



FAIR AND EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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Mid-term evaluation | April 2020

# Promoting and Monitoring Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of Civil Society Organisations



Project funded by



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## Acronyms

<b>ASB</b>	Arbiter Samariter Bund
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>HRC</b>	Human Rights Centre
<b>MoC</b>	Ministry of Corrections of Georgia
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice of Georgia
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NPM</b>	National Prevention Mechanism
<b>PRI</b>	Penal Reform International
<b>RIVG</b>	Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups

## 1. Introduction

This report details the findings of a mid-term evaluation undertaken in October 2019 of the European Commission-funded project “Promoting and Monitoring Reforms in the Penal Sector through the Engagement of Civil Society Organisations”. The project is being implemented by Penal Reform International’s South Caucasus office in partnership with Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups (RIVG) and The Human Rights Centre (HRC). The project’s goal is to promote engagement of civil society in penitentiary and probation reforms through enhanced advocacy, improved networking, influencing policy making and monitoring of completed and ongoing stages of reforms.

The research for this evaluation was conducted just after halfway through the project’s implementation period and aims to establish what has occurred in the project so far, whether the project’s activities, outputs and outcomes remain relevant, and what changes have been made so far. This mid-term evaluation falls under PRI’s commitment to learning and sharing. PRI aims to ensure that all of PRI works in synergy, is reflective, and uses and builds internal and external expertise. Learning is embedded at every stage of the project cycle to ensure that projects are evidence-based, which in turn, contribute to the pool of knowledge of effective methodologies for doing criminal justice reform.

### 1.1 Background and context

Significant and large-scale reforms to the criminal justice system have taken place in Georgia over the last six years. These have included more openness and transparency and greater involvement of civil society and have resulted in some improved prison conditions, especially for women and children. However, there are still improvements to be made and there remain opportunities for further, more meaningful and formalised involvement of civil society organisations especially in prison monitoring but also oversight of the criminal justice sector.

This project responded to a call for proposals from the EC for actions on Enhanced Engagement of Civil Society in Justice Sector Reforms. With the specific objectives being advocacy, policy dialogue, networking and monitoring and implementation of strategies and action plans. This project was proposed under Lot 2 of the call Penitentiary and Probation (the other Lots were judiciary, juvenile justice, criminal justice, prosecution and investigation). This call for proposals was launched as part of the EU and Georgia’s ongoing Association Agreement signed in 2014 and entering into force on 1 July 2016. The Agreement aimed at “further reforming the justice sector, in particular ensure the independence, efficiency, impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary and the prosecution, as well as of law enforcement agencies which should be free from political or any other undue interference” with specific priorities and goals. PRI’s project therefore complements other projects being implemented on this topic by international organisations and NGOs and consultancy projects. As part of the Agreement, the EU publishes an agenda and action plan outlining how the agreement will be implemented. In addition to these, several more policy documents have been produced through the cooperation between the EU and Georgia and are being implemented by criminal justice agencies including the Criminal Justice Reform Strategy, the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan, Penitentiary reform strategy and action plan; Probation Reform strategy and action plan; Offender rehabilitation strategy and action plan; Penitentiary healthcare strategy and action plan. These documents are subject to annual revisions and updates by respective agencies however CSOs have generally not been substantially involved in this process. There is a lack of targeted and consistent range of activities and commitments, lack of deadlines against which to achieve targets, lack of a budget for activities, lack of evidence-base on the effectiveness of the activities and strategy, lack of risk assessment, and lack of indicators which measure progress towards the goals of each strategy. No evaluation of these strategies has been conducted against relevant international and European standards.

In July 2018, the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia which had been the Ministry tasked with regulating prisons and probation services was dissolved and merged with the Ministry of Justice as

part of cabinet reforms. The merger resulted in a loss of some key focal points at the MoC and other officials being unavailable and unresponsive to the project.

The Penal Reform International's office in the South Caucasus has been focused on improving and strengthening the role and involvement of civil society in Georgia's criminal justice system, including its role in monitoring places of detention and having a role with the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), overseeing reforms, and as a provider of services to people who are serving or who have served sentences.

