



Government Program 2021-2024 Toward Building a European State

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Vision

The building of the Georgian state rests on key democratic principles and values: freedom, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights, and serves the welfare of each citizen, restoration of territorial integrity, and Georgia's full European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The crisis triggered by COVID-19 has created new challenges for Georgia, similar to the rest of the world. The pandemic has affected every level of social life.

Consequently, the key goal of the Government Program 2021-2024—Toward Building a European State is to overcome the pandemic-related crisis, ensure rapid economic recovery and development, and put in place stable and safe environment for every citizen.

In parallel, the country will continue progressing toward democratic consolidation and aspiring for European and Euro-Atlantic integration in the international arena. The following years' key tasks include the country's institutional, economic, and social readiness to apply for full EU membership in 2024.

In light of the objectives above, and to secure the country's rapid economic recovery and development, along with building a strong, unified democratic state, the efforts of the Georgian Government in 2021-2024 will be channeled toward the following 4 key directions:

- **Foreign policy, security, conflict-resolution, and human rights:** Security is the cornerstone of the country's development. Given the country's occupation and growing external threats, it is important to deepen cooperation with the country's strategic partners and to ensure European and Euro-Atlantic integration, on one hand, and to secure the effective functioning of a defense system compatible with international standards, also of structured maintaining domestic security and law and order, on the other. Equally important is to maintain full compliance with high human rights standards. Also, on the path of full EU integration, deepening economic, trade, transport, communications, and energy ties with the European Union represent crucial aspects.
- **Economic development:** The Government's economic policy will focus on encouraging economic growth, with promoting rapid post-crisis business recovery and development as the starting point which, for its part, should create new jobs and overcome extreme poverty. At the same time, the state will use every available tool of economic policy to promote the creation of additional stimuli for economic development.
- **Social policy and human capital development:** The state must support the empowerment of human capital as an important factor in economic development, also fostering the development of a decent system of social security, the further advancement and

effective management of the healthcare system; and, despite the barriers created by the pandemic, putting in place a quality, accessible system of education grounded in technological achievements.

- **State governance:** Strong state institutions, and qualified and honest public servants, make up an important asset in building a strong state. In the fight against the crisis, special importance is attached to effective state governance and result-oriented governmental work that must be visible and tangible for every citizen.

Foreign Policy, Security, Conflict-Resolution, and Human Rights

1.1 Foreign Policy

Given the current security environment, special importance is attached to strengthening Georgia's national security through deeper cooperation with strategic partners, and the strengthening of the country's sovereignty and restoration of territorial integrity through engagement from the international community. In this context, the Government of Georgia continues its peaceful policy for regulating the Russo-Georgian conflict.

At the same time, the recent events in the region have brought about new challenges. In light of the present situation, support for initiatives seeking to establish relevant negotiation formats with sizeable Western representation is important for Georgia to counter new threats and challenges.

Georgia's number one task in the international arena, as well as on partners' agenda for relations with Russia, is to **keep and bolster the issue of regulating the Russo-Georgian conflict at a high level.**

At the same time, the country continues proactive and constructive participation in **the Geneva International Discussions**, to use this format effectively for countering security and humanitarian challenges stemming from Russian occupation. Intensive work will continue toward reinforcing this format high on the agenda of our partners, including in terms of securing high-level representation of Georgia's strategic partners in said format.

Equally active will be continuous work toward achieving concrete, tangible results in de-occupation efforts, which involves ensuring practical steps toward **the full implementation of the August 12, 2008 Ceasefire Agreement** facilitated by the EU. The confirmation and fulfilment of the non-use of force obligation by the Russian Federation, along with the withdrawal of troops from the occupied territories, are of paramount importance. In parallel, ensuring the establishment of international security mechanisms on the ground, and enhanced international engagement in this process, represents an important line of action.

An equally important priority seeks to grant **the EU Monitoring Mission** access to Georgia's occupied territories, in order to ensure the full implementation of the mission's mandate.

Special attention will be paid to bettering the humanitarian situation and ensuring respect for human rights in the occupied territories. Consolidation of international efforts and effective use of negotiation formats in this direction will continue. Proactive work will continue in

relation to the persons on the **Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili List** in order to attract support from various countries and international organizations and introduce restrictive measures.

Boosting efforts toward ensuring **the safe and honorable return of IDPs and refugees** from Georgia's occupied territories will be one of the key priority lines of action.

In the same vein, equally important directions involve consolidating the non-recognition policy and mobilizing international effort to prevent risks and respond to individual cases.

The country aims at **peaceful conflict-resolution**, as part of which special importance is attached to the policy of reconciliation and engagement. The cornerstone of state policy is Georgia's stable development to make the country appealing to those living on either side of the occupation lines. The foregoing stands for sharing with those living in the occupied territories the goods and services achieved through the state's democratic and economic development and European integration.

Priority will be given to the successful implementation of the Georgian Government's peace initiative, *A Step to a Better Future*. Until the ultimate resolution of the conflict, special attention will be paid to enhancing and developing building trust between the torn communities and cooperation based on shared interests as one of the Government's key tasks. Active work will continue further to mobilize international support.

State interests will be further defended in the Strasbourg and Hague Courts, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, and the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH). In 2021, the European Court of Human Rights will publish its decision on the case of the 2008 war, and its enforcement procedures will be launched. The Hague International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor will further step up its investigation and continue cooperation to defend the rights of the Georgian state and population.

The component of full EU integration holds a special place in Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration. To this end, the country will further bolster individual directions on the integration agenda, those outlined in the roadmap for EU integration. Above all else, active work will continue toward the effective implementation of the Association Agreement, and tapping into the opportunities offered by it, including the DCFTA component.

At the same time, especially important for offering tangible results to citizens will be continuous work toward integration into the single European market.

Security and defense cooperation with the EU, alongside sectoral integration, will deepen substantially. Special attention will be paid to participation in EU programs and cooperation with specialized agencies.

Special emphasis in relations with the EU will be placed on finding and effectively tapping into new opportunities under the Eastern Partnership. In this context, it is necessary further to strengthen the so-called Associated Trio of associated partners: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine through ensuring maximal coordination on European integration issues and developing shared positions.

An important area for action in relation to the EU involves further cementing Georgia's transit function and deriving mutual benefits from the component linked to membership of the European Energy Community and engagement in the Trans-European Transport Network. All these activities, alongside the search for new integration opportunities, serve the ambitious ultimate goal of preparing for official application for full EU membership and further ensuring accession to the EU.

One of the country's key foreign policy tasks is **accession to the North Atlantic Alliance**. To this end, the decision of the 2008 Bucharest Summit and the obligations defined in the Constitution of Georgia will continue to be carried out resolutely. Also, Georgia, as an aspirant country, will continue effectively using the basic tools for NATO integration (the updated Substantial NATO-Georgia Package [SNGP], the Annual National Program, and the NATO-Georgia Commission). Further steps will be taken to ensure more NATO in Georgia (drills, trainings, and others).

The Black Sea security dimension is a special aspect of NATO-Georgia cooperation. Georgia positions as the Alliance's reliable partner in its Eastern flank, one that is ready to contribute to this direction, an approach evidenced by the plan designed to develop the country's strategic vision in the context of Black Sea security. Consequently, **the process of developing the national policy on Black Sea security will be initiated**.

Active work will continue to ensure deeper strategic **cooperation with the US as the country's main strategic partner**. Work will intensify on such priority directions as security cooperation, enhanced defense capabilities and Euro-Atlantic integration, the country's de-occupation, and cementing the non-recognition policy toward the occupied territories, also further US support for the country's economic development and consolidation of democratic institutions.

Active work will continue in every direction (the so-called sectoral cooperation component) under the Strategic Partnership Charter between the two countries. The Government seeks to deepen and enhance defense and security cooperation with the US and to coordinate a new legal framework to that end. Work will intensify on the issue of the Free Trade Agreement with the US (in order to finalize the document), alongside efforts to encourage US investments in Georgia and the wider Black Sea Region. A special line of action involves maintaining and strengthening Georgia's unwavering support by the US Congress.

In light of the current state of affairs, **cementing bilateral relations** with partners, advancing present cooperation formats to a qualitatively new level, and search for new areas become especially relevant for Georgia. The state will advance **bilateral partnership with European countries to a strategic level**, also continuing and further deepening partnership with traditional allies from among the European states. The country takes a keen interest in further deepening cooperation with the UK in the post-Brexit period.

Active efforts will be channeled toward implementing a policy based on **balanced and mutually beneficial cooperation** in the region. With Georgia positioning as an actor in the wider Black Sea Region, special attention will be paid to boosting regional bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the relevant countries of the Black Sea Basin. In this context, strategic and political ties with said countries will deepen alongside sectoral cooperation.

Of vital importance will be the continuation of the process of border delimitation and demarcation in line with national interests and based on strategic partnership and good neighborly relations.

In light of the growing role of and opportunities found in Asia, the Near East, Africa, and South America, further enhancing the country's visibility in said regions, and the promotion of Georgia's economic prosperity, make up the next line of action.

Given the rapidly changing geopolitical challenges, it becomes especially relevant for Georgia to be actively engaged in **global and regional international organizations, within the frameworks of multilateral formats**. Consequently, one of the key directions in the country's foreign policy seeks active engagement in international organizations and the implementation/positioning of policies serving the country's national interests.

In light of today's challenges and opportunities, special attention and support is in order for the **Georgian diaspora** abroad. It will important to that end to continue various grant programs and projects seeking to introduce a systemic approach to relations with the diaspora and to encourage diaspora initiatives. Special attention will be paid to the implementation of existing projects, and work will continue toward establishing and developing new cultural and educational centers for compatriots abroad.

