teachers of Ukrainian origin. Additionally, two specific schools for Ukrainian students were opened with the same design, funded by the National Government and the government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Adjara A/R). The Adjara Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport also provides subsidized language courses, as well as culture and sport programming, to ensure the integration of all pupils registered in Batumi public schools, regardless of their nationality.

¹⁶ As per Order No. 98 of the Minister of Georgia on the approval of the procedure for registration and deregistration of Georgian citizens and aliens residing in Georgia and the 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.

¹⁷ According to Article 3 of the Law, a child is “a citizen of Georgia, or a citizen of a foreign country, a person having a status of a stateless person in Georgia, from the moment of birth until entrance to the first grade of the primary level of general education as provided for by the Law of Georgia on General Education”.

All children in Georgia – regardless of national origin, ethnicity and race – have the right to equal treatment, respect and regard for their protection needs, in accordance with the Code on the Rights of the Child of Georgia (2019). According to the same Law, the powers of municipal bodies include, among others, the development of child-sensitive social protection measures and municipal programmes to support the protection of children’s rights (Article 96). The 2024 Batumi Municipality Budget identifies priority areas related to children, primarily focused on the provision of social protection for children and socially vulnerable families. This includes elements such as monthly material benefits, cash benefits, and subsidized services like telephone and public transport. As with other municipal programmes, these social protection programmes are generally available only to Georgian citizens registered in the municipality.

The local government has also allocated specific funds in the 2024 Batumi Municipality Budget for the creation of a municipal housing fund and a support fund for the reconstruction of common housing. These funds are accessible to residents of Batumi with Georgian citizenship, as well as returning migrants and emigrants who do not already own property in Batumi.

1.2. Areas with potential for further development

Expanding local health programmes to include migrant populations presents a potential area for development. Currently, access to municipal health programmes is limited to Georgian citizens due to regulations of Adjara A/R. Access to services in the municipality is restricted to those with residential registration.¹⁸ Regarding competencies, Article 16 of the Local Self-government Code (2014) allows municipalities to implement activities on their own initiative to solve any issue that, under Georgian legislation, does not fall within the powers of any other public authority and is not prohibited by law. This includes activities within the health-care domain. The Health and Social Protection Service of the municipality of Batumi is responsible for developing new health and social protection programmes, which are then approved by the City Council.

The establishment of local mechanisms to provide migrants with legal services/advice represents another potential area for development. The Law of Georgia on Legal Aid (2007) states 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). Article 2 further specifies that legal aid beneficiaries may include stateless persons and foreign citizens, in addition to Georgian citizens. To qualify for State-provided legal aid, individuals – excluding asylum-seekers and those requesting international protection – must demonstrate an inability to afford legal services (Article 5). The Ministry of Justice offers legal aid through the Legal Aid Service, which has an office in Batumi.¹⁹

Over the past years, there have been no information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at combating xenophobia and exclusion, or at promoting acceptance towards migrants and social cohesion. Nevertheless, the 2024 Batumi Municipality Budget includes funding for programmes to promote cultural diversity, which can contribute to the promotion of social inclusion. For instance, the budget includes funding for cultural events initiated by selected ethnic minority groups. At the national level, the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (2014) recognizes the need to address discrimination based on citizenship, social status, and national, ethnic or social origin.

Providing assistance to individuals who wish to emigrate is another area with potential for further development, as existing services are offered by international organizations. For example, IOM provides pre-migration information and counselling through the Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) located in

¹⁸ For example, to utilize a municipal service offered in the 2024 programmes, individuals must be registered (have a registered address) by 1 January 2024.

¹⁹ Visit the [Legal Aid Service](#) website to know more.

four cities in Georgia, including Batumi.²⁰ The MRCs offer individualized consultations to prospective migrants, covering topics such as regular migration opportunities within and beyond the European Union; the risks associated with irregular migration, including trafficking and labour exploitation; and the documentation and processes for safe and regular migration.²¹

Additionally, designing specific local programmes to ensure the protection of migrant children in the municipality of Batumi is another opportunity for development. Within the Batumi City Hall, there are bodies²² and mechanisms that address children's well-being. The municipality of Batumi has different competencies when it comes to child protection, but they do not specifically target migrant children.

