



CEC

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
OF GEORGIA

**GENDER EQUALITY
POLICY OF THE
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
OF GEORGIA**

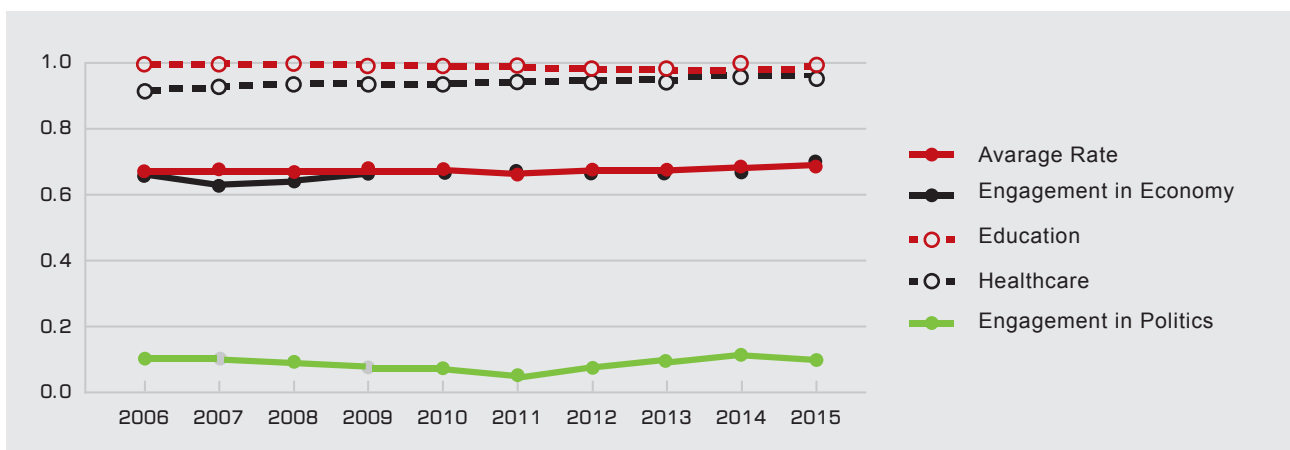
INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Election Administration (EA) of Georgia is to contribute to the building and strengthening of a democratic society in Georgia through the conduct of free, fair, credible and transparent elections. The EA is responsible for running an election with integrity and in which its participants are confident in the process. This can only be a reality when all Georgians – women and men – have equal opportunities to engage in the electoral process as voters, election officials and administrators, members of civil society, political unions and candidates.

The Gender Equality Policy of the EA outlines the administration’s guiding principles, commitments and objectives that promote gender equality in voter participation, for candidates as well as within the EA’s organizational structure.

The EA recognizes gender inequality in political participation as a serious challenge to Georgia’s democracy and long term development. The EA has been actively engaged in addressing gender inequality in the electoral process. In 2011, the Central Election Commission established the Standing Commission on Gender Equality (currently Gender Equality Council), which is responsible for creating and implementing the Gender Equality Policy of the EA.

This policy represents the EA’s commitment to a holistic, process-based approach, which places strategic importance on the equal participation of women and men in the electoral process. Within its authority the CEC is committed to ensuring gender equality and promoting and delivering an electoral process in which equal participation of men and women is guaranteed.



Source: World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2015;
<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015>

The EA is in a unique position as the body responsible for overseeing the administration of elections to play a leadership role in creating the conditions necessary for the equal participation of women and men in electoral process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & COMMITMENTS OF THE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The EA adheres to the equality of men and women and commits that all policies and institutional activities shall be in line with this principle respecting Article 14 of the Constitution of Georgia, which states that “everyone is free by birth and is equal regardless race, color, language, sex, religion, political and other opinions, national, ethnic and social belonging, origin, property and title and place of residence.”

In pursuing the goal and objectives of this Gender Equality Policy, the CEC recognizes and is guided by the following fundamental principles:

- The equal participation of women and men is a fundamental human right as articulated in, and guaranteed by Article 14 of the Georgian Constitution and the Georgian Law on Gender Equality, as well as by the key international conventions and agreements that Georgia is party to, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)¹
- Promoting equal participation of women and men is an important prerequisite for the delivery of free, fair and transparent elections and building a democratic Georgian society;
- Gender roles and stereotypes have negative impact on equal participation of women and men in electoral and other democratic processes;
- Equal distribution of power between women and men is key to equitable access to resources required for equal participation in electoral processes;
- Aspiring to achieve gender balance in decision-making process is highly important for ensuring the quality and outcome of democratic governance;
- Promoting women’s empowerment is integral to the EA’s efforts for ensuring all Georgian citizens to have equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process as outlined in Pillar 3, Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan of the Election Administration which states: “Supporting development of an environment with greater gender equality”;

1 See Annex for list of related international and national laws and documents

- Efforts need to be taken by the EA to prevent and eliminate behavior and actions that may negatively affect women's participation as voters, candidates and election officials;
- The EA, within its authority and in accordance with its organizational capacities, commits to integrating gender aspects in all its organizational policies and practices;
- Promoting gender equality is a shared responsibility of all electoral stakeholders. As an important electoral stakeholder, the EA, within its competences, supports gender equality and performs the policy prescribed by this document;
- Non-partisan partnerships with all stakeholders, including other government entities, political unions and civil society, are integral to achieving the goal of this policy.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The CEC effectively utilizes its human, financial and other resources to achieve the equal participation of women and men in all aspects of the electoral process.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen the EA's organizational capacity to address gender inequality and promote the empowerment of women in the electoral process;
2. Establish institutional practices and policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace;
3. Develop programming to engage external stakeholders to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women all aspects of the electoral process;

OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN THE EA'S ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY AND PROMOTE THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

The CEC will employ several strategies to increase its internal capacity to ensure gender equality and increase the EA's ability to effectively address issues that currently challenge the equal participation and representation of women and men in Georgia's electoral processes.