Care for Georgian citizens abroad, and the effective protection of their rights and lawful interests, will remain a key priority.

1.2 Strengthening the Country's Defense Capabilities

In light of the present security context and today's challenges, it is important to strengthen the country's defense capabilities and sustainability through the institutional development of

combat-ready, mobile, and NATO-compatible defense forces equipped with modern capabilities, also through deeper interagency cooperation.

The further introduction of total defense elements, and the development of its military component, will continue. Alongside strengthening the defense forces—which, among other goals and tasks, rests on 5 key priorities: development of air defense, anti-tank, artillery, intelligence (ISTAR), and engineering capabilities—participation in international peace missions alongside the Alliance’s member and partner states will continue to cement global security. At the same time, the defense forces will be ready to provide the civil authorities’ support during natural and technological emergencies at home.

The country’s participation in the Alliance’s peace missions and operations, alongside keeping the expenditures allocated to the Defense Ministry at least at 2% of GDP, will be ensured in the future. Active cooperation with the US will continue toward strengthening Georgia’s sustainable combat readiness and defense capabilities. One of the key components of US-Georgia defense cooperation is the Georgia Defense Readiness Program (GDPR) incorporating training and institutional development components. The GDPR helps identify infantry battalion training and equipment needs and contributes to constantly maintaining high combat readiness.

With assistance from partners, the Defense Ministry will continue building combat modeling and simulation capabilities. By 2024, these capabilities will be strengthened within the framework of the Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC). Also, the Civil Office and the General Staff will cooperate with the JTEC on the development of modeling scenarios and concepts for high-level drills and operations for land, air, sea, and cyberoperations to be carried out at strategic, operative, and tactical levels. The JTEC will evolve into a NATO-affiliate training and evaluation center bringing together both Georgian and NATO/NATO partner staffs, with its goal being to train personnel and troops based on top-notch NATO-compatible programs.

The Defense Ministry will reform the Common Military Center to better the mechanism for sharing military-branch experience. Within the center’s framework, Georgia’s defense forces will be divided into land, armed and mechanized, logistics, medical, aviation, air defense, intelligence, engineering, also nuclear, biological and chemical, communications, and artillery-focused schools. In addition, in light of modern requirements, the institutionalization of such important segments of military education as training of officers and sergeants will continue along with their alignment with the Alliance’s standards.

Based on the process of strategic defense review, special attention in the next 4 years will be paid to the establishment of balanced and sustainable forces through further developing the

management and control systems of Georgia's defense forces which will be tailored to suit task management requirements. In the same vein, the special task forces will be reformed structurally and functionally, with special focus on strengthening air defense, anti-tank, and engineering capabilities and elements for tackling hybrid challenges, including intelligence and cyber-defense tools. At the same time, priority will be given to bettering defense infrastructure and decentralization of the logistics management system.

The development of military medicine capacities will continue, and so will the efforts seeking to upgrade the effectiveness of medical services/rehabilitation for service members of the defense forces, the Defense Ministry's staff, their family members, and the family members of deceased service members, also social reintegration and resocialization measures for injured/wounded service members. Financing of apartment building and other social projects for service members will continue.

The Defense Ministry will develop an upgraded reserve and mobilization system through improving its effectiveness and reliability. This vision stems from international experience and analysis of challenges in the mobilization system, based on which active and mobilization reserves are defined as the key types of military reserve.

Manufacturing batch production of military and dual-purpose products will be one of the working areas of the Defense Ministry. Under the long-term vision, the enhancement of the capacities and role of the State Military Scientific and Technical Center Delta LEPL will continue.

Successful cooperation with NATO/EU members states and other partners will continue toward improving and upgrading legal bases for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Initiatives defined under the SNGP will be implemented. With effective assistance from the Alliance, a higher quality of compatibility with NATO will be achieved in bilateral and multilateral formats.

Security and defense cooperation with the EU will be boosted and deepened. In following years, a formal application will be submitted for launching cooperation with the European Defense Agency (EDA). The Defense Ministry will also be ready to participate in concrete projects under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

1.3 Security and Law and Order

1.3.1 Public Safety and Order

The National Security Council (and its office), a key strategic advisory body of national security, will continue active efforts toward planning and coordinating national security policy.

The ongoing upgrading of two fundamental conceptual national security documents: The National Security Concept and the Risk Assessment Document will be continued/finalized.

Cybersecurity is one of the country's priority directions. As a result of developing a relevant conceptual legal framework, the key goal is the creation of robust institutional architecture and the upgrading of security standards.

The state will pay special attention to combatting hybrid threats. To this end, the elimination of flaws in this area and the development of a national strategy for combatting hybrid threats will be launched.

The implementation of a **unified analysis-based criminal policy** and **ensuring retributive justice** are key to establishing a safe environment and protecting order in the country.

To that end, it is necessary to **continue the reforms** in the areas of security and law and order and to implement measures seeking to improve **the quality** of performance.

In line with concept of **Systemic Upgrade**, the further development of the Interior Ministry will continue to involve structural and essential amendments and legislative initiatives alike.

The criminal police reform will continue, as part of which the investigative, operative, and district directions will be clearly separated throughout Georgia. The replacement of the district direction with the model of public-oriented police activities will continue. The institute of law and order officer will be developed with its key goal being to work on crime prevention. To draw closer to international standards and enhance the effectiveness of police work, regulatory legislation on operative and investigative work will be upgraded.

The empowerment of the investigative component and qualitative improvement of investigation will continue. Based on the Venice Commission's recommendations, draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code—seeking to ensure clear separation of investigative and prosecutorial functions, enhance the independence and responsibilities of investigators, and ultimately upgrade the quality of investigation—will be developed and submitted to the Parliament of Georgia. To ensure the system's readiness for the enactment of said amendments, the Interior Ministry will develop a multiyear action plan incorporating attracting new human resources, amendments to hiring procedures, systemic retraining for currently employed investigators, and other measures seeking to enhance quality.

The upgrading of the system for investigation quality monitoring will continue, and so will support for the centralized mechanism for quality control—the Department of Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring—as a way to that end.

Active steps will be taken toward ensuring **effective investigation into offenses committed by and against juveniles**, introduction of special approaches to minors, and establishment of an environment suitable for juveniles. The introduction of infrastructure suitable for juveniles will continue across the country, and so will specialization of investigators and their quality-enhancement, and measures designed to prevent juvenile crime.

The border police reform will continue, and so will the development of human resources, border infrastructure, and modern technologies of border surveillance. The development of a single system for border management risk analysis, and its integration into a relevant analytical system, will continue. The cooperation of the coastal guard with the North Atlantic Alliance will deepen further. The development of the Joint Maritime Operations Center will continue.

The patrol police reform will continue further to simplify administrative processes, enhance access to patrol services, foster the adoption of modern technologies. The concept of the **joint patrol police service center** will be adopted throughout the country.

Approaches designed to prevent crime and an analysis-based police activity model will be adopted, to which end the establishment of a nationwide network of analysts at police units will continue.

Active **fight against organized and drug-related crime** will remain the Ministry's priority.

Cooperation with international police structures will deepen. Active cooperation with Interpol will continue, the network of police attachés will expand, especially in EU member states.

In response to issues arising from visa-free travel, effective management of migration flows and borders, and the implementation of the readmission agreement, will be bolstered.

To attract qualified young workforce into the system, and to enhance the motivation of presently employed human resources, an **effective human resources management system** will be established to incorporate effective mechanisms for hiring, promotion, and social security. Rules for hiring will be further upgraded. The Interior Ministry's Academy will focus on professional training/retraining for police officers. Consequently, educational programs will be developed to counter challenges identified in police work. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) will be adopted. Social security mechanisms for police officers will be upgraded, and their remuneration will gradually increase. At the same time, an internship system will be developed to attract motivated and qualified workforce into the Ministry.

The implementation of the **road safety program** will continue. The use of new technologies in road traffic administration will increase dramatically. To that end, the system of points will be further upgraded, a practical component of driving in city streets will be integrated into the Government Program 2021-2024

driver's license test, and legislative framework will be developed to put in place preventive measures.

To enhance the effectiveness of **emergency management**, operational capacities/resources will be developed, the level of readiness will be advanced, and the quality of response will improve. It is planned to overhaul equipment/machinery and fully modernize infrastructure, also significantly to boost international cooperation. Advanced emergency management technologies will be adopted, such as an electronic fire safety supervision system.

To improve public and road safety, **the Public Safety Management Center 112 LEPL** will continue expanding/developing nationwide video surveillance and speed control systems. Through adopting the Priority Dispatch Software (ProQA), response to priority cases will grow faster, an early SMS warning system will be introduced to warn subscribers in dangerous territories about existing or potential threats; for the purpose of combating and preventing domestic violence, an electronic monitoring system will be developed to boost the effectiveness of real-time control over offenders.

The creation of **new digital police products** will continue, including an anonymous reporting platform, an electronic border-crossing system, a transport information platform, a citizen feedback system, and others.

The process of **renovating/rehabilitation police buildings, and the construction of new ones**, with relevant material and technical bases in place, will continue. **The infrastructural renovation of pre-trial detention facilities, the construction of new ones, and replacement of outdated surveillance systems, also the establishment of medical facilities, and the installation of new devices in pre-trial detention facilities, will continue.** To align provisional detention facilities for migrants with international standards, and to improve the conditions of detainees, the current infrastructure will be rehabilitated, new ones will be built, and equipped with material and technical means.