²⁰ The MRCs were initially created and operated within the European Union-supported project [Reinforcing the Capacities of the Government of Georgia in Border and Migration Management](#), which ran from 2013 to 2017 and had the objective to improve State capacities to reduce irregular migration and prevent cross-border crime and trafficking in human beings.

²¹ For more information, visit IOM Georgia's [Migrant Resource Centres](#) page.

²² Examples are the Health and Social Affairs Commission and the Education, Culture, Tourism and Sports Commission.



2

FORMULATE POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

2.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Municipal Services Agency is the local office responsible for providing information on services available for all residents, including migrants, through its representation office in each of Batumi's 14 districts. The Agency provides information and advice on access to municipal and national services, as well as available social and support programmes. In 2023, the municipality collaborated with IOM on a pilot project to train the staff of two districts of the Batumi Municipal Services Agency in how to advise returning migrants about specific services and resources available to them. The long-term goal of this collaboration is to enable all 14 service centres of the Municipal Services Agency to operate as one-stop shops for migrants, offering advice and information on State and local services.

Batumi has a dedicated coordination mechanism in place to foster gender equality and diversity: the Gender Equality Council, established in 2018. Its mandate is to integrate gender considerations into the municipality's policies. This includes monitoring and evaluating gender equality within the municipality, proposing measures to eliminate discrimination, coordinating actions between municipal actors and ensuring women's participation in decision-making processes. The Council's membership comprises City Council officials (including the Mayor) and representatives of local organizations working on gender issues.

The government engages the local population in the local governance process through the Civilian Advisory Council. This is a 19-person department in Batumi with a mandate to ensure the participation of members of the public in local governance. The Council's members include two representatives of the private sector, two representatives of non-governmental organizations and two members of media organizations, with the remaining members coming from City Hall staff across the districts of Batumi. The Council's remit includes reviewing and providing opinions on draft legal acts, workplans and agendas of the City Council, as well as submitting proposed policy solutions to problems identified in the municipality.

There are a number of diaspora organizations operating in Batumi and the wider region of Adjara, such as the Ukrainian diaspora organization Edinstv, the Georgian Azerbaijani Charity Organisation and the Georgian–Turkish Adjara Society Friendship. In principle, diaspora individuals or organizations could be included in the Civilian Advisory Council, as the regulations of the body do not exclude them. However, as of the drafting of this report, they do not participate. Nevertheless, the municipality engages with diaspora organizations through the Friendship House. The municipality has a structural unit in City Hall that maintains relationships with ethnic minorities and collaborates with the Friendship House.

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

Establishing a local-level coordination mechanism on migration issues is an area for further development. The municipality does not engage with the State Commission on Migration Issues – a national-level consultative body for migration-related matters. Nonetheless, members of the municipal government are part of a coordination mechanism specific to displacement: the Joint Governmental Commission for the Liquidation of Damage Caused by Natural Disasters within the Administrative Borders of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.²³ The Joint Governmental Commission includes members of municipal governments and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Defence of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

²³ This Commission is responsible for assessing damages to housing caused by natural disasters and determining the eligibility of affected households for material and financial assistance.

The municipality does not have a migration strategy defined in a programmatic document, and no other sectoral strategies developed by the municipality specifically address migrant populations. Migrants may be incidentally referred to in sectoral strategies, plans or policies at the municipal level, but there is no body overseeing their inclusion. The development of sectoral strategies, plans and policies is conducted by municipal departments in conjunction with relevant national-level bodies, but they do not explicitly have a mandate for migration issues or see migrant populations as target groups for programming. Consequently, having a department responsible for designing and implementing migration policies and programmes, in coordination with Adjara government and national-level profile agencies, is a subject for further development.

At the national level, the Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030 (2020)²⁴ 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 processes. The Strategy notes that municipal authorities can play a stronger role in the development of tailored and targeted interventions at the local level.

