

The Judicial Independence and Legal Empowerment Project (JILEP) in Georgia

The **East-West Management Institute (EWMI)** is implementing the **Judicial Independence and Legal Empowerment Project (JILEP)** in Georgia, a four-year initiative funded by the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**. JILEP is structured around four components:

- 1. Strengthen judicial independence**, accountability, and professionalism by supporting the development of the High Council of Justice (HCOJ), charged with appointing, advancing, and disciplining judges. EWMI will work with the HCOJ to develop written procedures and performance evaluation tools for assessing judicial performance and guiding advancement and disciplinary decisions. EWMI will also work with the HCOJ to improve its transparency and public outreach, and to increase access to information in the courts. Under this component of the project, EWMI will also help to strengthen the long term sustainability and training capacity of Georgia's judicial training center, the High School of Justice (HSOJ).
- 2. Strengthen the institutional capacity of legal professional associations**, legal rights NGOs, and the state legal aid system. EWMI, working in conjunction with its sub-awardee the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), will implement a grants program targeting court performance monitoring, public education, and providing representation to underserved elements of Georgian society. The project will also support the work of a coalition of NGOs that will coordinate efforts and be the basis for continued work in this area after the conclusion of the project. Also, EWMI will strengthen the institutional capacity of the Legal Aid Service (LAS) through targeted assistance to its Monitoring Board. Access to justice will also be strengthened through grants supporting the work of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) and Transparency International – Georgia in this area.
- 3. Improve the quality of legal education** by improving the accreditation process, introducing more practical skills training, making more specialized training available, and establishing a collaborative relationship with US law schools. EWMI will establish two centers of learning in two Georgian law schools, and partner them with US law schools. One center will focus on dispute resolution skills, including the use of mediation and trial advocacy, and the other will focus on commercial law issues. The component will also foster the expansion of clinical legal education and will advise the National Accreditation Center (NEAC) on setting/implementing program

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accreditation standards for law schools. Finally, this component will also increase the capacity of the Georgian Bar Association to provide continuing legal education (CLE) programs.

4. Develop commercial law and improve commercial law related practice.

EWMI will support the development of training modules on commercial law for use in the law schools, the HSOJ, and the bar. In addition, the project will award grants to monitor commercial law developments and their disposition in the courts and educate the public on commercial law issues and property rights. This component will also strengthen awareness of and access to alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and the use of arbitration.

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