Far-reaching projects will be implemented further to make the services offered to the public by the **Service Agency** more flexible, comfortable, and diverse. **Remote services will be introduced**, such as remote registration/alienation of transport. Citizens will be able to register their transport online, using a special software. The Service Agency will offer citizens a simplified remote service for changing their license numbers.

To put in place a high standard for evidence, forensics capacities will be developed, and laboratories will be equipped with modern technologies, the area of accreditation will expand in individual forensics directions, K9 capacities will be boosted.

Given the rising cybercrime trends, special attention will be paid to cybersecurity issues. To that end, similar to Tbilisi, police units for combating cybercrime will be gradually established in every big city, the number of police officers with necessary qualifications will increase, effective steps will be taken for timely identification of materials harmful for minors. Said units will be equipped with special software and technical devices, legislative framework will be upgraded, and operative cooperation with leading European and US cybercrime agencies will deepen.

The empowerment of the Unit for Witness/Victim Coordination will continue with a view to assisting victims and witnesses and protecting them from repeated victimization.

Penitentiary System

The development of the penitentiary system and securing its compliance with international standards will remain a priority direction. To that end, the maximal alignment of the penitentiary system's infrastructure with international standards will continue, and so will the **construction of smaller penitentiaries** and renovation of existing ones in line with applicable international human rights and rehabilitation standards.

Family-type penitentiary facilities will be established to house several juveniles sharing interests and aspirations, to enable them to live in a family-like environment until release.

Resocialization and rehabilitation programs will be boosted in penitentiary and probation systems.

Employment, professional learning, education, and recreation opportunities will be boosted for convicts and former inmates. To that end, relevant systems and infrastructure will be installed to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

On January 1, 2020, the Center for Professional Training and Retraining of Convicts LEPL was launched to develop targeted activities/projects designed to promote professional learning and employment for convicts.

Effective methodologies for the individual assessment of former inmates will be adopted, including for classification, sentence planning, and case management.

To support transition from penitentiaries into the probation system and return from penitentiaries/probation into society, **a policy for preparing for freedom** will be introduced.

It is planned to build brand-new infrastructure for the psychiatric unit at the Medical Facility #18 and to equip it with an adequate walking area.

To ensure civil sector service quality, **healthcare services** provided to defendants/convicts in penitentiaries **will be further improved**.

To enhance the effectiveness of medical services provided to defendants/convicts with mental disorders in penitentiaries, and with the specifics of the penitentiary system in mind, relevant legislative amendments will be drafted.

Further to improve the early release mechanism, relevant legislative amendments will be carried out.

To prevent crime, work will continue with difficult juveniles under the age of criminal responsibility in conflict with the law.

Work toward crime prevention among children under the age of 14 will be stepped up.

Measures toward enhanced security, outer perimeter protection, and prisoner escorting will be improved in penitentiaries, in order to mitigate opportunities for prison breaks, evasion, and illegal smuggling. Professional development and awareness among specialists working in the crime prevention and probation systems, including probation officers, social workers, and psychologists, will be further promoted to better the practice of working with target groups and to provide needs-based services.

Safety and working environment will be further improved at penitentiaries and probation bureaus for their beneficiaries, staff, and visitors. Training and professional development programs for staff will be created and implemented.

Active work will continue toward the development of restorative justice practices and programs, including the introduction of pilot programs for mediation in the system of criminal justice.

1.3.2 Protection of Human Rights

The integration of human rights-oriented approaches into the formation of state policy remains the Government's top priority.

The new national human rights policy, defining the Government's long-term human rights priorities, will be approved and implemented.

Effective measures will continue toward the implementation of the **right to equality** and to avert and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Measures will be taken to strengthen **gender equality** in every area of social life. Rapid and effective response will be provided to every case of gender-based violence.

Coordinated work will continue toward protecting children's rights, including through the prevention and identification of and swift response to violence against children, also toward effectively implementing applicable legislative framework in practice.

The Government will continue the active implementation of the Convention on the Rights of **Persons with Disabilities**; also, based on the individual needs of persons with disabilities, assisting their full integration into every area of social life. Effective coordinated steps will be taken toward the successful practical implementation of the Law of Georgia on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Government will continue providing **senior citizens** with active economic assistance and access to healthcare services. Special attention will be paid to their inclusion into every area of social life, also to the prevention and effective response to violence against senior citizens.

Relevant activities will be carried out toward the full implementation of the **Law of Georgia on Social Work**, including through allocating additional resources to increase the number of social workers, their continuous capacity-building and adequate remuneration.

Special focus will remain on the state policy on civic **equality and integration**, and a new policy for 2021-2026 will be adopted and implemented. A priority goal of the Government's **policy** will be to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, are fully engaged in every area of social life, the country's economic development, and political and civic processes.

To foster social integration, special attention will be paid to **enhancing the knowledge of the official language**. Based on the needs of various segments of the population, official language teaching programs will diversify further.

Special attention will be paid to the integration of representatives of **ethnic minorities** into the unified information space. Keeping and protecting unique cultural identity will be supported. Access to state services will be improved. Programs will continue to empower and engage young representatives of ethnic minorities.

The unwavering protection of **property rights** will continue. Reliable and safe property registration procedures will be put in place, including through the adoption of the latest technologies.

Work will continue toward upgrading legislative framework and its full practical implementation in the area of **labor rights and workplace safety**. Priority will be given to the practical implementation of workplace safety regulations and the effective exercise of the Labor Inspection's mandate.

To ensure effective and independent investigation into offenses by law enforcement representatives, the Government will support the capacity-building of the State Inspector's Service and reforms designed for its further development.

A new **enforcement code** will be adopted to put in place legislative enforcement guarantees in line with modern international standards. The code will include a number of innovations largely designed to establish a new effective system of enforcement, simplify the process of enforcement, cement the principle of parity in the process of enforcement, and offer users new services, also to create a healthy business and investment environment in the country, secure the inviolability of property rights, an maximal alignment of enforcement legislation with EU law.

After the adoption of the new enforcement law, program and infrastructural projects will be implemented in stages. In addition, public enforcers will be retrained in vital issues pertaining to private practice.

To counter today's human rights challenges, **the Code of Administrative Offenses** will be upgraded in line with international standards.

In light of the obligations assumed under the EU Association Agenda, efforts will continue toward recognizing the November 23, 2007 Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance and the November 23, 2007 Hague Protocol on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations, on one hand, and of the 2005 Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements, on the other, as mandatory for Georgia. By joining said international agreements, Georgia seeks to ensure the obligation to recover child support in transborder cases based on their best interests, and to promote international trade and investments through adopting unified rules for the recognition and enforcement of court decisions on civil and commercial cases.

Active work will continue toward to represent the interests of Georgian citizens in international courts. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers will continue measures designed to ensure enforcement in the case of the so-called deportees.

To develop state services focusing on the needs of citizens, and to improve the protection of state document memory, in 2021, a new building of the Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Archive will open in Akhaltsikhe.

To upgrade cooperation between courts on civil and commercial matters, simplify rules and procedures for mutual legal assistance between nations, and to ensure the timely and effective resolution of civil and commercial cases, the Parliament of Georgia will be provided with the 1965 Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in

Civil or Commercial Matters, and the 1970 Hague Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil or Commercial Matters, along with legislative amendments stemming from said conventions, for their recognition as mandatory for Georgia.

2. Economic Development

The new coronavirus pandemic has caused new challenges and problems for Georgia's economy and has revealed areas of concern therein. Alongside challenges, however, the pandemic offers new development opportunities and prospects. And the country's economic policy in the next 4 years will focus on maximally tapping into these opportunities. At the same time, active work will be dedicated to the systemic and structural problems of the country's economy. Georgia's economy in the post-pandemic period will have all preconditions for rapid recovery and transformation into "an economy of opportunities."

The country's economic policy will continue focusing on free market principles, with the private sector as the main driving force behind the economy. At the same time, the economic policy will be channeled toward maintaining macroeconomic stability, especially in the post-pandemic period, also toward further developing the business and investment environment, to support the recovery and subsequent expansion of pandemic-affected businesses. Attention will be paid to rapid infrastructural development as a factor stimulating economic growth.

The Government's economic policy will focus on Georgia's repositioning in the post-pandemic world, and on tapping into new opportunities for the country's subsequent development, especially in terms of encouraging domestic investment growth and attracting foreign investments.

To ensure a high level of long-term economic growth, the Government will work on the structural transformation of the economy, and on the maximal incorporation of economic factors, and state-owned resources, into economic activities.

In addition, active efforts will continue toward the qualitative improvement of the work of relevant state institutions, which will support the effective implementation of the country's economic policy.

The Government's key task will involve ensuring the readiness of the country's economy for officially applying for EU membership by 2024. To that end, the Georgian Government's economic policy will focus on the country's rapid economic growth, poverty reduction, and the country's stronger positioning as the region's logistics and investment hub.

2.1 Economic Policy Framework: Rapid Economic Recovery and Development

The crisis triggered by the COVID pandemic has jeopardized the country's economy and practically every area of social life.

According to preliminary projections, GDP growth in 2020 will be negative 5%. Given the deepening of the ongoing crisis, and with a view to encourage keeping jobs, the tax breaks offered under the anti-crisis plan are expected to cut the 2020 budget's tax revenues alone by 1.3 billion GEL. The budget's unexpected expenditure has reached 1.6 billion GEL. Overall, the deficit of the 2020 budget will reach 9.1 of GDP.

The Government, in response to the crisis, has secured the rapid mobilization of international assistance and attracted 1.7 billion USD in additional assets. These resources have been channeled to cover for the decreased budget revenues, on one hand, and to finance the expenses for anti-crisis activities. Consequently, the national debt in 2020 will reach 59.9% of GDP. The Government, in the course of the next four years, will ensure that the debt returns to a lower indicator.