While the Municipal Services Agency provides orientation services through its representation offices, it does not have a centralized repository or website that provides information regarding migrants' rights, obligations and access to local public services. A comprehensive list of services and programmes available at different governance levels would enable municipal actors to more effectively refer individuals to the appropriate department or programme. Providing specific and relevant information for migrants, therefore, has significant potential for further 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 (last conducted in 2014). Data on the distribution of internally displaced persons are available at the local level, based on data collated and published by the National Statistics Office of Georgia and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. Since the municipality provides various services to the population, such as through the Municipal Services Agency, another area that could be developed is the regular collection of migration data by the local government (e.g. migrants' profiles, including sex, age, nationality and skills).

²⁴ The Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030 (2020) has the broad goal of reducing the negative consequences of migration while enhancing its positive impacts, which should be met through seven sectoral priorities: (a) enhancement of migration management, (b) facilitation of legal migration, (c) fight against illegal migration, (d) reintegration of return migrants, (e) engagement of diaspora in the country's development, (f) development of the asylum system and (g) integration of foreign nationals.

3

ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

3.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Batumi is a member of international networks that promote the exchange of information and best practices on topics related to sustainable growth, local governance, and the promotion of children's rights and human rights. In 2018, Batumi joined Shelter City,²⁵ a forum for cities, organizations and individuals to offer protection and support to human rights advocates at risk. Through this initiative, Batumi offers a safe haven to human rights defenders from Central Asia, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In 2018, Batumi joined the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), a joint initiative of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. The M4EG promotes training, capacity development and knowledge-exchange activities related to the development of local spaces to further future resilience. The municipality is also a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an initiative launched in 2011 to strengthen public participation in local governance, reducing corruption, promoting e-governance and increasing the transparency of policymaking processes.

Batumi joined OGP in 2017 to ensure the establishment of an effective mechanism for informing and engaging the public regarding the budgeting process at the local level, which was fully consistent with OGP's principles on transparency, accountability and civic engagement. Finally, in 2023, Batumi became a candidate city for the United Nations Children's Fund Child Friendly Cities Initiative, which supports municipal government efforts to increase the protection of children's rights, using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as its guiding framework.

The municipality of Batumi actively cooperates on migration issues with United Nations agencies, such as IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the large-scale displacement of Ukrainians into Batumi, the municipality collaborated with UNHCR to offer orientation and support services for Ukrainians. In June 2023, the municipality of Batumi and UNHCR signed a two-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) emphasizing the municipality's commitment to making the city a more inclusive environment for refugee integration. The MoU has two specific aims: to raise public awareness about refugees through events such as World Refugee Day and to promote refugee integration in Batumi through local initiatives that encourage interactions between refugees and other members of the local community. For example, the MoU considers the opening of an Integration Centre for Refugees. In parallel, in June 2023, Batumi has launched a pilot project through which staff members of the Batumi Municipal Services Agency will be trained by IOM on how to advise returning migrants on specific services and resources that may be available to them. This pilot project is the follow-up of a two-day workshop offered in 21–22 June 2023 in which IOM introduced its referral guide for return migrants to staff of the Municipal Services Agency service centres.²⁶

3.2. Areas with potential for further development

Formally engaging with civil society, the private sector and members of the diaspora in agenda-setting and the implementation of migration-related programmes is an area with potential for further development. The Civilian Advisory Council includes representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations; however, as of July 2024, the Council has not discussed migration-related policies.

²⁵ Shelter City is a network launched by Justice and Peace Netherlands in 2012.

²⁶ IOM, 2023.

The establishment of bilateral city-to-city cooperation programmes within Georgia focusing on issues related to international migration is another area that could be developed. The National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) acts as mediator between national and local authorities and promotes regular discussions between cities and municipalities on specific policy areas. NALAG was created in 2004 within the framework of a Council of Europe and European Commission joint initiative, and its membership includes municipal authorities such as Batumi. Through NALAG, Batumi has engaged in discussions on a gender equality policy and the promotion of independent living of persons with disabilities, but there have not been any activities specifically related to migration.