## 1.2 Project description

The project's overall objective is *Promoting engagement of civil society in the penitentiary and probation reforms through enhanced advocacy, improved networking, influencing policy making and monitoring of completed and ongoing stages of reforms*. Which is to be achieved through the following specific objectives and their respective outputs:

1. To monitor and review progress against sectoral strategies, action plans, legislation, practice and process, in view of European best practices.
  - 1.1. Alternative progress reports produced on the status of reforms, existing challenges and policy recommendations
  - 1.2. Recommendations elaborated on the specific improvements required in actual policy documents
  - 1.3. Sub-granting to third parties to enable thematic monitoring/research
2. To increase the capacity of CSOs and media organizations for policy monitoring and advocacy and create a regional network in the sector.
  - 2.1. Improved monitoring and advocacy capacities of CSOs
  - 2.2. Informative/training workshops arranged for regional media representatives
  - 2.3. Network of CSOs –Georgian Criminal Justice Alliance activated
3. To enhance policy dialogue and advocacy with relevant stakeholders related to penitentiary and probation reforms.
  - 3.1. Enhanced Dialogue process with target state agencies
  - 3.2. Arranged Public discussions on the course of the justice system reform
4. To raise public awareness and outreach on the project themes
  - 4.1. Printed posters, leaflets for direct and indirect beneficiaries
  - 4.2. Producing and airing analytical-documentary film on penitentiary and probation reforms
  - 4.3. Arranged 5 radio broadcasts on the national/regional radio channels
  - 4.4. Prepared 10 (English-Georgian) newspaper inserts
  - 4.5. Created English-Georgian active Blog on penal reforms of Georgia

The project is being implemented in partnership with the Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups and the Human Rights Centre, both Georgian NGOs.

## 2. Evaluation purpose and methodology

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess changes the project has made so far and its progress towards the achievement of the planned outcomes and goal. It also seeks to identify

whether the project design is still appropriate and make recommendations for its adaptation to ensure meaningful and relevant change can be made.

## 2.2 Methodology and data collection

The evaluation draws on elements of process tracing methodology. This methodology is especially suited to evaluating projects such as this which aim at policy change and involve many different actors and processes. The outcomes of these projects are not tangible nor quantitative and it is difficult to attribute cause to a single process or actor. Process tracing involves assessing to what extent the project's outcomes have been achieved, reconstructing the theory of change backwards from the identified outcomes and investigating and ruling out alternative explanations and causes for these achievements.

Data collection for this evaluation was carried out using the following methods:

1. Semi-structured interviews with the following stakeholders:
  - Executive Director of Human Rights Center
  - Representatives from the National Preventive Mechanism
  - Georgian Professional Psychologist's Association
  - IDP Women's Association Consent
  - Institute for Democracy and Safe Development
  - Trainer for advocacy training held for Alliance members
  - Rehabilitation Initiative for Vulnerable Groups (RIVG)
  - Arbitrator Samariter Bund (ASB)
  - A journalist who participated in some project activities
  - PRI's South Caucasus Regional Director and the Programme Manager for this project

Interview questions were adapted for each group of project stakeholders.

- Project management including PRI and partner NGO representatives
- Project participants including CSOs, training participants and journalists
- State actors including NPM/ombudsman representatives

Analysis of the following project documents:

- Concept note, project proposal, logframe and budget submitted to the EC (submitted July 2017)
- Interim report to the EC (submitted May 2019)

Analysis of the following documents produced under the project:

- Blog posts published on PRI's website

## 2.3 Roles, scope and limitations

The evaluation was undertaken by PRI's Strategy and Impact Manager (SIM) alongside an independent evaluator based in Tbilisi. The independent evaluator (IE) conducted all semi-structured interviews with the project's stakeholders based on an interview guide developed by the Strategy and Impact Manager. Both persons worked together to analyse the interview transcripts as well as other project documents for the purposes of deriving findings and conclusions and determining PRI's contribution towards these as well as developing lessons learned and recommendations for the remainder of the project period.

The evaluation took place just after the mid-point of the project and therefore some activities planned under the project had not yet been carried out by that period. These include:

Outcome 1

- The second year of prison monitoring visits
- Second training workshops for detention monitors
- Five remaining sub-grants to CSOs for conduct thematic research

Outcome 2

- Seven of the 12 planned thematic trainings for media and NGO representatives in regions

#### Outcome 3

- Two out of four planned roundtable meetings with the involvement of government and the Alliance
- Three out of five planned public discussions involving government representatives, Ombudsman's Office, CSOs, students and other interested parties.