Given the global nature of the crisis, the situation in export markets has deteriorated, consequently decreasing Georgia's export. The crisis has also impacted other sources of income, especially the tourism sector, resulting in an expected 9.7% of GDP growth of the current account deficit in 2020.

The crisis has significantly affected economic activities in the country. The shock was twofold, impacting both demand and supply. As a result, many businesses have encountered serious financial difficulties, also risking losing jobs.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts Georgia's economy to return to positive dynamics and reach a 4.3% growth in 2021.

The next four years must be a period of Georgia's rapid economic recovery and growth.

The short-term priorities of the Georgian Government's economic policy include:

- Mitigation of the negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic/minimization of economic losses
- Recovery of positive pre-pandemic trends and rapid economic recovery.

The above will be achieved through fiscal discipline, state assistance for affected economic sectors, support for the purchasing power of the country's population, and incremental measures for enhancing the effectiveness of the social security system, while the following will make up the key medium-term priorities:

- Upgrading the country's regional and international competitiveness

- Promoting competitive local production and export
- Encouraging domestic and foreign investments.

To achieve the goals above, a stable macroeconomic framework will be put in place, under which the Government will ensure improved fiscal discipline, gradual reduction of the national debt, price stabilization, independence of monetary policy, and gradual reduction of the budget deficit.

To create a macroeconomic environment conducive to economic development, it will be necessary to implement coordinated fiscal and monetary policies, especially in the post-pandemic period. In this regard, along with fiscal stimuli, it is necessary to put to work monetary policy stimulating tools in order to promote domestic investments and enhance the scope of stimulus. In this process, alongside the Government's stimulating fiscal policy, it will be equally important to encourage the engagement of foreign investments in the local market, which will somewhat reduce interest rates and create additional monetary stimuli.

Consequently, our ultimate goal is to ensure low unemployment rates to be followed by the elimination of extreme poverty and maintenance of low poverty rates, also decreased rates of the current account deficit and higher economic and income growth indicators.

To that end, the Government of Georgia has a concrete plan using every tool available to assist Georgia's economy and business.

The following fiscal policy measures will be implemented:

- **Fiscal consolidation and improvements to fiscal discipline will continue:** The process of cost optimization will continue, including financing for only highly effective economic projects through the broad application of the public investment management (PIM) tool (by 2024, this tool will cover 100% of the investment projects to be funded from the budget). The budget deficit will incrementally drop to 3%.
- The current system of tax breaks will be reviewed to establish a competitive environment, and the tax administration system will be upgraded.
- The outcomes of **state programs** will be analyzed and assessed for effectiveness.
- **Large-scale reform of state-owned enterprises** will be implemented.
- Capital investments with **volumes most optimal for the economy** will continue—in the medium-term, Georgia will keep capital costs at 8% of GDP.
- In addition, capital projects will be strictly prioritized, based on the country's economic needs.
- **Low national debt:** The Government seeks to keep the deficit below 5% by 2024.
- **Stabilization of the national debt** to drop below 55% by 2024.

- **Ensuring effective management of public finances:** Active work will continue toward budget transparency, with special attention paid to greater engagement of the population and interested organization in budgeting.

As for promoting entrepreneurial and investment activities, the state will make full use of all available tools in the period in discussion, namely:

- Property rights will be strictly observed.
- Active communication with businesses will continue.
- New regulations will be adopted based on consultations with businesses.
- Broader introduction of assessment tools for regulatory impact will be ensured.
- A favorable tax environment will be maintained, tax burden will not increase, financial resources available through various tools will be offered maximally to overcome liquidity-related problems, in order to deal with the crisis.
- The country's investment policy will be planned anew, based on an aggressive campaign designed both to attract regional offices of international companies and to encourage investments in the real sector (production). This process is already underway, and presently proactive communication with relevant companies is in full swing to pitch relevant offers.
- **Further improvements in sovereign rankings:** The Government seeks to keep the country's constantly improving sovereign rankings, to make it possible to reach the BBB-/Baa3 investment grade.
- **Implementation of structural economic reforms to bolster economic stability:** Boosting Georgia's image as the region's leading reformer.

2.2 Employment

Promoting business as the main generator of jobs is the key issue in the employment direction. The state, for its part, will encourage the market's effective operation, including the effective enforcement of the rights of employees and securing decent employment. The state will also ensure the implementation of an effective education policy to eliminate the demand/supply disbalance in the market. In addition, in the coming years:

- To protect the rights of employees, the legislative and institutional framework of the Labor Inspection will be enhanced.
- Through access to relevant educational programs, emphasis will be placed on human resource retraining and the development of their competencies.
- The labor market services under ongoing state programs will be developed and upgraded to encompass development of professional skills, training/retraining, internship, consulting and career planning, and continuous nationwide access to services.

- The labor market’s detailed study will continue, and so will information assistance for jobseekers and close coordination between jobseekers and employers.
- Regulation of international labor migration will continue, and the relevant legal framework will be brushed up.
- Work will continue toward developing cross-national cooperation on labor migration, enhancing opportunities for temporary legal employment (circular labor migration) abroad, and signing bilateral and multilateral agreements to protect the rights of labor migrants.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Environment

The further improvement of entrepreneurial and investment environments, and relevant measures, will continue.

- The principle of inviolability of property rights will be protected.
- Active dialogue with businesses will continue to identify and address problems in the private sector. The institute of Business Ombudsman will be further empowered.
- Georgia will maintain its favorable tax system: low tax burden will be kept, and innovative approaches will be ushered in:
 - Automated VAT recovery will be put in place.
 - Automated tax declaration system will be introduced.
 - Reform of the tax dispute system at the Finance Ministry: Under the reform, a collegial body will be put together to consist of members selected based on their professional merits. The collegial body will review tax and customs disputes, and it’s the rules for appointing and releasing its members will ensure its independence and integrity. The reform will result in both the institutional empowerment of the body in charge of disputes and the betterment of the position of taxpayers.
 - The practice of tax treaties will be reconsidered: It is important to launch a broad dialogue on this issue to assess the advisability of the practice of tax treaties for its impact on the competitive environment and the economy.
 - The introduction of digital and modern technologies will continue to enable entrepreneurs to enjoy effective up-to-date services, also to mitigate risks of tax evasion and ensure fair tax administration.
- Georgia’s tax and customs legislation will be harmonized with EU legislation.
- State-owned resources will be further engaged in economic activities, including through the privatization of state-owned property.
- The reform of the mining industry will continue to establish a competitive and investment-friendly environment. Phase two of the reform seeks to update the legislative framework regulating the mining sector, as part of which it is planned to

adopt an integrated licensing system and a modern system for geological data management, also to upgrade the fiscal regime, empower the supervisory function, and to establish a risk assessment-based monitoring system.

- Based on international success stories, a reform of state-owned enterprises will be carried out relying on 5 pillars meeting international state-owned enterprise standards:
 - Enhanced prioritization of commercial goals for enterprises
 - Corporate management principles will be adopted by enterprises, based on the principles of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)
 - The policy of state enterprise ownership will be defined and rationalized
 - Enterprise management employing medium-term strategic goal indicators
 - Institutionalization of the competitive neutrality principle.
- The Partnership Fund will be reformed.
- A new system for rehabilitating businesses in crisis will be introduced in practice (as an alternative to bankruptcy). The rights of creditors will be protected, which will increase the predictability of the insolvency environment and the attractiveness of the investment environment. Based on the newly adopted Law of Georgia on Rehabilitation and the Collective Satisfaction of Creditors, which will come into force in April of 2021, greater stimuli will be put in place for the rehabilitation of enterprises, also greater guarantees for securing the rights and lawful interests of creditors. In addition, the issue of establishing the institute of personal bankruptcy is under consideration, a tool adopted in developed countries.
- The structural reform of the capital market will continue, as part of which a new policy for the capital market will be presented in 2021. Under said reform, the legislative framework for the development of the stock market will be upgraded. Entrepreneurs and investors will enjoy access to available liquid assets to attract investments through them. To support long-term investments, long-term insurance products will be developed, including within the framework of the pension fund; the reform of private pension schemes will also be finalized, which will contribute to the accumulation of the GEL in the long run. An action plan will be developed to focus on aspirations to be categorized as a frontier market.
- Support will continue for investments projects by innovative hi-tech startups.
- With engagement from regional technology parks and universities, programs to support new innovative ideas will continue.
- The further development of free market institutions will continue: The institutional framework of competition policy will be boosted, alternative mechanisms for resolving commercial disputes (mediation) will be developed, fast and effective justice practices will be adopted, amendments will be finalized to the framework of state procurement dispute reviews.

- The process of ratification of the UN Convention on Mediation will be finalized, this way fostering the development of mediation as an alternative mechanism for dispute-resolution.
- Support will be further provided to entrepreneurs seeking access to international markets. The potential offered by present FTAs will be further tapped into, as part of which entrepreneurs will enjoy support in developing international-standard production and systems. To explore new markets, the FTA scope will be further expanded (Israel, India, the US, South Korea, Gulf states), and priority will be given to signing an FTA with the US.
- The country's investment policy will be formulated anew: In the post-pandemic period, Georgia will switch to an aggressive policy toward attracting foreign investments, and the country's new positioning will be ensured. At the same time, both central government institutions and local self-governments will bolster coordination mechanisms for investment activities. Consequently, the effectiveness of communication with international and local investors will grow.
- The regulatory impact analysis (RIA) tool will expand to enable us to analyze in advance the impact of each decision on the economy, to avoid possible negative effects.
- The new Law on Entrepreneurs will be adopted to reflect the requirements of EU regulations under the Association Agreement and its appendices, this way aligning Georgia's commercial law to EU legislation.
- To promote a competitive business environment, the state will gradually pull out of economic branches with potential for independent operation and development.

