

Community Participation Institutional Capacity Building
SME Development VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GENDER TOURISM
CLIMATE CHANGE CYBERSECURITY
Domestic Revenue Mobilization Migration
Public Administration Intellectual Property Rights
ENVIRONMENT SOLAR ENERGY
Labor Market and Employment CSO Development
Monitoring and Evaluation WASTE MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL Access to Finance YOUTH
REPORT 2024 TRANSPORT
ENERGY POLICY E-GOVERNANCE
PUBLIC SECURITY EDUCATION
Doing Business Reform Water and Wastewater
Value Chain Analytics Management
RESEARCH Local Governance
Public Finance Management Biodiversity
TRADE Urban and Rural Development



Inspiring change,
creating value, fostering
collaboration, and
ultimately having a
meaningful impact on
people, governments,
businesses, and civil
societies across various
industries



Chairman's Letter

When we first started working on this report, which reflects the many achievements and impacts we made in 2024 including geographical expansion and financial growth, radical changes were sweeping across the globe, especially in the international development industry. Indeed, for various sectors and services, these significant changes have reshaped overall demand and also altered the range of actors involved in the field.

In response, we have had to demonstrate resilience as we adapt to a new reality. The necessary transition we have undertaken has been challenging but PMCG continues to respond swiftly and smartly to the nascent status quo.

A substantial part of PMCG's work over the years has been accomplished through valued partnerships with US institutions (such as USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the U.S. Missions). As we look ahead, we understand the need for greater diversification, working with both bilateral and multilateral organizations. That includes cooperating with new clients like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the African Development Bank, and other organizations. Our primary objective is to obtain direct contracts with large clients, including government institutions and agencies.

We remain committed to our long-standing core focus areas, particularly governance and public finance management, which continue to be fundamental for every country's development. At the same time, we are intensifying our work in areas relatively new to us, including technology (with a focus on the increasingly omnipresent AI), and deepening our already substantial expertise in private sector development and security, as highlighted throughout this document.

In the private sector specifically, we are building on the rich experience gained Financial Innovation Program (FIP) to support further development. This foundation enables us to deliver progress by crafting new ideas, introducing financial innovations and tools, and promoting best practices in corporate governance.

Elsewhere, we have already acquired deep experience in security, which we recognize as one of the most critical challenges in today's evolving reality. With that in mind, we are broadening our engagement in cyber security, critical infrastructure, and public safety.

Another key area on which we are focused is international trade, having worked notably in this field in CAREC and Middle East countries. The current global situation might be bringing the relevance of the WTO frameworks into question, but we are certain that these remain essential and will thus continue to provide high-level expertise and develop strategic profiles to keep these pillars of the global economy as robust as ever.

Meanwhile, in the energy, transport, and logistics sectors, our active work is supporting their growth and resilience. Significantly, the post-pandemic period has witnessed conflicts that have in turn triggered the development of new supply chain corridors. In particular, we are committed to supporting the rising Middle Corridor, by helping to strengthen regional connectivity and ensure more reliable and efficient trade routes for the future.

Very importantly, these rapid and far-reaching changes are transforming the lives of people across the labor force. While many have faced unexpected job losses, we observe with encouragement that these hardships are also giving rise to new beginnings and the formation of new kinds of partnerships.

In conclusion, 2024 was defined by major breakthroughs, and was our most successful year yet. Now, as we navigate the external challenges that make 2025 our most demanding year to date, we remain focused on progress. This is not just a test, but a turning point: a gateway to new technologies, new areas of expertise, new geographies, and new partnership mechanisms. We are resilient and ready for everything ahead.

ALEKSI ALEKSHVILI,
Chairman and CEO

Meet PMCG's Board

The purposes of the board of PMCG are supporting the company's strategic development and innovation, exploring new business ideas, facilitating sustainable growth, providing strategic direction, and guiding quality improvement.



Mr. Aleksishvili is Chairman and CEO at PMCG. He served as a Minister of Economic Development of Georgia, and moved on to become Minister of Finance (MoF). He has also held the position of Chairman of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development. He holds a master's degree in International Development Policy from Duke University with a major in Public Finances and Management (USA).



Dr. Japaridze is responsible for strategic management and daily operations. She has previous management expertise in both public and private institutions, as well as international development institutions, focusing on organizational development, fundraising, quality assurance and coordination. She holds a PhD in Oriental Studies from Javakishvili State University, and a Master's degree in International Development from Western Michigan University (USA).



Dr. Kharebava manages infrastructure development project portfolio, supporting partners in waste management, environment, climate change, water management and wastewater handling, energy, and transport. He has previously worked in government institutions, served as an advisor to Prime Minister of Georgia on Economic Issues. Mr. Kharebava holds a PhD in Mathematics from North Carolina State University (USA).



Dr. Khishtovani, manages PMCG's research and analytics services. He has international experience in public, private and non-governmental organizations as a researcher, trainer, consultant and project manager within the framework of various international projects. He holds a PhD degree in Economics from the University of Bremen (Germany).



Mr. Broladze, PMP, joined PMCG in 2008 as a Public Sector Consulting Director and in 2012 he became Deputy CEO, coordinating policy advising, capacity building and institutional development projects at PMCG. In prior, he was a Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, and a Head of the Tax and Customs Policy Division at the Ministry of Tax Revenues of Georgia, as well as the head of the Department of Statistics (National Statistical Office) in Georgia. He holds MSc in Policy Economics from the University of Illinois (USA).