#### Outcome 4

- Production of documentary movie on penal system reforms
- Airing of five radio broadcasts
- Issuing 10 newspaper inserts about project themes
- 15 blogs on penal and probation system reforms
- 1,500 information brochures on the project for direct and indirect beneficiaries

The selection of interviewees was done by the Independent Evaluator based on the list of names of project stakeholders. The independent Evaluator identified herself at the beginning of all interviews and outlined the purpose of the interview and how the results would be used.

Despite several attempts, no one from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) responded to a request for interview. PRI project staff also reached out to MoJ representatives. This is a significant limitation to this evaluation; the MoJ is a significant stakeholder in this project and their lack of participation in the evaluation has created a large gap in the findings. It also means several claims made by interviewees cannot be verified and thus the findings of the report are unreliable and lack confidence.

### 3. Analysis of findings

#### 3.1 Outcome 1: Progress against sectoral strategies, action plans, legislation, practice and process, in view of European best practices is monitored and reviewed

##### Activities delivered under this outcome

This outcome aims to monitor and review the implementation process of sectorial strategies, action plans, legislation and practice in line with European best practice by examining official policy documents and actual practice in prison and probation reform. This involves visits to prisons and probation offices by PRI and partners to produce alternative progress reports with recommendations for specific improvements required in actual policy documents. Grants were given to third party CSOs to enable them to conduct thematic monitoring and research.

The partner organisation RIVG, conducted research and analysis on the following eight issues comparing current policy and practice against international standards: healthcare legislation, prison personnel, disciplinary procedures, rehabilitation services, classification and risk assessment, state budgetary allocation, contact with the outside world and appeal procedures. The findings of the research were published on PRI's website and formed the basis for analysis of sectoral strategies and action plans (Human Rights Strategy and its action plan; Penitentiary Reform Strategy and its action plan; probation Reform Strategy and its action plan; Medical Reforms in Penitentiary System and; Rehabilitation-Resocialization Strategy and its action plan).

These strategies were reviewed by the project team for their relevance, structure and content (how well and detailed the activities are and how SMART the indicators are) and actual implementation and alternative reports produced. The alternative reports, directed at the Ministry of Justice, also included recommendations on specific improvements required in policy documents. The reports were delayed due to the Ministry of Justice not sending public information and being unable to conduct qualitative interviews with government officials. The alternative reports were thus based only on secondary sources and reports from the Ombudsman's Office.



The project team undertook monitoring visits to four men's prisons under the mandate of the NPM - Kutaisi prison N2, Batumi prison N3, Rustavi prison N16, and Rustavi prison N17. The visits were initially delayed due to delays obtaining permission from the MoC and MoJ and obtaining permits from the Ombudsman Office. The monitoring methodology was developed with the NPM and the project team (PRI and partners) developed questions for interviewing people in prison and prison staff. The visits also looked at rehabilitation, disciplinary proceedings, risk classification and prison staff. Doctors also accompanied the visits to assess the quality of medical care. Findings from the visit were compiled into a monitoring report finalised by the partner HRC and presented for feedback to the NPM and MoJ. It was published in June 2019.

One of the two planned 2-day capacity building workshops for prison monitors took place. The aim of the training was to promote improvements to the prison conditions, support the protection of prisoners' rights in line with international standards. Six National Preventive Mechanism representatives and ten project team (PRI and partners) members attended. The training covered standards and methodology for prison monitoring.

Four out of the planned 10 sub-grants for NGOs to enable thematic monitoring/research were distributed to civil society organisations to conduct thematic research on current criminal justice issues including:

1. Rights of prisoners (including vulnerable groups) during conditional and non-custodial sentences
2. Rights of prisoners in life imprisonment and high-risk prisons
3. Rights of foreigners and minorities in the penitentiary system.
4. Rights of Vulnerable Groups in the Penitentiary System – Alternative progress report

### **Progress towards the outcome**

Many interviewees stated that the alternative report analysis highlighted key issues and shortcomings in the penal system and did contribute to improvements in several areas. Several interviewees stated that prison personnel now had improved working conditions, salary, food, training and recruitment procedures. This could also be as a result of the prison monitoring report based on prison monitoring visits in December 2018 which revealed shocking working conditions for prison personnel and in general poor personnel policies. Others stated that the number of social workers and psychologists working with prisoners is expected to increase and the new position of an escort officer had been created. There have also been improvements to rehabilitation by adding more personnel and certification programmes, increasing contact with the outside world and increasing individual case management. The extent to which this project has had a direct contribution to these changes is difficult to be absolute about, but many interviewees did cite PRI's involvement.