Finally, the municipality's participation in networks that support specific knowledge and good practices exchange on migration issues, including those related to supporting the implementation of international commitments, could be further developed.²⁷ Batumi is a member of networks/initiatives, but they are not explicitly focused on migration issues.

²⁷ Examples of networks can be found on the [Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments](#) website.



4

ADVANCE THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

4.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Gender equality in the workforce is promoted in the municipality through the Gender Equality Council. The 2023–2024 Action Plan of the Gender Equality Council (2023) has several objectives that relate to increasing gender equity in employment, including through information and training campaigns for local employers on gender issues, conducting research on women’s inclusion and the barriers to inclusion, and promoting women’s access to entrepreneurship opportunities. However, it makes no specific reference to migrants in this regard.

In 2024, a new workspace was established in Batumi under the Stimulation of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Development subprogramme. This space is available for start-ups from both Batumi and other localities, who can reserve it for their use. The purpose of this workspace is to foster a new ecosystem in Batumi and the development of entrepreneurs. Between 2019 and 2020, Batumi hosted three entrepreneurship festivals focusing on specific products and demographics (such as female entrepreneurs) and led training seminars and business consultation services for all local residents. The Budget of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (2024) establishes that “promoting entrepreneurship, including through training courses for aspiring entrepreneurs” is a key intervention area.

The municipality has increased its focus on entrepreneurship support since 2022, following Batumi’s selection by the Mayors for Economic Growth Initiative²⁸ to develop an urban transformation portfolio. This portfolio is designed to foster economic diversification in Batumi, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of start-up enterprises in the city. A key objective of the portfolio is to retain skilled young people within local start-ups and to attract external young talent into local enterprises.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development

The responsibility for conducting labour market assessments lies with the Labour Market Analysis Division of the Department of Economic Policy, along with the Labour Market Information System (LMIS),²⁹ both of which fall under the remit of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development at the national level. The LMIS provides information on labour market trends, including information on employment, unemployment, and immigrant and emigrant flows. However, 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 a 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.

The municipality has taken some steps in this regard by including data in the Local Economic Development Plan 2019–2020 (2018) on skills shortages and supply/demand mismatches derived from a 2016 survey conducted by the Young Scientists Union “Intellect”. These data were used to establish the need for changes in local educational offerings and to support the development of in-demand professional competencies. Consequently, conducting similar assessments to monitor the labour demand and the effects of emigration

²⁸ For more information, see: Tkeshelashvili et al., n.d.

²⁹ 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.

on the local labour market, as well as integrating labour market needs into national and regional regulations, presents significant potential for development.

The Local Economic Development Plan aimed to increase international awareness about investment opportunities in the city. This goal was pursued through public awareness campaigns, including television advertisements, exhibitions and a promotional film. The primary objective was to attract investors, which could lead to the development of local enterprises. These activities have the potential to be further developed, to attract migrant workers and support their integration in the labour market. Local employers seeking to recruit qualified personnel can utilize the services provided by the State Employment Support Agency (SESA) at the national level. SESA facilitates the matching of potential employers with jobseekers registered on the Worknet portal.³⁰ On the level of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Adjara A/R), the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara is responsible for implementing employment promotion programmes, organizing professional training for jobseekers, maintaining a database of employers and vacancies, and conducting systematic studies of the labour market. The Employment Agency's office in Batumi supports the local population, connecting them to regional and local employers. However, its services are limited to Georgian citizens with a valid national ID and registered residence in the municipality. Therefore, there is an opportunity to coordinate with the government of Adjara A/R to expand existing initiatives or to create new local programmes to support migrants' access to private-sector employment.

Implementing measures to facilitate the employment of international students, in alignment with local labour market needs, is another area that Batumi could further develop. While universities such as the Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and BAU International University Batumi have medical faculties that attract international students, neither has information on its website about postgraduation opportunities for international students to work in Georgia, although both offer career advice services to students. At the national level, the 2022–2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science (2022) identifies the need to incorporate international students in the local labour market more effectively to expand local innovation in research and development, but it does not establish any specific programme to fulfil this goal.