2.4 Promotion of Entrepreneurial and Investment Activities

To mitigate the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure rapid post-pandemic economic revival, vital importance will be attached to support for businesses, including SMEs.

Further to support the development of SMEs and introduce the best international practices, the 2021-2025 Strategy for Developing Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurship will be developed based on the key principles of the Small Business Act for Europe.

In terms of supporting businesses, priority will be again given to the development of tools for accessing financing, also to support for overcoming problems related to covering existing obligations and liquidity, and for further business development. It will be equally important to provide entrepreneurship with technical support and boost its internationalization.

In light of the foregoing, the Government of Georgia will further develop the Credit Guarantee Scheme, which will significantly ease access to financing for SMEs and contribute to additional crediting for the economy and to enhancing liquidity among SMEs.

The Enterprise Georgia agency will continue supporting the development of local entrepreneurship and the hospitality industry, and work toward promoting export and attracting investments.

To improve access to financing for SMEs, state-run financial support programs will continue and expand. Active support for companies with export potential will also continue using various development tools.

The platform for attracting and encouraging foreign investments will be strengthened. The state program for investment grants, approved under this platform, is designed to cover qualified expenses for investor companies after the fulfillment of their investment obligations. This mechanism will cover the areas of hi-tech production, service export, logistics, and aircraft maintenance. In addition, the process of working and communicating with investors has been amended and will continue anew. The agency has started working with so-called location scouts. Leading location consultants have been identified and, despite the pandemic, brought to Georgia. Profiling of prospective investors is up and running, and will continue in the future, with ongoing direct communication with them involving high-level political participation.

Also, in order to simplify the provision of relevant state services, information, and educational means to entrepreneurs, under The State—Your Partner initiative, front desks operate at local/regional levels, with consultative centers, so-called business hubs, also to be established in the future. The initiatives above seek to assist the local population, startup and operating enterprises alike, to make use of previously unavailable services, educational and informative.

The tradewithgeorgia.com online platform will be launched to offer a variety of single-window services to export companies. In particular, companies will be able to create a company profile, pass an export readiness test, register for international events, sign e-agreements, and so on—and all in one space!

2.5 Tapping into Georgia's Potential as a Regional Hub

To tap into Georgia's potential as a regional hub, it is important to develop the country's infrastructural, transport, logistics, communications, energy, technological, educational, and financial hub-systems. Along with other advantages, this is a practical way to draw closer to the countries of the EU market and to make use of the potential offered by the EU Association Agreement.

Accordingly, it is important to work toward both the rapid development of the country's key infrastructure and the further advancement of transport corridors. Especially important in this context is if the development of the country's port infrastructure, including the expansion of

Pori Port infrastructure and the implementation of the Anaklia Deep-Sea Port infrastructural projects.

Work will continue toward integrating the country's transport systems into the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) through implementing the Eastern Partnership's TENT-T investment plan. Work will also continue on the development of modern logistics centers in Tbilisi and Kutaisi and the international airport cargo terminal in Kutaisi.

The finalization of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railroad project will significantly reduce the time of freight transport between Asia and Europe, a precondition for attracting additional freight flows through the country. To improve the competitiveness of the transit corridor, integration into international transport systems will continue, and regional cooperation will deepen. In cooperation with partner countries, it is planned to digitalize the transit corridor passing through Georgia, by way of putting in place the transit corridor's digital logistics platform, all of which will enhance the effectiveness of the country's freight transport and secure their sustainability.

In the area of civil aviation, the implementation of the Open Skies policy will continue, which will allow, in the post-pandemic period, for an expedited return air traffic to pre-pandemic volumes, also for the entry of new airlines into the Georgian market, and the development of new direct flights. In addition, the policy of supporting low-budget airlines in entering the Georgian market will continue.

Based on the technical and economic study conducted with a view to advancing ferry and container transport between Georgia and Black Sea countries, steps will be taken to promote and develop freight/feeder transport with European countries in the Black Sea.

It is equally important to develop energy and communications corridors passing through Georgia, which will also contribute to the country's practical economic alignment with the EU.

2.6 Infrastructural Development

To tap into Georgia's potential as a regional hub, it is vitally important to develop international and national roads and key infrastructure. In particular, by 2024:

- Almost 200 kilometers of highways, up to 200 bridges, and almost 70 tunnels will be built. Consequently, a Tbilisi-Batumi trip will take about 3.5 hours, and the travel time from Red Bridge to the border in Sarpi will be cut from 8 to 4-4.5 hours.
- The construction of the Rikoti, Samtredia-Grigoleti, and Grigoleti-Choloki sections, and Batumi Bypass, of the East-West Highway will be finalized.

- The construction projects of all border checkpoint-bound international highways will continue, including the 23-kilometer Kvasheti-Kobi section with a 9-kilometer tunnel that will be finalized by 2024, and the upcoming construction of the 27-kilometer Natakhtari-Zhinvali highway. The construction of Batumi-Sarpi, Tbilisi-Sadakhlo, and Tbilisi-Red Bridge highways will be launched.
- The construction of Kakheti-bound highways will continue, including the finalization of 15-kilometer Gurjaani Bypass and the 35-kilometer Tbilisi-Sagarejo highway.
- The construction of the Baghdati-Abastumani, Sachkhere-Oni, Tbilisi-Shatili, Batumi-Akhalsikhe, and other sections of national roads will be finalized.
- Up to 1,500 kilometers of international and national roads will be rehabilitated, and almost 200 overcrossing bridges will be constructed/rehabilitated.

Providing the population with continuous 24/7 quality water supply is one of the Georgian Government's top priorities. To that end, in the coming years, based on the completion of projects planned from 2020 to 2024, continuous water supply will be provided additionally to tens of cities, settlements, and villages, including Khashuri, Telavi, Stepantsminda, Vani, Baghdati, Samtredia, Pasaauri, Matani, Dedoplistskaro, and their villages, the villages of Sighnaghi, Tetrtskaro, Zugdidi, Lanchkhuti, and Chokhatauri, also Gardabani and its villages: Martkopi, Norio, Akhalsopeli, Vaziani, Akhali Samgori, and others.

Consequently, about 2,850,000 subscribers, or 77% of Georgia's population, will enjoy streamlined water supply by 2024.

Waste management in the country will be carried out in line with European standards, and municipal waste collection services will improve throughout the country. Integrated waste management projects are underway and will be completed by 2024 in Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kakheti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Shida Kartli, and Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Work will continue on the development of concepts, schemes, and plans for nationwide and municipal spatial planning, and plans for land use and development regulations for cities, settlements, and villages.

In the course of the next 4 years, almost 20 billion GEL will be invested in the development of the country's infrastructure.

2.7 Energy

The Government's energy policy seeks to enhance energy independence and energy security, also maximal use of domestic resources based on the principles of the area's sustainable development.

To make full use of Georgia's energy potential, and cement the country's energy security, far-reaching energy reform will continue, including:

- To cement free market relations in this field, energy transmission and distribution functions will be separated from energy generation, trade, and provision activities.
- Georgia's energy stock market will start operating at full throttle to ensure the introduction of competitive and open market principles in the energy market.
- From 2021 to 2026, large energy consumers, based on the volume on consumption, will be engaged in the market. In parallel, relevant regulated stations will be regulated based on their capacities.

As for tapping into the country's renewable energy, presently 130 memoranda have been signed, 106 and 4 of which cover the development of medium- and large-capacity HPPs, respectively, and 16 and 4 involve the construction of wind and solar farms, respectively. According to these memoranda, the combined installed capacity of said HPPs reaches 3,486 megawatts, with expected electricity generation at 13,764 billion kilowatt-hours.

In addition, maximally to tap into Georgia's energy potential, and to boost the country's energy security, the following steps will be taken in the following years:

- It is planned to build an underground natural gas storage reservoir. The project will be implemented in 2 phases: 1) research, and 2) the design and construction of the underground natural gas storage reservoir proper. The project's finalization is expected in 2024.
- Energy security will be further boosted. Based on the legislative framework adopted in 2020, energy efficiency standards will be introduced in line with the best international experience.
- With a growing demand on electric power in mind, the construction of systemically important HPPs will continue.
- The development of renewable energy sources and introduction of new technologies will be further supported.
- In order to develop the transit direction, an addition 1,140 kilometers of power transmission lines will be built in Georgia by 2024, including strengthening and enforcing lines connecting to neighboring countries.

2.8 Transport and Logistics

To make full use of the country's transport potential, the relevant transport policy will continue alongside the creation of key infrastructure.

Georgia will continue implementing the Open Skies policy, an approach enabling airlines to define the frequency and rates of flights on their own, this way boosting competition. The Government Program 2021-2024

post-pandemic recovery and development of the aviation industry will be fostered. Work will also continue toward the fast recovery of the pre-pandemic volume in Georgia's airline industry, attraction of new airlines, and development of new destinations.

To bolster the country's transit function, the implementation of a number of projects is planned, including the completion of railroad modernization and the development of port infrastructure. In addition, the Batumi airport terminal and Kutaisi International Airport will be expanded to increase the size of the terminal 5 times and passenger traffic 4 times (about 2 million passengers a year). To improve air traffic safety, and in line with the requirements of European standards, the development and replenishing of navigation infrastructure with modern technologies will continue.