Mr. Dershem leads PMCG's monitoring and evaluation practice. He is experienced in the design of social and behavioral surveys, research for program development, design and oversight of program evaluations, as well as in capacity-building. Mr. Dershem held the positions of Senior Advisor in Research & Evaluation, and Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor at Save the Children, and was responsible for 11 Country Offices in the Middle East and Eurasia Region. He is a member of various professional organizations, and has authored a number of books, papers, and publications.



Mr. Lezhava leads and oversees a portfolio of public policy projects, collaborating with partners, clients and international development organizations.. Previously he has served as a Deputy Minister of Finance of Georgia (MoF), worked with international development organizations and National Bank of Georgia He holds a master's degree in Development Economics from Williams College (USA).



Mr. Meskhia is responsible PMCG's strategic development, expansion, and identifying new markets and product opportunities. He has accumulated experience in public finance management, and institutional building and capacity development, dealing with public and private organizations. He holds a master's degree in Economics from the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET)(Georgia).



Mr. Shigeo Katsu has three decades of experience working with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in Europe and Central Asia in the fields of infrastructure, trade, and transitional economies. During 2011-2012, he served as the chair of the US Board of Restless Development. He is currently the President of the Nazarbayev University in Astana.



Mr. Van Der Sleen has professional consulting experience across 50 different countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He served on the position of CEO and Chairman of the Board of Management at Ecorys Netherlands, where he was primarily responsible for leading the development of the company's strategy, operational performance, market renewal, and product innovation.



Mr. Tavadze leads PMCG's work related to enhancing institutional and human capacity of various organizations. He is a Certified Performance Techno-logist (CPT), with more than 20 years of professional experience in capacity and institutional development, policy planning, business process analyses, monitoring and evaluation, utilizing performance measurement instruments for local and central level public agencies or nongovernmental organizations internationally.



Ambassador Yalowitz served as a US diplomat for 36 years before leading the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College from 2003 to 2011. He currently works as Director of the Conflict Resolution M.A. Program at Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.). Mr. Yalowitz is a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

A Window into PMCG's World

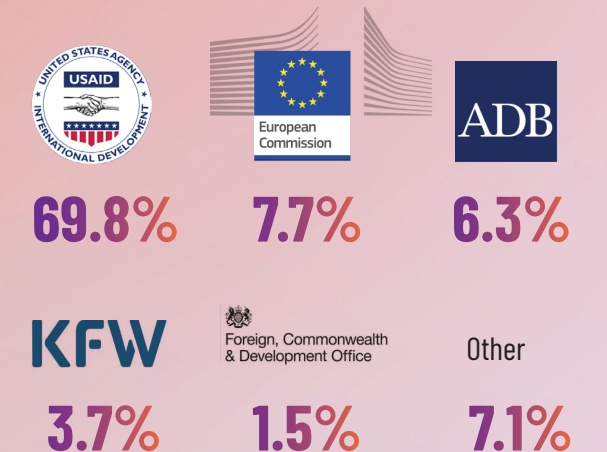
Countries in which we have worked



Revenue and Numer of Projects by Services 2024

Policy Advising	63%
Number of projects	27
Institutional Development	11.3%
Number of projects	13
Engineering Consulting	9.4%
Number of projects	11
Research	9.2%
Number of projects	19
Monitoring and Evaluation	7.1%
Number of projects	8

Revenue by Origin of Funding 2024



Revenue by Sectors 2024

Governance	44%	Energy, Transport	6%
Including Cyber Security, Critical Infrastructure		Including Waste into Energy	
Economic Growth	32%	Public Finance Management	6%
Including International Trade, Business Enabling Environment		Including Fiscal Self Reliance, Public Procurement, Domestic Revenue Mobilisation	
Education, Human Development	8%	Waste, Water and Environment	4%
		Waste Management	

Turnover (2024)

\$ 8,652,587

Number of Awarded Projects (2024)

29

Contracted Consultants Annually

>400

Turnover average Growth Rate (last 5 years)

26%

Number of Economic and Policy Publications (2024)

80

Number of Implemented Projects (2024)

78

Sales average Growth Rate (last 5 years)

14%

Pool of Consultants

>7500

**Guiding effective policies, fostering
organizational efficiency, and
empowering the workforce**

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**POLICY AND
INSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Guiding effective policies, fostering organizational efficiency, and empowering the workforce

We provide Policy Advising services to support governments respond people's existing and foreseeable needs by reimagining and designing public policies across a wide range of sectors, including economic growth, governance, public finance, education, cybersecurity, environment and climate change, agriculture and others.

As part of our Institutional Development services, we work with organizations from both the public and private sectors to help them build their capacities to change and achieve greater productivity by developing, improving, and reinforcing strategies, structures, and processes. We transform inefficient bureaucracies into modern, capable, and transparent structures to efficiently enforce legislation and improve service delivery.

We provide Capacity Development services to prepare employees of public organizations, private organizations, and CSOs, as well as those entering the labor market with the tools and skills needed to conduct productive and high-quality work that will guarantee organizational success. While Capacity Development comprises part of our wider efforts to help employees adapt to labor market changes, it is also delivered as an independent service.

Particularly, we concentrate on the following:

- Policy Analysis;
- Strategy and Action Plan Development;
- Public Private Dialogue (PDD);
- Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA);
- Capital Investment Plan Development;
- Study Tour;
- Training Needs Assessment;
- Organizational Design;
- Change Management;
- Performance Assessment and Management;
- Human Resource Management;
- Public Relations and Communication;
- Trainings, Coaching, Mentoring;
- Business Plan Development; and
- Business Process Modeling and Optimization.

GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of Tetra Tech, kept its contribution to the USAID Local Governance Program going, to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and citizen-responsiveness of targeted local governments. It also strengthened accountability across the local governance ecosystem, and fostered inclusive and user-centered public services at the subnational level, while supporting central-level institutions in managing decentralization and public administration reform.

Throughout 2024, we worked towards enhancing public administration and accountability systems by enhancing the functionality and efficiency of local self-governments (LSGs).

Specifically, PMCG's in-depth study analyzed the structure of

revenue streams, identified the main hindrances, and proposed viable solutions through which partner municipalities could adopt more ambitious and effective approaches.

Meanwhile, PMCG supported the Committee on Regional Policy and Local Self-Government in conducting a thematic inquiry into the uneven development of municipalities obstructing the decentralization process, and built the Committee's capacity to conduct further inquiries. Moreover, we facilitated regular PPDs in 11 partner municipalities, developing research methodology as well as a PPD guide and recommendations on feasible interventions to institutionalize municipal-level PPD.

In addition, PMCG took a comprehensive and systematic approach to promote sectoral competitiveness, inter-





municipal cooperation, and policy advocacy to address various dimensions of sectoral development and support sustainable economic growth.

Furthermore, PMCG supported the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) in accomplishing Task 2.2 (improvement of the mechanisms of state resources distribution) of the 2022-2023 Decentralization Strategy Action Plan. We also conducted energy efficiency audits of selected municipal buildings. These assessed energy consumption levels, determined compatibility with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for Buildings, and recommended energy-saving measures to reduce costs and environmental impact. The assignment aimed to enhance the capacity of public and private sector representatives, along with civil society actors, by broadening knowledge of fundamental principles of energy efficiency, and fostering awareness regarding the Law of Georgia on Energy Efficiency.

In western Georgia, we assessed the degree to which Kutaisi Municipality's website met Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments, while also supporting partner municipalities to enhance their technical capabilities in using the Electronic Human Resource Management System (eHRMS) platform.

We also backed Chokhatauri, Batumi, and Lentekhi municipalities in applying for the OGP Local 2024 Cohort and in developing strategic visions and local action plans.

Elsewhere, our support of the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia (CSB) helped to develop a methodology that rates its additional professional development programs, while we also conducted a participatory gender audit of Tbilisi City Council.

For Akhaltsikhe Municipality, we provided guidance in developing its 2nd OGP local action plan, and for the Government of Georgia we supported the establishment of state standards for waste management.

Our work in 2024 enabled partner municipalities to enhance their construction permit management capacities, while also boosting civil servants' skills through inter-municipal cooperation in the regions of Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo Svaneti and Shida Kartli.

In the course of 2024, PMCG's efforts increased communities' understanding and appreciation of (and capacity to engage with) LSGs, encouraging them to utilize social accountability and transparency mechanisms to demand citizen-responsive local governance and service delivery.

Specifically, PMCG developed a manual empowering civil society actors and citizens active at the municipal level to engage with LSGs effectively. Moreover, PMCG's support developed civil-society-led communications strategy on decentralization, good governance principles, and citizen-centered public service delivery.

Relatedly, we contributed to enhancing the capacity of the MRDI and other central-level stakeholders to implement, manage, and oversee decentralization strategy and action plans.

Moreover, our responsibilities covered exploring and piloting opportunities for decentralization, and establishing long-term, sustainable national partnerships (including with civil society, private sector, municipal, and business associations) thereon.

UKRAINE: USAID GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY (HOVERLA) ACTIVITY

PMCG was engaged in the USAID Governance and Local Accountability (HOVERLA) Activity in Ukraine, led by DAI Global. This program supported Ukraine in advancing the self-reliance of its local governance including with respect to legislative reforms, participatory strategic planning methodologies, service improvement, local economic development, civil society engagement, and building the capacity of sub-national government entities.

In 2024, underpinned by a comprehensive approach to improving local governance, economic development, and infrastructure management in Ukraine, PMCG's contributions to the HOVERLA Activity spanned the following diverse areas:

- Geographic Information System (GIS)-based Analytical Portals:** We launched eight GIS-based analytical portals in key oblasts (Lviv, Poltava, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Odesa, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv) and Kyiv City, and mentored local government staff on how to utilize these tools effectively. These portals, which enable data-driven decision making, were crucial in addressing urban planning challenges and managing the influx of 240,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 230 relocated enterprises in Lviv Oblast. They have also supported emergency response and planning by providing real-time data on available facilities, housing, and public infrastructure, as well as information on socio-economic factors, the environment, and investment assets.
- Spatial Planning and Asset Management:** We assisted 15 CTCs in developing terms of reference for their comprehensive spatial plans, six of which have already advanced to full plan preparation with grant support from HOVERLA. In addition, HOVERLA co-hosted a national spatial planning conference with the Ministry of Communities and Territorial Development (MCTD), gathering 700 officials and experts to discuss Ukraine's spatial planning challenges.
- Local Economic Development (LED):** PMCG provided technical guidance in the preparation and implementation of large grants in the LED field. This included supporting the development of strategies for communities, local performance programs, and economic profiles. By fostering LED, PMCG contributes to the financial sustainability and growth of local communities across Ukraine, showcasing and sharing its expertise in economic development planning.
- Construction and Reconstruction:** PMCG supported local governments to identify their infrastructure reconstruction needs, developed construction implementation plans, and conducted needs assessments. Specifically, the PMCG team ensured transparency in design and costing, coordinating closely with local governments. Ultimately, PMCG played a crucial role in overseeing reconstruction activities, promoting accountability and effective project execution.
- Own-source Revenue (OSR):** PMCG assisted in drafting an activities and implementation timeline, contributing to OSR generation in the selected communities. Specifically, we conducted a brief needs assessment of selected communities on their capacity for OSR (given their limited resources), and then identified potential ways in a final report consisting of recommendations for certain regions, proposing the idea of running study tours for municipalities to demonstrate to them the best international practices. In addition, a presentation was given and a training titled "International experience of administration of local taxes and fees" was conducted.
- Coaching Program for Municipal Leadership:** PMCG designed the Coaching Program for Municipal Leadership for 76 participants, including mayors of CTCs of 9 HOVERLA oblasts and officials from the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. The Program included a 2-day online training