Offering training or educational programmes to promote the financial inclusion of migrants and their families is another area with potential for further development. The Local Economic Development Plan briefly addresses financial inclusion in its contextual chapter but does not establish specific actions or initiatives in this regard. However, remittance receivers can access the municipality's programme Cheap House, which provides housing at lower prices. Residents of Batumi with proof of stable income from employment or remittances can apply to the programme. In addition, migrants have had access to services provided by private actors. For example, in 2023, Credo Bank³¹ opened a Banking Service Centre in Batumi for foreign citizens and Georgian migrants abroad as clients, which provides advice on products tailored to the needs of the migrant population, such as multicurrency current bank accounts and online banking remittance services. Similarly, in 2022, the microfinance organization Crystal launched a suite of products targeted at Ukrainians displaced to Georgia, which included a start-up loan for aspiring entrepreneurs, a financial mechanism for Ukrainian entrepreneurs to purchase equipment or machinery, and counselling and mentoring services specifically for female entrepreneurs. MFO Crystal also provides remittances-backed loans to Georgian migrant workers and their household members back in Georgia for starting rural businesses and agribusinesses in the country.

³⁰ Employment services are accessible to Georgian citizens; foreigners with residence cards; foreigners with humanitarian, refugee or asylum-seeker status; and stateless persons. More information is available in this 2013 article on how [Georgia is responding to unemployment through the Worknet portal](#), from Agenda.ge.

³¹ This is a commercial bank focused on providing financial services to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs.



5

EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

5.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

At the national level, disaster preparedness and response falls under the mandate of the National Crisis Management Centre, a department within the National Security Council, responsible for the development, coordination and oversight of national strategies. The national legal framework for disaster risk reduction and management comprises four main documents: the Constitution of Georgia (1995),³² the Law of Georgia on Planning and Coordination of the National Security Policy (2015),³³ the Law of Georgia on Public Safety (2018)³⁴ and the Law of Georgia on State of Emergency (1997).³⁵ According to the Law on Public Safety, the Emergency Management Service, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the authority responsible for emergency prevention, response and recovery operations. The Emergency Management Service has its own branch in the municipality of Batumi.

The Law on Public Safety stipulates that local authorities may be delegated responsibilities by the Government of Georgia for tasks related to the identification and management of and recovery from risks and emergencies (Article 5). For instance, municipalities may be tasked with identifying hazards, analysing the risks of emergency situations and formulating risk management plans.

In 2024, the Batumi City Hall started working on the municipality security passport in accordance with the regulation on the development of the municipality security passport, approved by Resolution No. 48 of the Government of Georgia on 4 February 2021. The process is coordinated by the Municipal Policy Planning, Risk Management and Monitoring Division of the Batumi City Hall.³⁶ The municipality security passport is a predeveloped document designed to plan for the degree of risk associated with emergency situations, predict potential results, evaluate preventive actions carried out by municipal bodies, and develop and implement measures to reduce risks. The municipality, in coordination with the State subdepartmental institution under the governance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia – the Emergency Situations Management Service – is responsible for completing the security passport. The document is then approved by the Mayor of the municipality.

The municipality of Batumi has communications systems in place to transmit information during emergencies through the Georgian Public Broadcasting System,³⁷ 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. In the event 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 and rescue services, and ambulance dispatch. Since 2015, the services have been contactable via mobile/fixed-line telephones or SMS and video-calling. These communications systems provide information

³² The Constitution establishes that the Government of Georgia may take emergency measures to protect the population in cases of natural or human-induced disasters.

³³ The Law on Planning and Coordination of the National Security Policy defines areas of national security policy, the authority of agencies that coordinate related policy-planning processes and the processes of planning/coordinating national security policy.

³⁴ The Law on Public Safety defines the powers and mandates of different public authorities, including municipalities, related to public safety, and it describes the procedures for establishing a unified emergency management system.