Ensuring road safety is one of the Georgian Government's top priorities. To that end, it is planned to develop and approve the 2021-2025 National Strategy for Road Safety and the 2021-2022 Action Plan, as part of which important activities and measures will be implemented to decrease the number of fatalities and injuries on Georgian roads. In addition, international assistance tools for road safety will be employed even more actively, including with the EU and under the Eastern Partnership cooperation format.

In addition, the following measures will be taken to upgrade the country's transport and logistics function:

- In terms of land transport, a unified electronic/digital platform will be created for services to be used by the sector involved in international transport (freight, passenger).
- We will also continue to adopt the standards of and practices recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), as well as the European regulations prescribed under the European Common Aviation Area Agreement.
- The maritime single-window principle will be introduced by Georgia's ports. Also, fully to digitalize maritime sector services, effective steps will be taken, including probing into the feasibility of adopting the port community system concept.
- The employment of Georgian seafarers will be promoted, and the 2006 Maritime Labor Convention will be ratified, the maritime transport policy will be approved, and the relevant action plan will be implemented. Also, the development of higher maritime education will be supported, including professional education and the research branch of maritime and bordering sectors.
- Investments in maritime transport and maritime infrastructure will be encouraged.
- To enhance the safety and effectiveness of rail transport, and to mitigate rail infrastructure tear and wear and overload, work will continue toward the development of a combination of road and rail transport. In the long run, this service may be

expanded to cover the territories of Georgia and Azerbaijan, which will have a positive impact on the overall volume of Georgia's rail transport.

2.9 Communications and Information Technology

In the age of digital technologies, one of the top priorities of the Georgian Government is to use communications and information technology to develop Georgia's digital economy and information society.

In addition, in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, broadband internet networks and their proper functioning have gained special importance for continuing critically important services in the country, including access to healthcare, education, information, and others.

To maintain the pace of development of Georgia's digital economy and information society, the Government of Georgia will implement an active policy, namely through the following activities:

- In line with the 2020-2025 National Strategy for the Development of Broadband Networks of Georgia, the state program for supporting the development of broadband infrastructure will continue. Consequently, households and administrative bodies will have access to at least 100 megabyte per second and at least 1 gigabyte per second, respectively, which will allow half a million residents in almost 1,000 settlements to enjoy high-quality internet.
- Under the Log in Georgia project, policy legislation will be upgraded to support broadband networks and services, measures to attract investments into the sector, nationwide training and capacity-building programs, assistance to persons with disabilities in using internet and digital services, and others.
- To provide the country's mountainous regions with internet connection, measures to support community internet supply provision will continue.
- Using broadband telecommunications infrastructure, transit potential will be maximally used, and measures will be taken to create a digital transit hub connecting Eurasia via Georgia.
- Measures will continue toward integrating Georgia's digital market into the single EU digital market, including the harmonization of the legislative and normative frameworks for electronic communications and postal services with EU directives.
- The Long-Term National Strategy for the Development of Digital Economy and Information Society and Its Implementation Plan will be developed and approved, based on which—with coordination between and engagement of all relevant organizations—activities will be carried out to promote the development of digital services in the public and private sectors, enhance digital literacy, step up the process of establishment of an information society, growth of hi-tech export, better the

development of research and innovation, and upgrade Georgia's competitiveness in the global digital economy.

2.10 Regional Development

To eliminate inequality in the development of the regions, and to create decent living conditions, the development of various types of municipal, cultural, tourism, sports, educational, and healthcare infrastructure will continue. In particular, 6 billion GEL will be spent in 2021-2024 for the development of municipal infrastructure in the regions, such as the rehabilitation of village roads and smaller rehabilitation works targeting water supply and sewage systems, schools, kindergartens, cultural sites, and athletic infrastructure.

To create new opportunities for economic activity in the regions, new tourist attractions will be created, such as in Abastumani, Mestia, Velistsikhe, Tskaltubo, and others.

Further to empower the system of self-government, and enhance its independence, reforms will seek, above all else, to expand the authority of self-government based on the principles of subsidiarity, also to introduce effective and innovative systems for providing quality services, boost the role of self-government in the development of local economy, and provide self-government with relevant material and financial resources.

Special attention will be paid to the development of mountain areas. Concessions will be further provided as prescribed by the Mountain Law.

2.11 Development of Rural Areas and Agriculture

The key goal of the Government's agricultural policy is to increase agricultural product export and reduce import dependence. In addition, the COVID-10 pandemic has caused new problems and exposed new needs in the direction of the sector's further development and ensuring food safety.

In addition, enhancing competitiveness in the sector of agricultural products, stable production growth, food safety, and the development of rural areas is among the priorities under the state policy on this industry.

Under the unified agricultural policy, the following will be implemented in 2021-2024 to improve living and to increase economic activities conditions in rural areas:

- To increase access to financial tools, and to promote primary agricultural production, processing, storage, and sales, individuals and legal entities will continue to be provided with affordable and accessible monetary assets.
- The following will continue and expand in scope: Support for the primary production of perennial and annual agricultural crops, the co-financing program for processing and storage enterprises, co-financing for greenhouses, a program for financing crop-

harvesting machinery, programs for developing animal farming, support for the sustainable development of aquaculture in sea and internal waters, and access to infrastructure and services.

- The quality and accessibility of means of agricultural production will be ensured.
- To enhance the competitiveness of those employed in agriculture, programs for developing and promoting agricultural cooperatives will continue.
- To reduce risks for those engaged in agricultural activities, the agricultural insurance program will continue and improve further. To protect from unfavorable hydrometeorological events, namely from hail, Shida Kartli, similar to Kakheti, will be provided with hail protection systems.
- To improve the quality and fertility of Georgian agricultural food products, further improvements will be made to effective systems involving measures against harmful organisms and natural disasters.
- Based on the situation in local and international markets, programs to support the sale of agricultural crops will be planned.
- Active work will continue toward exploring new markets and improving positions in existing ones.
- In line with modern requirements, the knowledge/awareness among farmers and entrepreneurs will be further promoted.
- In the next three years, systemic registration of 1.2 million hectares of land will be carried out. In this direction, notary mediation will be actively functioning for finding alternative solutions to possible disputes arising in recordkeeping, to contribute to the effectiveness of the process.
- The privatization of state-owned agricultural lands will be carried out. Leased lands up to 10 hectares will be alienated through direct sales.
- The balance of Georgian lands will be developed, agricultural land resources will be inventoried, and a unified database of land resources will be created.
- The process of aligning with relevant EU legislation, as prescribed by the Association Agreement, will continue in the areas of food safety, veterinary medicine, and phytosanitary.
- To uproot falsified and poor-quality wine products from local and export markets, laboratory studies will be bolstered.
- To ensure water supplies for lands, in excess of 220 million GEL will be invested in the next few years, to ameliorate an additional 40,000 hectares and dewater almost 1,000 hectares of land.

In 2021-2024, to develop the agricultural industry, the state will spend more than 1 billion in financial resources.

2.12 Environmental Protection

Alongside the country's rapid economic development, environmental protection, maintaining its sustainability, and rational use of natural resources, pose a major challenge.

To improve the country's environmental situation, the Georgian Government will implement the following reforms:

- Environmental standards will qualitatively harmonize with European requirements. Almost 150 automated surveillance stations and modern early warning systems will be installed in gorges susceptible to natural disasters.
- The enhancement of air and water monitoring and assessment systems will continue.
- Given the country's social and economic situation, the population's demand on timber resources will be met. Multidirectional use of forests will be developed to result in additional environmental, economic, and social benefits.
- It is planned to establish new protected territories and to expand some of the existing ones (a total of about 185,000 hectares). A new ecotourism infrastructure will be created.
- Measures will continue toward supporting environmental education and raising environmental awareness.
- Throughout the country, a system for separate waste collection will be gradually introduced, and waste reprocessing will be supported.

2.13 Tourism

Tourism is one of the industries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why the efforts of the Government of Georgia, in the next few years, will focus on tackling the consequences of the pandemic and the further development of the tourism sector.

A new vision will be formulated in the area of tourism development. Tourism and its adjacent industries have been hit by the pandemic worse than others. The new strategy for tourism development will be based on the requirements of diversification and qualitative improvement. Support for business in terms of offering quality services will be taken into account, which will contribute to attracting higher-end tourists into the country.

In particular, in order to develop Georgia's tourism potential, the following measures will be planned:

- In terms of tourism recovery and crisis management, a strategic plan will be developed with engagement from the private and public sectors. The document's main objective is to assist Georgia in adopting the Tourism Strategy 2025, based on challenges covering the pandemic and post-pandemic periods, in order to ensure tourism's effective and timely recovery.

- In the course of next 4 years, target countries will diversify, implying growing market shares of the EU and new markets (China, the US, and others). Target countries will be identified and international marketing activities will be implemented based on the global trends of COVID-19 spread.
- In 2023, Georgia will be showcased as Host Country at ITB Berlin 2023, the world's largest and most influential tourism fair.
- To support tourism in the post-pandemic environment, and to increase domestic tourism flows to strengthen the sector, targeted marketing activities will be carried out.
- Expanding qualification enhancement programs for employees and jobseekers in the nationwide tourism sector will result in improved quality services.
- To ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry and improve services, the legislative framework for tourism, aligned with the European Parliament's directive, will be formulated based on the best European practices. Said legislative framework will introduce high standards of traveler safety and consumer rights. In addition, the establishment of this legislative framework will boost coordination between national and regional policies.
- To meet the demands in the international market, new tourist products will be developed, and existing projects will expand.
- The Wine Way program will expand with a new quality standard. The project will cover family-run wineries and enterprises throughout the country which provide hospitality services as part of wine tourism.