for 70 participants (CTC mayors and SES officials) and five 45-minute in-person sessions for every participant to prepare and/or monitor individual coaching plans. Crucially, the trainers developed trusting and professional relationships with their clients, creating a conducive climate for their ongoing cooperation.

- **Institutional Capacity Building in Asset Management:** PMCG worked to strengthen the institutional capacity of local governments and their executive bodies in asset management. This involved developing municipal property registers to assist in accounting for communal property assets, ensuring effective monitoring of their use. In addition, PMCG also provided direct consultations for local government specialists on various aspects, including land lease relations, land management documentation development, and legal issues related to communal property.
- **Organizational Performance Assessment:** PMCG conducted organizational performance index (OPI) assessments for selected partner CTCs local government associations, and CSOs, carried out OPI learning sessions and delivered consultations and recommendations to the entities. We also helped them to prepare organizational development plans, and provided recommendations for further customization of OPI tools.
- **Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM):** PMCG contributed to the development of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy (ISWM) and recycling/waste separation practices, with the aim of utilizing ISWM outputs in partner regions and CTCs. It has facilitated a national dialogue through conferences and events, providing recommendations, training, and support. Meanwhile, PMCG conducted training on the nuances of Law No. 2207-1d "On Waste Management" in relation to contemporary ISWM practices for local government officials, local elected officials, starostas, civil society actors, and professionals responsible for local policy on SWM as well as representatives of communal enterprises.
- **Capacity Building for Partner CTCs:** HOVERLA has supported 103 CTCs across 11 oblasts. During a November 2023 forum in Odesa, 78 Office of Municipal Affairs representatives and 33 local government officials from project CTCs participated in discussions with HOVERLA to identify where support should be prioritized. PMCG thus contributed to developing and implementing a comprehensive support package, focusing on economic recovery, financial stability, and governance capacity. During 2024 alone, HOVERLA built local governments' capacity to implement the Law on Administrative Procedure by training 576 local officials from 319 CTCs.

The training covered the functions of administrative commissions and led to the updating of six model acts regulating their legal status within local councils. The reforms ensure that local governments can operate within the newly established legal framework, thereby increasing transparency and accountability.

- **Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024 (URC2024):** At a Berlin conference, PMCG facilitated participation of two communities, namely the Zakarpattia Oblast Military Administration (OMA) and the Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils. Being at the event enabled these entities to pitch their recovery and development projects to international investors, businesses, and CSOs.

HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (HICD)

PMCG, as a subcontractor of the Kaizen Company (Tetra Tech ARD) worked on USAID's five-year Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Activity in Georgia. Its goal was to achieve sustainable results in the human and institutional capacity development of key strategic partner institutions from the public, private, as well as NGO sectors to boost Georgia's self-resilience.

Pursuing Activity goals, PMCG implemented various projects benefitting numerous organizations, some of which are detailed below:

- **Civil Service Bureau (CSB)** – Gaps were identified in the activities of the CSB which was offered a package of recommendations. Their implementation would allow the Bureau to effectively meet the expectations of the Georgian government, the Parliament, other administrative bodies involved in public policy, consumers, and beneficiaries.



- **Public Defender of Georgia (PDO)** – Three particular projects stand out here. The first focused on institutionalizing best human resources management (HRM) practices through consultancy and capacity-building services. The second entailed a comprehensive assessment of the PDO's IT infrastructure, and established a unified vision for the agency's most acceptable IT design. The PDO's business processes were also examined to determine the right enterprise architecture and blueprint for its operational goals. Finally, the third project assessed and determined risk levels related to entity features, budget, procurement, cash management and treasury, accounting and reporting, internal control, IT, audit and compliance, and fraud in the PDO, after which USAID would consider entering into a government-to-government (G2G) development activity agreement.
- **Georgian Association for Public Opinion Research (GAPOR)** – We helped to develop core strategic documents, a service provision manual, and a draft of the transparency initiative alongside providing expertise/consultancy to strengthening the GAPOR's capacity and systems.
- **Sakpatenti** – The project aimed to strengthen the agency's PR practices to enhance its visibility.
- **Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD)** – In one project, we supported the Ministry in developing the concept of a formal mediation body acting as an intermediary to assist competing parties in resolving labor-related conflicts within the whole MoESD system including subordinated agencies, LEPLs, and state-owned companies. In addition, our work in another project covered actual implementation of the labor dispute resolution/mediation concept developed through building the capacity of selected candidates to join the labor dispute management council.
- **Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)** – Here, the first project in which we were involved assisted the GYLA's leadership, enhancing its organizational effectiveness through functional analysis and designing an optimal new structure. Specific responsibilities were outlined at both structural and individual levels, empowering the GYLA to achieve its mission and objectives more effectively. The second project assisted GYLA leadership in devising an organizational development strategy and its corresponding action plans, linking specific programs and employee-level objectives to top-level organizational goals.
- **Georgian Hazelnuts Growers Association (GHGA)** – Support provided under this project strengthened the GHGA's institutional capacities, strategic planning, and performance management and monitoring. A long-term



organizational strategy and action plan were developed, with an updated organizational structure guiding the association in implementing its 10-year sector development plan.