³⁵ The Law on State of Emergency provides guidance on how a state of emergency should be declared and describes the transfer of powers during emergencies.

³⁶ The Division's main field of activity is the development of sectoral or strategic development documents of the city, analysis of programme risks, and monitoring.

³⁷ The System operates with public financing but is a legal entity under public law.

in several languages. Specifically, the emergency dispatch service of the State Public Safety Command Centre is prepared to handle calls in multiple languages, such as Armenian, Azerbaijani, English, Russian and Turkish.³⁸

There is a coordination mechanism to manage population relocation and assistance during local emergencies. The State Interagency Coordinating Council, based in Adjara, is the agency responsible for coordinating all actions during emergencies. Its members include representatives from both national and local levels. Additionally, at the national level, there is a network of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations working on disaster management and response. Many of these organizations have supported populations during times of displacement and have also contributed to COVID-19 response efforts, often working directly with municipalities.

The Local Self-government Code (2014) stipulates that municipalities have the competence to promote environmental protection. Within that mandate, in 2011, the municipality of Batumi joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy,³⁹ an international network of cities interested in taking voluntary actions to reduce emissions and address climate change mitigation targets. In addition, the local government has developed plans to promote climate-related resilience and reduce environment-related hazards. The *Batumi Green City Action Plan* (2019) focuses on interventions to promote climate-related resilience, such as increasing energy efficiency and reducing pollution – for instance, by increasing the resilience of electricity networks and promoting sustainable private and public mobility options. The 2024–2027 Medium-term Priorities of the Municipality of Batumi (2023) further commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating hazards to natural environments.

Persons displaced by natural disasters may receive housing support in Batumi, under Resolution No. 14 of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (2016). According to the resolution, persons who originally resided in a location affected by a natural disaster may relocate temporarily or permanently to another location or may seek assistance in the repair of damaged housing. In addition, the local government cooperates on displacement-related issues with the government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara through the Joint Governmental Commission for the Liquidation of Damage Caused by Natural Disasters within the Administrative Borders of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. The Commission is responsible for determining relocation assistance for persons displaced by natural hazards, which are referred to as “eco-migrants”.

5.2. Areas with potential for further development

The municipality follows the national legal framework for disaster risk reduction and management, as the local emergency framework is being developed. While emergency responses take into account key vulnerable groups, regardless of their migration status, the development of the local emergency framework represents an opportunity to ensure that specific measures to provide assistance to migrants are included (e.g. information and assistance provided in various languages) and that such measures are gender-responsive. In addition, the municipality does not have a disaster risk reduction strategy with provisions for preventing and addressing the displacement impact of disasters, this being another area for development.

The municipality has taken steps to promote environmental protection through the *Batumi Green City Action Plan* and the 2024–2027 Medium-term Priorities of the Municipality of Batumi. Nevertheless, none of these plans reflect how issues like climate change and slow/rapid-onset disasters may correspond to population movements, which could in turn inform measures to accommodate the needs of displaced populations at the local level.

³⁸ Visit the 112 Public Safety Command Centre's [frequently asked questions page](#) to know more.

³⁹ More information is available on the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy website](#).



6

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

6.1. Migration governance: examples of well-developed areas

Migrants in Batumi have access to legal advice through the Public Service Hall. The Law of Georgia on Legal Aid (2007) specifies that everyone 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 Georgia (Article 2). According to the Statute of the Public Law Legal Entity – Public Service Hall (2015), Public Service Halls are one-stop shops run by the Ministry of Justice, offering public services such as civil registration, public archives, notary services and justice enforcement services. Migrants may use the services at the Public Service Hall, and staff are generally able to provide information in English, Georgian and Russian. In addition, at the national level, the Public Defender's Office of Georgia is responsible for providing legal remedies for those who have experienced discrimination.⁴⁰

All the staff of the Batumi Municipal Services Agency have participated in training provided by IOM in how to support returning migrants. For example, 42 persons participated in four rounds of training workshops in June and September 2023. IOM introduced the referral guide for the reintegration of return migrants, which consolidates information about public and non-State services and programmes available in Georgia. As a follow-up to these workshops, in May 2024, staff from two districts of the Municipal Services Agency were trained by IOM in how to advise returning migrants in a more detailed and consistent manner. The selected staff also participated in the Service Hubs' networking event, organized on 23 July 2024. The ultimate goal is the establishment of the Service Hub functions at all the district service centres of the Batumi Municipal Services Agency.