Some interviewees stated that the existing formal platforms under the Criminal Justice Reform Interagency Council and different working groups for monitoring and review processes had not been participatory enough and requested further involvement from civil society organisations.

Civil society comes with a different perspective, some of them will have close contact and communication with people in prison and people who have served sentences so they are able to speak to the situation, represent those who have been in prison etc.

PRI together with its partner organisations and subgrantees and a few other NGOs are working on this kind of analysis of monitoring of sectoral strategies and action plans, several interviewees called for more CSOs to be involved and that state agencies should also invite civil society to be part of the review process. Even though the project partner RIVG was leading on the review process, all relevant CSOs (especially those who are part of the Alliance) were invited to public discussions of the findings.

### **3.2 Outcome 2: Increase in the capacity of CSOs and media organisations for policy monitoring and advocacy, and creation of a regional network in the sector**

## **Activities delivered under this outcome**

The main activity under this outcome has been the formation/reactivation of the CSO Alliance. A CSO Alliance was first created in 2013 in a previous PRI project to promote civil society engagement in the policy process. However, since then there had been little activity from the Alliance mainly due to lack of funding and capacity. This project aimed to reactivate it although some interviewees stated that they had only joined this Alliance as new members at the start of the project. The Alliance currently comprises 26 member organisations.

Two training workshops took place for Alliance members on monitoring and advocacy. The first of these training workshops also served as the first meeting of the alliance where the MoU and working methods were agreed upon. The first of the training workshops introduced an advocacy planning framework and tools and approaches for successful advocacy and defined policy and practice change objectives for the alliance alongside detailed action plans for achieving these.

The second workshop for Alliance members took place in June. The aim of this workshop was to engage Alliance members in human rights policy dialogue and thematic discussions with the authorities around the key issues in the criminal justice system as identified by monitoring and analysis of the policies and actions plans. 26 CSO representatives from 17 Alliance member organisations participated in the workshop. The first day of the workshop sought to acquaint participants with the analysis of the policy documents and results of the prison monitoring visits regarding prison staff and their working conditions. On the second day, the speakers presented the policy document analysis and prison monitoring results on the rehabilitation process at prisons. Participants also agreed on the advocacy priorities and presented one-year action plans with detailed indicators, deadlines and responsible organizations.

Five of 12 training workshops took place for CSO and media representatives across Georgia. The purpose of these was to improve the oversight role of CSOs and media, especially in the regions of the country, because there are few existing frameworks for them to be involved in the reform process. The workshop topics included challenges of rehabilitation process in prisons, prison staff and their working conditions, rights of minorities in the prisons and rights of probationers. The aim of these workshops was to inform as well as build support and involvement of CSOs and the media in the reform process, to promote democratic oversight of the criminal justice sector. Over 100 people attended the workshops.

The Alliance's main role is to ensure that the rights and interests of people in the criminal justice system and their families are adequately addressed in national strategies, action plans, budgets and programmes and projects implemented by the government. Members of the Alliance are engaged with policy dialogue related to the ongoing reforms and discuss the research and recommendations developed under the project.

## **Progress towards the outcome**

The main achievement under this outcome was the creation, or reactivation of the Alliance. The alliance has allowed for coordination, sharing of expertise and really shows the importance of working in coalition. Many interviewees commented on the power of the Alliance in policy dialogue and the strength derived from working together. The Alliance members said that as a result of the activities they had become more acquainted and shared information and that trust had grown between them, including sharing tools, and practices and empowering them to raise their voices about issues. Interviewees also stated the training they participated in had better equipped them with the tools and skills to conduct monitoring and advocacy.

In terms of raising awareness and support among the media and CSOs around the country, few participants of the training workshops for CSOs and media were interviewed as part of the evaluation. It is therefore difficult to assess the impact of this activity and how it contributes to the outcome or the overall goal. Follow up work to engage this group further may be fruitful in ensuring continuity of

the messages conveyed in the workshops to ensure ongoing interest and future participation in the reform process.

This goal is well on course to being met; however, work will need to be done to ensure the work of the Alliance continues after the end of the project. Mechanisms need to be established to ensure Alliance members have the space and capacity to maintain cooperation and communication after the end of the project.