- **National Agency of Public Registry** – A unified framework for data creation, processing, storage, and access was developed, with a view to institutionalizing an integrated data management system, and to issue personal data protection recommendations and concoct an action plan complying with domestic legislation and EU regulations.
- **Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA)** – One project undertaken sought to enhance the long-term institutional and operational effectiveness of the GNTA through the development of a three-year organizational strategy and a two-year action plan. Another project aimed to study the gaps and challenges in the GNTA's performance and propose recommendations to help the organization to accomplish its tasks and objectives more effectively.
- **Resorts Development Agency (RDA)** – Through one project, we aimed to enable the RDA to fulfill its mandate more efficiently, set its mid- and long-term goals, adapt its objectives and activities to accommodate external conditions and requirements, improve its internal monitoring, evaluation, and control systems, and align the organizational setup and management systems with the set objectives. Meanwhile, the second project in which we were involved aimed to identify gaps and challenges in the RDA's performance and put forward recommendations to increase its effectiveness.

- **Department of Tourism and Resorts of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (DTRA)** - The project aimed to enable the DTRA to upgrade its HRM system and adapt it to external conditions and requirements, as well as strengthening internal communication among DTRA staff members, increasing work process efficiency, ensuring mutual appreciation among staff, and shaping a culture striving towards a common goal.
- **Selected domestic CSOs** - We assisted a selected cohort of partner CSOs in carrying out financial and tax reviews to ensure compliance with financial management, legal, and regulatory requirements.

Furthermore, under the Activity, Kaizen is operating the Center of Excellence (CoE) - a dynamic hub providing USAID Georgia's partners with diverse HICD knowledge, tools, research, and support to achieve continuous improvement. Relatedly, PMCG has delivered the following executive roundtables: Employee Motivation System; Fundraising for Zugdidi-based Associations/NGOs; and HR Administration System Modeling for Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency and the GNTA.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Throughout 2024, we engaged in the USAID National Governance Program in Georgia as a subcontractor of DAI Global, aiming to enhance accountability systems, procedures, and mechanisms in oversight institutions, and equipping them to better serve the public. Moreover, the Program supported the national government in bolstering the cybersecurity capabilities of key institutions to deliver more resilient governance systems.



PMCG partook in numerous activities under the Program. Supporting the national cybersecurity strategy, we focused on bridging the gap between educational attainment and labor market needs. With that purpose in mind, we carried out an in-



depth review of current cybersecurity education and training offerings, analyzed market demands and legal requirements, and developed recommendations to improve or create academic and professional training programs.

In addition, we assessed key stakeholders' needs and interests before designing a joint cyber lab for Georgian universities. This shared lab will enhance practical cybersecurity training, supporting universities with shared infrastructure, governance, and funding models, aligned with international best practices.

Working with the Parliament of Georgia, we also developed a comprehensive guide and training materials to foster disability-inclusive parliamentary institutions, and a handbook and training module for the Parliament to enhance awareness, understanding, and application of gender equality principles in practice. We also helped to produce similar materials to strengthen the Parliament's use of State Audit Office (SAO) reports for oversight purposes. That included improving MPs' understanding of audit processes and nurturing cooperation between the SAO and parliamentary committees, enhancing evidence-based scrutiny of government performance.

Across 2024, we also laid the academic foundations for the establishment of a cadre of skilled journalists. This entailed assessing current journalism education offerings related to data journalism and open data in Georgian universities, and crafting recommendations and a model syllabus to bring the curriculum in line with international standards. Moreover, we developed tailored workshop materials for journalists and conducted a regional media workshop to educate them on civil service ethics, the rights and limitations of civil servants during elections, misuse of administrative resources, and whistleblower protections.

In data management, our technical assistance helped the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) to improve practices within the National Food Agency and

the National Wine Agency. Meanwhile, we aided the National Archives of Georgia in reviewing electronic document management systems and developing rules and procedures for digital archiving, and we also helped the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) to raise awareness and promote the use of online self-registration for the 2024 Population and Agricultural Census.

Cooperating with CSOs, we assessed and enhanced private sector engagement in governance reforms, particularly through public-private dialogue (PPD) platforms. Moreover, we assessed CSOs' compliance with Georgia's Law on Personal Data Protection and provided tailored recommendations and advice. The goal thereof was to strengthen CSOs' capacity for legal compliance, thereby protecting data privacy while supporting democratic governance.

Elsewhere, we increased the adoption and understanding of regulatory impact assessment (RIA) in policy planning among government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders. Here, foundational online RIA courses were developed, and awareness-raising and training sessions were held to enhance evidence-based policymaking and oversight capacity.