The EA will pursue the following strategies to achieve this objective:

- 1) Build capacity of EA's Commissioners, senior management, and staff around basic gender concepts, gender analysis and mainstreaming approaches;
- 2) Support women and men at the EA to participate equally in decision-making roles on the basis of their merits and professionalism;
- 3) Support the Gender Equality Council to lead efforts to implement the Gender Equality Policy and supporting programming;
- 4) Develop various tools (e.g. gender audit) to assist male and female staff to maximize the participation of women and men in the electoral process.
- 5) Identify and make available opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing around gender and election matters within the organization.
- 6) Collect and analyze gender disaggregated data.
- 7) Allocate a budget for activities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 8) Integrate gender equality and parity principles when soliciting and evaluating grant proposals.

OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES THAT PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

The EA recognizes that organizational policies, systems and practices play an important role in promoting positive attitudes and approaches toward gender equality. EA promotes creation of a work culture that equally values the contributions of women and men, as well as one in which the pursuit of gender equality is appreciated and understood to be integral to the achievement of the AE's mandate.

The EA will pursue the following strategies to achieve this objective:

- 1) Ensure policies on recruitment prevent gender inequality in EA's staffing.
- 2) Include in the performance assessment process efforts of staff to comply with the EA Gender Equality Policy.
- 3) Ensure performance assessment process is based on gender-neutral criteria.
- 4) Include in staff career development the aspects of gender balance.
- 5) Maintain parity of gender, to the extent possible, in official delegations, working groups or in groups sent on study tours.
- 6) Strengthen the EA's accountability for promoting gender equality through consistent collection of internal sex-disaggregated data; development of gender sensitive indicators; periodic assessments of EA's gender work; evaluation of appropriate funding for implementation and annual reporting on institutional gender initiatives.
- 7) Incorporate gender-sensitivity into human resource policies and practices including those that prevent and discipline sexual harassment in the workplace.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP PROGRAMMING TO ENGAGE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN ALL ASPECTS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

EA recognizes that gender inequalities negatively affect our society, therefore distinct programming to define and analyze women's needs is required. The EA will develop programming to promote gender equality.

The EA will pursue the following strategies to achieve this objective:

- 1) Identify and carry out specific advocacy, training, public awareness campaigns and

outreach, research and other activities to address the social, cultural, political and legal challenges that prevent men and women's equal participation in electoral processes as voters, elected officials and candidates, civil society and election administrators.

- 2) Seek to maximize women's participation in the electoral process through capacity building, civic and voter education and information campaigns.
- 3) Conduct outreach and information campaigns for women with multiple marginalization, such as women with disabilities or women from ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups.
- 4) Analyze gender-disaggregated data, including the voter registration list and voter turnout, to implement evidence-based gender programming.
- 5) Cooperate with political parties to raise awareness about gender equality through round-tables, conferences and other relevant events.
- 6) Regular consultation with civil society, including women's organizations.
- 7) Integrate gender equality considerations in grants competitions and requirements for participation in competition.
- 8) Engage the media (including social media) to promote pluralistic and inclusive media coverage of the electoral process, which takes into account the interests of women voters and remains respectful towards women candidates.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION & REPORTING

Each employee of EA shares responsibility and accountability for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. EA implements the gender equality policy by considering equality issues envisaged by its annual action plan.

Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy will be evaluated based on annual report about the defined goals and objectives.

The CEC Standing Council on Gender Equality will monitor the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Policy of EA.

Accountability for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is the responsibility of everyone at the Election Administration. The EA will implement Gender Equality Policy through the integration of gender equality strategies in the Annual Action Plan.

The EA will review and evaluate the policy and its implementation through annual reporting on the results of the EA goal and objectives.

The Gender Equality Council will be responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of EA's Gender Equality Policy.

Key national instruments on gender equality:

1. The Constitution of Georgia
2. Georgian Law on Gender Equality (adopted on March 26, 2010)
3. Georgian Law on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination (adopted on May 2, 2014)
4. National Action Plan on Activities for Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia (approved by the Parliament of Georgia on January 24, 2014).

Key international instruments:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights²
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)³
3. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)⁴
4. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality Development and Peace, Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)
5. Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council: Women, Peace and Security and National Action Plan⁵

2 <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=term&d=5&t=100>

3 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1398335>

4 <http://www.feminizmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CEDAW-GEO.pdf>

5 <http://www.mod.gov.ge/assets/up-modul/uploads/pdf/gender/gaeros-uSiSroebis-sabWos-1325-da-Tanmdevi-rezoluciebis-ganxorcielebis-erocnuli-samoqmedo-gegma.pdf>