Returning Georgian migrants can request assistance from the Agency of Internally Displaced Persons, Eco-Migrants and Livelihoods Provision, under the auspices of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Health, Labour and Social Affairs. The services focus on returnees in vulnerable situations (e.g. irregular migrants, asylum-seekers and international protection status holders) and include funding health-care services/medication, temporary accommodation, support to access to vocational education, funding for livelihood projects, one-off financial assistance and funding of sports/creative courses for returnee children.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

Training the police and local-level public servants in migrants' rights, including cultural sensitivity, is an area with potential for development. While the Georgian Police Code of Ethics (2013) does not explicitly address issues such as preventing discriminatory treatment or ensuring fair and equitable treatment for migrants, it does mention that a police officer should take into consideration the interests of those persons who require special treatment, such as juveniles, women, minorities and vulnerable persons (Article 6.1). At the national level, between 2020 and 2022, staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in various trainings under the Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Armenia and Georgia (EMERGE) project. Participants included staff from the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Patrol Police Department and Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department, among others. The courses covered different topics, such as English language, international migration law and intercultural communication.

⁴⁰ See more information about how to report discrimination complaints on the [Public Defender's Office of Georgia](#) website.

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for leading the national policy response to anti-trafficking and chairing the Interagency Coordinating Council for the Implementation of Measures against Human Trafficking. The Council, established in 2006, 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 victims. However, local self-government representatives do not sit on the Coordinating Council.⁴¹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a mandate to investigate trafficking in human beings, which it does through the specialized Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration Unit within the Central Criminal Police Department. The National Statistics Office of Georgia publishes data on the number of cases of human trafficking on its website, but the data source is not disaggregated by region or municipality.

Under the Law 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, which has a regional office in Batumi, has implemented actions to combat labour exploitation for the general population. For example, in 2019, it conducted public awareness training that covered information on forced labour, labour exploitation and labour trafficking. Building on these actions, specific local measures to combat the labour exploitation of migrants could be developed to complement existing mechanisms. These could include educational programmes and awareness campaigns for migrant workers on their labour rights and how to report situations of exploitation, among other initiatives.

Finally, another opportunity for development is having a local policy, protocol or guideline to respond to cases of disappearance or death that occur in the process of migration. The Central Criminal Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for investigating cases involving missing persons, but there is no information available on its website about how to declare a missing person, including cases of disappearance during migration.

⁴¹ 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).



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](#).

After the MGI assessment

IOM would like to thank the local authorities of the municipality of Batumi (Georgia) 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).



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



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



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



KEY SOURCES*

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

AECOM Limited and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

2019 *Batumi Green City Action Plan.*

Agenda.ge

2013 [Worknet.gov.ge](https://worknet.gov.ge) – Georgia responds to unemployment. 25 December.

Batumi City Council

2018a [Local Economic Development Plan 2019–2020.](#)

2018b [Resolution No. 77 of the Batumi City Council on the Establishment of the Municipal Gender Equality Council of the City of Batumi and the Approval of its Regulations.](#)

2022a [Resolution No. 2 on the Approval of the Regulations of the Financial and Economic Development Commission.](#)

2022b [Resolution No. 4 on the Approval of the Regulations of the Health and Social Affairs Commission.](#)

2023a [On the Approval of the 2023–2024 Action Plan of the Municipal Gender Equality Council of the City of Batumi.](#)

2023b [Resolution of the Municipal Council on the Approval of the 2024 Budget of the Municipality of Batumi.](#)