We also supported the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoIDPLHSA) in creating a monitoring and evaluation framework for the "Personal Assistance Program." That included designing measurable indicators and training ministry staff to ensure effective, evidence-based program implementation.

Meanwhile, we completed a situational analysis of business integrity and anti-corruption controls within Georgia's private sector. This identified risks and capacity-building needs, thus informing recommendations to improve corporate governance and ethics and promoting greater transparency and anti-corruption compliance.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF CSOs IN UZBEKISTAN

In 2024, we began implementing a three-year EU-funded project in Uzbekistan as part of an international consortium led by ICE EEIG, aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs).

The project aims to address capacity gaps within CSOs in Uzbekistan, enabling them to become strong partners in promoting inclusive sustainable development, particularly in the areas of human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms, and gender equality. It also seeks to build the capacity of relevant personnel in managing and implementing donor-funded projects, undertaking gender-sensitive programs and initiatives, and conducting advocacy work.

On 3-4 April 2024, PMCG organized two significant events in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), namely the EU Grant Scheme Kick-Off Event and the EU Grant Management Training. High-level officials, including **H.E. Charlotte Adriaen, Ambassador of the**



European Union to Uzbekistan, and Mr. Bobur Bekmurodov, Chairman of the Movement "Yuksalish," delivered opening remarks at the kick-off event. Thereafter, introductory presentations of all the grant-funded projects were given. Among the event's attendees were representatives of the international community, the Government of Uzbekistan, the media, and grant beneficiaries.

Subsequently, on April 4, the **EU Grant Management Training** was conducted, covering various topics, including **guidance on managing grant contracts, procurement, reporting, and compliance with EU visibility**



requirements. Crucially, it aimed to enhance the capacity of CSOs to implement visibility and communication activities effectively for EU-funded projects and to strengthen project management skills to be applied in practice.

Later in October, training sessions conducted in Tashkent, Ferghana, and Samarkand equipped CSOs with essential tools to enhance project design and management, promote gender inclusivity, and strengthen monitoring and accountability. The sessions also enabled participants to lead their own initiatives more effectively.



ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE OF 93 COMMUNITIES

In 2024, as part of a consortium led by Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA), we continued our work under the five-year USAID Resilient Communities Program, boosting the resilience of 93 communities near Georgia's administrative boundary line (ABL) and other areas vulnerable to external threats.

During the year, we focused on enhancing the capacity of communities to effectively prioritize municipal investments. In doing so, **PMCG organized 18 community meetings across five target municipalities and conducted four information sessions involving community members, private sector representatives, and community-based organizations (CBOs).** These activities helped to identify potential partners,

explore mutually beneficial project ideas, and lay the foundations for the development of proposals for projects to be implemented.

Meanwhile, throughout 2024, we also worked on strengthening the disaster risk reduction resilience of communities along the ABL. We engaged directly with beneficiaries in the municipalities of Zugdidi, Jvari, and Tslenjikha, providing targeted training sessions for community groups to enhance their preparedness and response capacities for potential crises.



ENHANCING THE RULE OF LAW AND STRENGTHENING THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN NORTH MACEDONIA

In 2024, PMCG, under the EU SIEA Framework Contract (Lot 3), in a consortium led by ICE, worked on a project with the overall objective is to enhance the rule of law in North Macedonia.

The specific objective was to provide technical assistance and advice to strengthen the capacities and efficiency of the Constitutional Court to control the constitutionality and legality of adopted normative acts and the protection of fundamental rights. In particular, the project seeks to improve the managerial capacity of the Court, enhance human resources and strategic budgetary planning, help to draft internal acts improving performance management in the Court, and organize trainings on strategic planning, research, analysis, and monitoring for staff.

To protect the fundamental rights of citizens, the project aims to prepare an assessment of the overall current legal framework for the protection of freedoms and rights in the country, analyze the needs and draft amendments to rules regarding the procedure for protection of freedoms and rights. In addition, trainings, manuals, and guidelines are being prepared for the application of legal acts and standards developed by the ECHR for the protection of freedoms and rights of citizens before the Constitutional Court.

In the end, the project will improve legislative, normative, and jurisdictional competencies of the Constitutional Court and protection of fundamental rights. Furthermore, it will strengthen the managerial, administrative, and HR capacities of the Constitutional Court, while increasing transparency, improving performance management, and enhancing the quality of constitutional justice.



SUPPORTING
THE INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC
AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Throughout the year, we worked on the five-year USAID Unity Through Diversity Program, in partnership with the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNA Georgia), aiming to better integrate ethnic and religious minorities into Georgian society. The Program has contributed to expanding and strengthening socio-economic connections between majority and minority communities, establishing mutually beneficial business relationships.

Accordingly, in 2024, we developed a policy paper that examined international best practices for facilitating access to financial resources for minority groups. The objective of doing so was to identify effective strategies that could be adapted and implemented within the Georgian context. Simultaneously, we collected and systematized information on all available funding sources in Georgia, with the goal of making this information more accessible to ethnic and religious minority communities.

Moreover, we implemented several capacity-building initiatives for local SMEs, focusing on key areas such as fundraising, business planning, sales, e-marketing, pricing strategies, and product and service diversification. In total, we strengthened the capacities of **159 SMEs in business plan development and access to finance through 12 targeted training sessions. Overall, we enhanced the marketing skills of 95 SMEs engaged in craft production, and provided individual consultations and coaching to 69 SMEs** operating in the handicraft and hospitality sectors across the Pankisi Gorge as well as Samtskhe-Javakheti and Adjara regions.