Special attention will be paid to the development of mountain resorts. To that end, the following activities will be implemented in the following years:

- To develop ski resorts (Gudauri, Bakuriani, Goderdzi, Tetnuldi, and Hatsvali), ski infrastructure will be developed, and four-season tourist products will be created.
- In 2023, Georgia will host the 2023 Freestyle Ski and Snowboard World Championships, but 12 other international tournaments will also be held here before the championships. Thousands of guests will visit Georgia for the championships.

3. Social Policy and Human Capital Development

The Government's policy cherishes a human being as the supreme value, which is why it focuses on the realization of the potential of each citizen, putting in place a decent healthcare and social security system, on ensuring honorable living conditions for senior citizens, and on creating a system of education dedicated to the development of individual skills and opportunities, and to the forming of competitive workforce, for future generations to be able to realize their potential and for securing a better future.

3.1 Healthcare

Maintaining a quality, universally accessible healthcare system based on the principle of social justice, and its further development, is one of the country's top priorities.

The universal healthcare program will continue to guarantee **universal medical service coverage** for all Georgian citizens. Medications will be further provided to treat chronic diseases among target groups (socially vulnerable, pensioners, veterans, and others), and lists of medications and beneficiaries will be expanded.

Oncology disease management and effective treatment will remain one of the key priorities of the state, and the foundation will be laid for effective modern methods of treatment of oncology diseases.

The **population will be further provided with medical services in priority areas**, and the budget financing for relevant programs will increase. The decentralization of mental health services will continue, and so will the expansion of family-type housing and shelter services, and the retraining of service providing personnel.

The **construction, rehabilitation, and equipping of state-owned priority inpatient facilities** will continue. **Measures will be taken toward adopting digital technologies and telemedicine** in the primary healthcare system. Prevention of diseases with the highest mortality and morbidity rates will continue, and priority will be given to early diagnostics designed to ensure early avoidance of complications.

To enhance effectiveness and quality, a **unified fee policy** will be carried out under the universal healthcare program. The introduction of the diagnosis-related group (DRG) system for medical service fees will continue. Selective provider contracting based on quality standards, accessibility, utilization indicators, and new financing methods will also continue.

For the purpose of improving quality, the development of international mechanisms for voluntary accreditation will be launched. The **regulatory legislative framework for the pharmaceutical industry** will be harmonized with EU legislation, and modern approaches to medication manufacturing, standardization, quality, safety, and effectiveness will be adopted.

To improve postgraduate and continuous professional education, the systemic reform of medical education will be carried out, and so will measures to enact effective mechanisms for the gradual introduction of a mandatory system of continuous medical education and for the recognition of discipline-specific associations/professional organizations.

3.2 Social Security

Maintaining a sustainable system of social security, and its further improvement, is one of the country's top priorities. Accordingly, the Government will continue assisting vulnerable Government Program 2021-2024

groups and implementing targeted social programs to better the conditions of vulnerable groups.

Provision of pensions to persons of retirement age will continue in line with legally prescribed rules, which involve state pension indexation based on economic parameters and, with low taxes in place, secure social guarantees for the population of retirement age. As early as 2021, pensions for pensioners under 70 will increase by 20 GEL, and those for pensioners aged over 70 will grow by 25 GEL.

The methodology for assessing the socioeconomic conditions of socially vulnerable households, and the rules for allocating social assistance will be upgraded. Effective mechanisms for encouraging and assisting employment among able-bodied household members will be developed and implemented.

Social security mechanisms will be improved and enhanced to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children (including children with disabilities and street children). The deinstitutionalization of larger boarding schools continues to secure a family-like environment for persons with disabilities and children.

Efforts will be stepped up to protect children from all types of violence, and to implement the norms enshrined in the Law of Georgia on Social Work and the Code of Children's Rights.

The effective policy of providing refugees with living spaces will continue. Over the next four years, it is planned to improve living conditions for 13,000 refugee and 1,200 ecomigrant families.

3.3 Education

Developed human capital is an important constituent of rapid economic development. A quality education system is key to the development of human capital in that it ensures the competitiveness of Georgian citizens at the local and international levels alike.

Boosting universal access to education and enhancing its quality is one of the key priorities of the Georgian Government. Educational reform requires a systemic and consistent approach, meaning a unified approach from early and preschool education to higher education and science, so that the reform may yield effective, tangible results.

Consequently, Georgia's educational reform is comprehensive to incorporate every level of the system of education.

At the same time, the separation of culture and sports as individual institutional entities is under consideration.

Early and Preschool Education

Government Program 2021-2024

In the area of preschool education, the previous achievements will be built on, and free early and preschool education will be further provided in public institutions, to ensure universal access. Measures will be taken toward securing educational services suitable for children with special needs.

Relevant efforts will continue toward improving remuneration of the employees of preschool institutions and upgrading their qualifications. In the same vein, attention will be paid to attracting young quality human resources into preschool institutions.

In every district compactly populated by non-Georgian-language citizens, the official language will be taught based on a bilingual model, to contribute to improving the readiness of schools and, at the general education level of the educational process and in the long run, to the successful social integration of the non-Georgian-language population of the country.

An integrated electronic system will be created to reflect statistical data on children aged between 1 and 6.

Efforts will continue toward infrastructural improvement. In various municipalities throughout the country, the construction of more than 50 kindergartens will be finalized in line with international standards, and new kindergartens will be established.

General Education

The Government will give priority to significantly improving the quality of general education, the system's development in line with international standards, and attracting young quality human resources into the system. To this end, in the coming years:

- The budget **financing** of general education will increase significantly, and so will the salaries of teachers and school administration personnel.
- Updated standards and procedures will be approved and implemented for general education **quality enhancement**, and supplementary activities will be carried out to meet the standards.
- Differentiated models for **school management** and financing will be developed and implemented.
- Work will continue toward the creation and development of new **national curricula** and relevant learning resources meeting high modern requirements and standards of excellence. A large-scale system for school assessment will be adopted, and the development of electronic resources will be launched.
- To raise the level of education and awareness about **cybersecurity**, teachers will be trained in relevant areas.

- The process of developing new **textbooks** will continue, with upgraded procedures of approval for use in school.
- Components of **inclusive education** will be actively introduced and developed throughout Georgia to enhance access to education for persons with special educational needs and persons with disabilities, and to conduct a learning process suited to their needs.
- A special model for bilingual teaching will be widely introduced in the curricula of **non-Georgian-language schools**.
- A policy will be defined for the integration into the learning process of **those left without education**, and an alternative curriculum will be put in place for them.
- A remote course in the Georgian language will be made available for **representatives of the diaspora**. Measures toward raising awareness will be implemented to promote inclusive education.
- To ensure school **safety and public order**, flexible and result-oriented mechanisms will be developed for planning and implementing preventive activities and for receiving psychosocial services, the number of public schools employing the services of the Mandaturi Service will increase, and programs will be implemented to retrain Mandaturi officers, psychologists, social workers, and persons authorized to protect safety.
- A new rule for regulating the profession of a teacher will be developed, measured toward **teachers' continuous development** will be implemented, based on their professional needs.
- Remote and hybrid teaching methodologies will be gradually upgraded.
- The development of school infrastructure will continue. In 2021, the construction of 57 fully adapted schools and the reinforcement/full rehabilitation of 91 public schools in need of renovation will continue, based on the requirements for creating a suitable environment for schoolchildren with special educational needs. With financing from the Government of Georgia and donor organizations, it is planned to rehabilitate and build public schools in 2021-2024, namely the finalization of construction of 47 schools and reinforcement/full rehabilitation of 80 schools.

Higher Education

In the course of the next four years, the following activities will be carried out to develop the system of higher education:

- Budget **financing** for higher education will increase.

- A **new model for financing** the system of higher education will be developed, to ensure the sustainable development of educational institutions and focus the educational process on the results of learning.
- Measures designed to support **quality enhancement** will be carried out.
- A single concept will be developed for scientific research activities and doctoral **program assessment**.
- The state will assist the acquisition of **international accreditation for higher education curricula**.
- The program Study in Georgia will continue.
- To **ensure access**: Financing will continue for participants of one-year educational programs for teacher training. Special educational programs for teacher training will be launched, and the training program for postgraduate education will continue for persons living in the occupied territories. Activities to assist convicts in studying toward bachelor's and master's degrees will continue.
- Georgia will prepare for becoming an Erasmus+ program country. As a result, Georgia, besides higher education and youth components, will enjoy access to every other component of the program.
- Schools of higher education will be further financed to improve their infrastructure and learning environments.

Vocational Education

The development of vocational education, as an important tool for evening out the disbalance between demand and supply in the labor market, will remain one of the priorities of the Government of Georgia. To that end, the following activities will be implemented in the course of the next four years:

- Budget **financing** for vocational education will increase, and a model focusing on the results of financing for vocational education will be launched.
- **Long-term strategies** and relevant action plans will be developed for the advancement of the system of vocational education for 2021 and subsequent years.
- Through public-private partnership, a new model for the management of the system of vocational education will be introduced. The role of **sectoral unions and the private sector** will be decisive in the process of preparing and implementing vocational education curricula.
- **Access** to vocational education and training/retraining programs will be enhanced, and mechanisms will be developed for identifying vulnerable groups outside vocational education and engaging them in vocational education. Professional standards for

vocational education teachers, and a new model for training, entering the profession, and continuous professional development will be approved.