2023c [2024–2027 Medium-term Priorities of the Municipality of Batumi.](#)

n.d. [Regulation of the Advisory Body – Civilian Advisory Council under the Batumi City Council.](#)

Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara

2011 [Resolution No. 43 on the creation and approval of the regulations of the legal entity under public law – the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.](#)

2014 [Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara No. 2/N on the approval of the regulations of the structural units of the legal entity under public law – the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.](#)

2016 [Resolution No. 14 on the procedure for the work of the Joint Governmental Commission for the Liquidation of Damage Caused by Natural Disasters within the administrative borders of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and on the differentiation of families affected by natural disasters within the administrative borders of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, criteria for assistance and the procedure for the elimination of damage.](#)

2024 [Budget of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.](#)

Government of Georgia

1995 [Constitution of Georgia.](#)

1997a [Law of Georgia on Health Care.](#)

1997b [Law of Georgia on State of Emergency.](#)

2005 [Law of Georgia on General Education \(last updated in 2017\).](#)

2006a [Law of Georgia on Violence against Women and/or Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Violence.](#)

2006b [Law of Georgia on Social Assistance \(consolidated version\).](#)

2007 [Law of Georgia on Legal Aid.](#)

2008 [Organic Law of Georgia on the Approval of the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.](#)

2010a [Labour Code of Georgia.](#)

2010b [Law of Georgia on Gender Equality.](#)

2011 [Order No. 98 of the Minister of Georgia on the approval of the procedure for registration and deregistration of Georgian citizens and aliens residing in Georgia and the issuance of identity \(residence\) cards, passports, travel passports and travel documents.](#)

2013 [Georgian Police Code of Ethics.](#)

2014a [Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination.](#)

2014b [Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons.](#)

2014c [Local Self-government Code of Georgia.](#)

2014d [Budget Code of Georgia.](#)

2015a [Law of Georgia on Labour Migration.](#)

2015b [Law of Georgia on Planning and Coordination of the National Security Policy.](#)

2015c [Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education.](#)

2015d [Statute of the Public Law Legal Entity – Public Service Hall.](#)

-
- 2017a [Constitutional Law of Georgia on the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.](#)
- 2017b [National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Georgia 2017–2020.](#)
- 2018a [Law of Georgia on Vocational Education.](#)
- 2018b [Law of Georgia on Public Safety.](#)
- 2019 [Code on the Rights of the Child of Georgia.](#)
- 2020a [Law on the Labour Inspection Service.](#)
- 2020b [Resolution No. 58 on the approval of the regulations of the legal entity under public law – the State Care and Assistance Agency for Victims of Trafficking.](#)
- 2021 [Resolution No. 48 of the Government of Georgia on 4 February 2021. Not available online.](#)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- 2023 [IOM Georgia organized workshop for Batumi Municipal Services Agency staff. 27 June.](#)
- Ministry of Education and Science
- 2022 [2022–2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia. Not available online.](#)
- 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 \(updated in 2017\).](#)
- 2019 [National Strategy 2019–2023 for Labour and Employment Policy of Georgia. Not available online.](#)
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
- 2020 [Decentralization Strategy 2020–2025.](#)
- National Statistics Office
- 2019 [National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia 2020–2023. Tbilisi.](#)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- 2020 [State Universal Healthcare Programme in Georgia.](#)
- State Commission on Migration Issues
- 2020 [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030.](#)
- 2021 [Action Plan of the 2021–2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia.](#)
- 2022a [Migration Profile of Georgia 2021. Not available online.](#)
- 2022b [Action Plan of the 2021–2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia.](#)
- 2023 [Action Plan of the 2021–2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia.](#)
- 2024 [Action Plan of the 2021–2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia.](#)
- Tkeshelashvili, T., I.E. Karel and I. Izotov
- n.d. [Reimagining Batumi through a startup portfolio of options. Mayors for Economic Growth.](#)



www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi

#migrationgovernance

 @IOM

 @UNmigration

 @UNmigration

 MGI@iom.int