### 3.3 Outcome 3: Enhanced policy dialogue and advocacy with relevant stakeholders related to penitentiary and probation reforms

#### **Activities delivered under this outcome**

Project staff met with MoC/MoJ representatives six times, the first of these to introduce the project, its aims and activities. Representatives of the Special Penitentiary Service were supportive of the project and expressed readiness to cooperate. Subsequent meetings covered the rehabilitation and resocialization of the prisoners, research activities of the project and prison monitoring visits

Two roundtable meetings have also taken place in the first half of the project. The first of these was the official launch of the project in June 2018 attended by state and non-state stakeholders. The second roundtable meeting was on the topic of prison healthcare was held in June 2019.

The representatives from the Special Penitentiary Service, its Medical Department, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice were active in presenting the achievements during the last years in prisons.

The attendees discussed identified shortcomings related to the prison healthcare system and defined fields for future joint advocacy actions: infrastructure and equipment, access to medicines, availability of medical personnel and access to medical services, independence of the prison healthcare system, health of prisoners and communicable diseases. Attendees agreed that although there have been significant improvements to the penitentiary health system there are a whole set of issues that still require a solution.

The first of five public discussions was held in May 2019 at Tbilisi State University. Speakers included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Special Penitentiary Service, Ombudsman's Office, academia, Alliance members and students. The discussion was on challenges to rehabilitation and resocialization for people who have offended. Findings of the first research were presented and government representatives spoke about the new plans embedded in new strategy and the action plan 2019-2020, the Ombudsman's Office gave an overview of the practical challenges related to rehabilitation and academic spoke about the state's responsibilities related to rehabilitation and resocialization of the persons in conflict with the law.

#### **Progress towards the outcome**

In July 2018, the Ministry of Corrections, which had overseen prisons, was incorporated into the Ministry of Justice. PRI had previously counted on a very open and trustworthy relationship with the Ministry of Corrections and had had long-standing relationships with many key stakeholders at the Ministry. This project was designed under the assumption that the openness and willingness of key stakeholders in the government would continue. However, since the move of prisons to the Ministry of Justice, these contacts and relationship have been lost. This is in part due to staff at the Ministry having to prioritise and manage the restructure, as well as previous points of contact changing and the new ones not having relationships with civil society. This change and lack of responsiveness from the MoJ has been interpreted by some interviewees as the MoJ becoming more closed and less transparent especially towards civil society.

This restructuring did lead to significant delays in the implementation of some of the project's activities especially related to dialogue to discuss shortcomings and progress in the strategies and action plans as well as more practically the submission of public information. In terms of the achievement or progress towards outcomes, these delays seem to have had little impact.

Despite these challenges, the project team continued active advocacy and campaigning efforts to influence policy makers by networking and bilateral meetings and many interviewees did report improvements in dialogue with stakeholders and particularly with government stakeholders and that recommendations from the Alliance were being adopted, due to the increase of resources to Alliance members and the project having established opportunities for dialogue and advocacy. Some of these recommendations considered and adopted by the government include employment programmes, gender specific needs, prison staff rights, infrastructure, social and psychological rehabilitation programmes for people in prison. PRI's project manager did state that ministries are now actively seeking research and information to inform their policy. PRI's Regional Director for the South Caucasus also stated that the project has been successful in making sure the government does not ignore details raised related to the treatment of people in prison. Interviewees also stated that dialogue and communication between civil society and the NPM had been strengthened and would be maintained after the project's end.

Although interviewees reported improvements to dialogue due to the activities and coordination from this project, and that PRI has played a key role as mediator which has allowed this dialogue to take place, these channels of dialogue need to be more firmly established so that they can continue after the project is finished. PRI obviously will continue to play an important catalysing role in bridging the gap between national civil society and government stakeholders, but this cannot always be assumed and there must continue to be open lines of communication and interaction. In the next half of the project, PRI will need to focus on ensuring that this dialogue can endure through embedding lines of communication and reinforcing relationships between the Alliance and government stakeholders.

### 3.4 Outcome 4: Awareness of public raised and increased outreach on the project's themes

#### **Activities delivered under this outcome**

At the time of the evaluation data collection in October 2019, out of the planned activities for this outcome, only 11 blog posts had been drafted and published on PRI's website. The following activities had not yet taken place:

- 4.1.1. Disseminating posters, leaflets for direct and indirect beneficiaries
- 4.1.2. Producing and airing analytical-documentary film on penal/probation reforms
- 4.1.3. Arranging 5 radio broadcasts
- 4.1.4. Preparing 10 English-Georgian newspaper inserts
- 4.1.5. Creating English-Georgian active blog on penal reforms and uploading news/articles monthly

All the media and awareness raising activities were planned to take place after all the research had been completed and published. It is therefore difficult to assess the achievement of this outcome given that most of the activities have not been implemented. The blog posts on PRI's website, three in Georgian and eight in English garnered 423-page views in total. They were also cross posted to PRI's South Caucasus Facebook page which has over 1,000 followers. On the Facebook page the blog posts garnered a total of 232 engagements (number of clicks, comments, likes and shares) with a reach of 2,199 (number of people who saw the posts).