Furthermore, we conducted an analysis of vocational education and training (VET) programs and providers in the project's target regions to determine how they align with the needs and challenges of the local economy. Based on this assessment, we then developed recommendations to strengthen partnerships between VET institutions and key stakeholders, to improve the response to market demands.



UKRAINE, GEORGIA, AND ARMENIA:
COMBATING DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES
IN THE FACE OF FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE

In 2024, PMCG, in partnership with the Civic Resilience Initiative (CRI) of Lithuania, completed the “Contemporary Disinformation Challenges in the Face of Foreign Military Presence” project.

The main objective was to enhance the capacity of Armenian, Georgian, and Ukrainian media representatives to select reliable sources and construct truthful narratives, and to equip and empower them, as well as broader society as a

whole, to identify disinformation effectively and prevent its dissemination. As part of the project, PMCG prepared a training package and methodology for the sessions in Georgia and Ukraine, encompassing both online and face-to-face elements. Moreover, PMCG delivered the training sessions while monitoring the quality of the services provided and assessing post-training activities as well.

Journalists, after participating in training sessions entitled “Information Warfare – How to Identify and Effectively Counter Disinformation,” were encouraged to publish articles addressing disinformation issues and stop the spread of “fake news.” Subsequently, the authors of the published articles deemed most exceptional received a financial prize and a certificate of appreciation.

“For the competition, I wrote articles exposing hidden Russian propaganda, deepfakes, and disinformation. Before drafting these pieces, I attended an excellent training session organized by PMCG Ukraine, where I learned interesting methods through which to write exposés, the ‘truth sandwich,’ as well as modern means of verifying the accuracy of photos, videos, and deepfakes. Having such knowledge is crucial today in these times of information warfare, as it enables one not to fall for the enemy’s tricks and to expose false materials that would otherwise sow panic among people. I thank the organizers for the opportunity to participate in this international competition. In the future, I will apply the new knowledge I have gained in another international article competition on protecting public figures during war,”

MARIA PAVLUKH,
one of the successful awardees from Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

EMPOWERING TRADE IN CENTRAL ASIA

In 2024, PMCG continued to assist Central Asian countries in designing and implementing policy, legal, and regulatory reforms, aiming to boost trade connectivity, harmonize customs and border procedures, and promote economic growth as part of USAID's Trade Central Asia Activity, led by DAI Global. In particular, PMCG has set out to **facilitate the seamless movement of goods through Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, thereby improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness.**

During the year, every day we conducted business process mapping and time-release studies to identify bottlenecks and develop process improvements. We also collaborated with customs agency staff to devise and put into practice policy and procedural solutions aimed at enhancing customs processing times, risk management, transparency, and governance. Elsewhere, we also assisted customs agency leadership in determining the incentives and capacity to sustain reforms, which included reviewing governance and policy structures, evaluating fee and budget adequacy, defining key performance indicators (KPIs), and improving staff evaluation frameworks.

On a daily basis, we also cooperated with private sector trade associations to monitor and report instances of border corruption while raising public awareness about its economic impact. In addition, we updated existing donor legislative reviews and delivered training workshops for border agency legal teams to draft necessary amendments and regulations. At the same time, we strengthened the capacity of customs agencies to provide effective training and facilitated regional training initiatives in collaboration with international organizations such as the World Customs Organization Training Center in Nur-Sultan, managed by Kazakhstan Customs.

PMCG has also led digital transformation efforts to advance digital trade and address key challenges related to interoperability, harmonization, and trust. Pertinently, it has overseen the development and implementation of the Smart Bazhy digital customs platform, which integrates customs-to-business (C2B), customs-to-government (C2G), and customs-to-customs (C2C) functionalities. Notably, **the Smart Bazhy project was shortlisted in the Best Customs Software System / Technology Solutions Provider of the Year**

category at the C4DTI Digital Trade Awards by ICC United Kingdom, demonstrating its recognition within the digital trade ecosystem for innovation and impact.

An important aspect of the Trade Central Asia Activity was the advancement of **Tajikistan's authorized economic operator (AEO) institution.** Here, PMCG engaged in analyzing and improving the AEO, and developed recommendations from a private sector perspective to heighten its potential appeal. Ultimately, it will foster a more favorable business environment in Tajikistan, stimulating trade opportunities and driving economic growth.

In Kazakhstan, PMCG assisted in **export optimization and legislative improvements.** In particular, by analyzing existing export procedures, regulations, and practices, we identified areas requiring enhancement and developed a roadmap to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and more closely align with WTO standards.

To build **capacities and promote knowledge-sharing in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, PMCG organized national and regional meetings, as well as training courses and events.** For these initiatives, customs administrations, industry experts, and government officials were the main beneficiaries. The activities focused on critical topics such as risk management, strategic management, project management, and training of trainers. Moreover, by presenting innovative approaches to always-evolving international trade, PMCG equipped stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate its complexities.

Some additional work PMCG undertook in Central Asia during the year is highlighted below:

- Trade Disruptions in Central Asia - PMCG identified supply chain disruptions due to Russia's war on Ukraine, assessed alternative sourcing options, and proposed strategies to strengthen regional production capacity.
- Trans-Caspian Corridor Study - PMCG analyzed the impact of the Ukraine crisis on transit routes, updated tariff schedules, and provided insights on how to improve the corridor's competitiveness.
- Market Study on the Trans-Caspian International Trade



Route (TITR) - PMCG assessed investment opportunities in Georgian ports and logistics infrastructure to optimize dry cargo and fertilizer supply chains along the Trans-Caspian route.