- A new model will be enacted for result-oriented **remuneration** of vocational education teachers.
- To **enhance the quality** of vocational education, the process of adopting new standards for a new framework of qualification and the authorization of vocational schools will continue. A new European system of crediting and a model for the development of professional qualifications will be adopted with the participation of/by the private sector.
- The number of dual professional training **programs** and programs demanded in the market will increase, based on which employment among vocational education graduates will increase. A regulatory framework will be defined for short-cycle programs, which will be launched to admit students. The scope of integrated programs will expand.
- The **recognition of informal education** will commence, and the scope of recognition will expand.
- To **internationalize** the system of vocational education, opportunities will be offered for international certification to implement international exchange programs and boost English language learning.
- An **electronic system** will be put in place for the **management** of vocational education, and a new vocational education portal will be developed.
- To develop **infrastructure**, 6 vocational education schools will be built, 2 campuses will be developed, and 3 vocational education schools will be fully rehabilitated in various municipalities of the country. New vocational education schools will be established, as need be. Activities will be carried out to expand the existing geographic scope in the public-private format. The delivery of vocational education will be boosted in schools and universities.

3.4 Science

A **strategic plan** for the development of science and technologies in Georgia will be developed and approved. The main goal of the strategy will be to promote the development of institutions focusing on the country's strategic development and public needs.

It is also planned to **expand financing** for scientific **grant competitions** in engineering, science, and technology (STEM), humanitarian, and Georgian studies, and fundamental studies will also be expanded.

Cooperation between foreign-based Georgian and foreign academic and scientific personnel and the Georgian scientific community will be a subject of special care.

The commercialization of applied sciences researches will be bolstered.

In the coming years, state **financing** for science will increase, and so will the salaries of scientists, and a model for result-based financing will be adopted.

To **retrain Georgian scholars of all generations**, and to provide them with new knowledge and new competences, and better to organize them in the modern global scientific space, the project School on Science Management will be implemented.

The **science management** system will be upgraded, and the state will define minimal mandatory standards for scientific research institutions and will support the improvement of the performance quality of scientific research institutions operating in Georgia.

The active engagement of scientific institutions and research groups in **international framework programs and scientific projects**, and the implementation of bilateral and multilateral scientific research and technology projects, will be encouraged. Relevant legislative guarantees will be provided, and the support will be secured for the engagement of Georgian researchers in grant competitions under Horizon Europe, an EU research and innovation program.

Scientific infrastructure will be upgraded to align with international standards.

3.5 Youth Policy

The state, recognizing the significant role of youth in the process of the country's development, is creating, for youth and in cooperation with youth, an ecosystem conducive to development which ensures the full realization of their potential, economic empowerment, and active involvement in social life and democratic processes.

The goal stated above is served by Georgia's 2020-2030 Youth Policy Concept approved by the Parliament of Georgia. To implement the strategic priorities defined in this concept document, the Government of Georgia will, in the nearest future, approve the State Youth Strategy 2025.

Along with the implementation of the state youth policy, special attention will be paid to the active involvement of youth in decision-making on issues important to them, including on the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of youth policies and programs.

To promote employment among youth, access to career consultation will expand, and the development of youthplatform.gov.ge, the online information's center's youth capacity platform, will continue.

International cooperation will expand in the direction of youth policy and youth activities.

3.6 Culture

To achieve the goals and objectives of the Culture Strategy 2025, state programs and activities will continue and expand to support the development of the field of culture.

Regulatory **legislation** will be upgraded, including cultural heritage legislation (tangible, intangible, natural heritage).

A flexible, European-standard culture **management** model and an effective financing mechanism will be put in place.

To modernize and upgrade the area of culture management, **fresh human resources will be attracted and resources will be mobilized** to work on priority directions, new initiatives will be introduced, and the material and technical framework will be gradually regulated. **Modern technologies** will be adopted in cultural heritage research and rehabilitation work.

Cultural resources will be actively used to develop tourism and creative entrepreneurship. To translate the best international practices into local practices, targeted programs will be carried out to counter new challenges.

Activities will be boosted toward ensuring modern cultural infrastructure, using modern technologies, and initiatives supporting **integration into the digital world** of culture, all of which will offer additional employment and creative self-realization opportunities to artists.

Special attention in **arts education** will be paid to the development of programs focusing on the empowerment of academic and scientific human resources in schools of arts, to supporting innovative methods and technologies in the area of modern arts, and to promoting initiatives of young artists.

The process of **European integration** will continue. Activities will also continue to raise the awareness of the international community about Georgia and its culture, and participation in international programs and events will increase. Support will be provided for deepening international cultural relations in bilateral and multilateral formats, and engaging regional artistic institutions and groups in the country's unified cultural space, also for their participation in the international arena.

Access to culture will be widened for the public at large, especially for the populations of the regions, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities. Support will be provided for preserving the cultural identity of ethnic minorities and the development of creative skills among persons with disabilities.

3.7 Sports

State **financing** for mass and high-performance sports will increase.

To develop **professional sports**, the preparation of the country's national teams, and their participation in international athletic events, will continue, and so will learning/training retreats, Georgia's championships and tournaments, promotion of various sports, and support for the development of national sports.

Active support will continue for **hosting international championships/tournaments in various sports in Georgia**. The country will host such important **international athletic events** as the 2023 Freestyle Ski and Snowboard World Championships and the European Under-21 Football Championship.

Activities will continue to support **social assistance** programs targeting meritorious sports figures, veteran athletes, and sports coaches operating in the country's mountain areas, also Olympic champions, promising athletes, and winners of international tournaments.

An effective system will be put in place to review sports disputes. A model will be adopted to **protect the rights of athletes** and engage them in decision-making. In line with the Strategy and Action Plan for the Development of Sports Infrastructure, an effective model for sports infrastructure management will be created based on effective cooperation between the public and private sectors. International-standard sports infrastructure will be built.

4. State Governance

The effective implementation of the Government's policy will build on a professional, honest, and streamlined system of state governance, and far-reaching steps will be taken in the coming years toward its development and the empowerment of state institutions.

The strengthening of the public governance reform, and cooperation with international partners in this process, will remain the Government's priority. The reform focuses primarily on enhancing the effectiveness of public governance and make the outcomes tangible for every citizen.

The public governance reform plays a pivotal role on Georgia's path to EU integration, a crucial priority in the formation of the Government's vision. Cooperation will continue with EU and Eastern partnership member states on further empowering Georgia's institutions with resources capable of coping with the challenges of modern public governance in line with high international standards, and of transforming into regional leaders.

The Government, with maximal engagement from experts, and local and international organizations, will develop a new strategy for public governance reform to define priority directions and areas for 2021-2024.

Open governance and Georgia's successful membership of the Open Government Partnership (GOP) remain key preconditions for securing high standards of governance. In an updated format of cooperation with civil society, the Government will develop a new action plan of Georgia's open governance which, in order to improve accountability, transparency, and openness, will define concrete goals and objectives.

To ensure the fundamental reform of public governance and good governance, the Government's efforts will be channeled in several directions, including:

- A robust legislative framework will be created at both central and local levels to ensure the proper and even policy planning at every level. To that end, the policy's document quality control will be tightened, and opportunities for public servants will grow.
- To ensure the success of the public service reform, all public institutions will continue human capital development, the Civil Service Bureau will be institutionally empowered, and effective, innovative modern systems of professional development will be fostered in public institutions.
- Through consistently deconcentrating and decentralizing the system of state governance, the Government will prioritize the successful implementation of the approved decentralized policy. The Government seeks to establish successful European-standard local self-government by 2024 and successfully finalize the process of transforming sectoral-centralized governance into effective local-territorial governance.
- To upgrade state and municipal services, a single standard will be developed for service creation, delivery, quality assurance, and evaluation—one that will allow for ensuring user engagement and even simpler access to services. The foregoing, along with physical services, will also upgrade online services and allow for digitalizing new, additional state services. Through this umbrella policy, the country will have the first fair and transparent standard for pricing state services.
- Cementing the safety of critical infrastructure and the development of electronic services will remain the Government's priority, also to encompass enhanced access to electronic services. To that end, the country's Second Digital Governance Strategy and Action Plan will be developed. The Government seeks to digitalize public institutions' internal processes for greater effectiveness and further to upgrade and enhance remote services for ensuring greater availability and effectiveness, on one hand, and to offer citizens and businesses simplified, user-oriented, and quality electronic state services in line with international standards for personal data protection, on the other. The importance of this direction became especially evident under the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, work will continue to introduce additional quality services allowing for electronic signing and sealing, which will significantly step up the process of service

delivery and will enable citizens and organizations to enjoy state services remotely and safely.

- To develop remote services, an electronic program and new catalogs will be developed for the services provided by researchers at the National Archives.
- Work will also continue toward electronic archiving to ensure reliable storage of electronic documents.
- To upgrade the quality of access to public information, relevant the legislative framework will be revised and upgraded.
- Issues related to the creation of legal entities of public law will be regulated on a legislative level and, to categorize presently operating legal entities of public law, their functional analysis will be conducted in line with legally prescribed requirements. Also, legally prescribed concrete requirements will be defined for the establishment of legal entities of public law by state government bodies (local self-governments).
- To enhance accountability and responsibility, the system of public finance distribution and management will be upgraded. In the same vein, standards will be defined for submitting, publishing, and publicly presenting annual reports on the implementation programs and projects, at both central and local levels.
- To ensure effective state governance, the fight against corruption will intensify. The active implementation of anticorruption policy (strategy and action plan), also the introduction of international mechanisms for preventing corruption, will continue. Public awareness about corruption-related crimes and methods to fight them will be enhanced.
- Monitoring of property declarations of government officials will continue, and the current electronic system will be upgraded to allow for identifying not only incomplete or erroneous information, but also for preventing possible cases of conflict of interests, an especially important factor for ensuring the comprehensive implementation of monitoring efforts.