#### **Progress towards the outcome**

Interviewees were asked about public outreach and made recommendations for how this outcome could be better reached such as communicating positive stories of real people who have been in prison to the public. Furthermore, blogs and analysis are useful for those already within the criminal justice sphere, but a different strategy is needed to engage a wider audience. The general attitude of Georgian society is quite negative towards people in prison, especially when crime rates seem to rise, and hearing positive stories about individuals who have rehabilitated can help change attitudes and support positive reforms which protect their rights. In 2012, there was a large prison torture scandal revealed in the release of videos showing horrific abuse of people in prison by prison officers. The footage shocked the country and led to huge public protests, the governing party losing the election and eventually some significant reforms. However, there is a risk that the public is becoming complacent towards the prison issue due to its wide coverage in the media. More engaging stories and creative media outputs may spark more interest from the public in the prisons issue and the importance of civilian oversight.

#### 4. Conclusion

The project is well on track to achieve its goal to promote civil society engagement in the reform process in Georgia, with the caveat that all the findings and analysis in this evaluation are based on interviews with PRI, national civil society and the NPM only. Representatives from the MoJ were not available for interview despite repeated requests for meetings with the interviewer, and so findings cannot be verified or triangulated with them.

The project has made many significant changes such as the creation/reactivation of the civil society Alliance which has brought together civil society organisations with the same purpose with the aim of strengthening their advocacy voice. The Alliance has shown that there is strength in numbers and synergy created in sharing expertise and advocacy capabilities. Although government stakeholders may be unresponsive and defensive towards their recommendations, engagement on policy is possible and the Alliance has made several achievements. Whether this can continue after the project ends when resources and support might end needs to be examined.

Through thematic research and the alternative reports on government strategies and action plans, several significant issues were raised and actioned upon, including working conditions for prison staff, rehabilitation and the number of prison social workers and psychologists.

PRI has been able to take advantage of the respect, trust and position it holds within the criminal justice sector in Georgia to function as a catalyst to bring state and non-state stakeholders together and ensure the greater involvement of non-state actors in the reform process.

Implementation of some of the project’s activities did suffer from several delays due to lack of responses from key interlocutors at the Ministry of Justice. However, these delays seem to not have had much effect on the achievement of change. PRI and civil society partners (official project partners and other civil society organisations involved in the project) were the drivers of the project, they conducted the research, analysed the policy documents, conducted the monitoring and formed the Alliance. The MoJ is obviously needed to bring about change and their increased engagement with civil society is the ultimate goal of the project, this seems to be on track despite the challenges faced with the MoJ and this can be attributed to PRI’s leadership on the project.

#### 5. Recommendations

<p><b>Further awareness raising required for government representatives to encourage a spirit of cooperation</b></p>	<p>In order to ensure that civil society policy recommendations are taken up by government policy makers and planners, more needs to be done to encourage a cooperative and collaborative mindset and understand the role of the Alliance so that recommendations are taken in the spirit they are intended and are more likely to be received and adopted.</p>
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<p><b>Work on setting up structures and systems to continue the work of the Alliance and ensure that it still has avenues for communicating with government stakeholders</b></p>	<p>The creation of the Alliance has allowed for a strong and cooperative advocacy ecosystem for communicating with the government. It demonstrates that there is strength in numbers and synergy has been created from pooling capacity. In order to continue this after the project ends, the project needs to reinforce communication channels and ensure members have the capacity and resources required to maintain the Alliance.</p>
<p><b>Ensure media and public awareness raising is engaging</b></p>	<p>Public opinion towards prisons and people who are or have been in prison is fairly negative in Georgia particularly against the background of rising crime rates. The public may also be suffering from fatigue due to past scandals in prisons. The project should aim for an innovative and engaging media strategy perhaps using positive stories about individuals who have been in prison to attract the interest and involve the public.</p>

**Penal Reform International Evaluation Report**

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