"I believe that PMCG's expertise in fostering resilient economies is significant. We have earned this through hands-on experience in key areas, including expanding markets, seamlessly integrating into regional and global markets, developing and implementing smart industrial policies, enhancing export competitiveness, and optimizing trade facilitation processes."

MIKHEIL JANELIDZE,

Trade Policy Sector Lead at PMCG

ENHANCING CAPACITIES OF CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CAREC) COUNTRIES IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (FTAS)

In 2024, we completed the first phase of a project strengthening knowledge and capacities regarding the design and implementation of free trade agreements (FTAs) of all countries of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program (Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan,) and development partners to accelerate economic growth and poverty reduction. The project is guided by an overarching motto of "Good Neighbors, Good Partners, and Good Prospects."

Here, we conducted a regional knowledge-sharing workshop, training of trainers with its e-learning tool, national workshops, and country-specific trainings - all covering the

design, negotiation, and implementation of FTAs, and raising awareness of the potential of the CAREC region as a whole and the possible effects of a CAREC-wide FTA in particular.

Based on the results of the research and capacity-building activities, ADB's commitment to support the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030. In particular, the ADB has pledged to assist CAREC countries in developing a regional agreement aimed at facilitating further trade and investment in the region through a modern and comprehensive institutional and regulatory framework. Accordingly, the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Agreement (CARTIF) is to establish a solid framework to advance the trade agenda, and support economic diversification in the region by facilitating cross-



border trade and investments through progressive trade and investment facilitation provisions. It is designed to improve the investment and business climate, making it easier for investors and other economic actors in all sectors to invest, conduct day-to-day business, and expand operations.

The CARTIF is set to be a “soft” agreement, defining clear roles and fostering cooperation among parties to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Open to all CAREC member countries, it will be built upon principles and rules already negotiated under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other regional agreements, such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

and the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement. Distinctively though, it will be uniquely tailored to meet the specific needs of the CAREC region, with a framework supporting sustainable growth and regional economic integration.

PMCG, with the support of ADB subject-matter experts, developed the CARTIF concept including its structure, institutional, and negotiation setup. After the draft concept was discussed with CAREC trade focal points and gleaned positive feedback, the joint team has since continued to work on refining the CARTIF agreement text.



SUPPORTING THE CARIFORUM-EU ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA)

During 2024, PMCG worked to **enhance the awareness of specific trade and investment opportunities, EPA provisions for market access, and the market access requirements for EU companies** in the member states of CARIFORUM (a sub-group of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States). Furthermore, the project **strengthened advocacy in conducting business in the EU and increased transparency** with respect to many provisions, thereby contributing to the attainment of improved preference utilization rates by EU exporters.

Throughout the project, funded by the EU and implemented by a GOPA-led consortium, the team provided technical expertise on priority sectors for EU trade and investment, including an outline of the EPA's relevance thereto.

The project team prepared a comprehensive and horizontal cross-sectoral digital paper on the business and investment climate, focusing on the ease of doing business. Moreover, webinars and other online knowledge-sharing events and activities were conducted to promote the visibility of trade opportunities and increase awareness of the EPA. Social media campaigns were also launched to share the results of the events and other EPA-related activities.

ADVANCING COMMERCE, CONNECTIVITY, AND EXPORTS TO PREPARE ECONOMIES FOR ACCESSION TO THE EU

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of DAI Global, started implementing the ACCELERATE Activity, which aimed to **strengthen trade, investment, and economic integration in the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region**, with a focus on preparing countries for European Union (EU) accession. The Activity was designed to foster new trade relationships, particularly between the US and E&E countries, and to improve market efficiency across various sectors.

The project's primary objectives were: (1) to improve trade facilitation within the E&E region and with the EU, (2) to increase access to finance through alternative regional financial products, (3) to support public and private sector compliance with EU standards, and (4) to enhance the transparency of investments to increase their development impact.

PMCG has played a central role in objectives 1, 3, and 4. In particular, it has been providing technical assistance, legal advisory services, training, and digital transformation support across beneficiary countries. The main responsibilities of PMCG in the Activity have been trade facilitation, EU compliance support, and investment transparency, as detailed below.

During the year, PMCG successfully conducted comprehensive procurement professionalization **landscape analysis across 10 countries in the E&E region (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Ukraine)**. This analysis employed qualitative research to examine the current state of procurement professionalization across the targeted countries. Specifically, PMCG delivered a detailed assessment methodology, combining desk research and expert consultation, and drafted comprehensive analysis reports covering institutional frameworks, certification systems, training approaches, and technology integration. We also gave presentations highlighting key findings and opportunities, and issued specific recommendations for regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.

PMCG was also assigned to support the ACCELERATE project's participation in the Central Europe Regional Working Group on Public Procurement and PPPs event in Warsaw by developing and delivering a specialized training program. Relatedly, PMCG developed a detailed agenda for day 5 of the event in 2024, focusing on capacity building for public sector leaders from nine countries (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Ukraine).

RULES OF ORIGIN ASSESSMENT FOR KAZAKH GOODS PROCESSED IN GEORGIA FOR EXPORT TO EUROPE

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor to Deloitte, engaged in the “Assessment of Rules of Origin Application for Potential Kazakhstani Goods to be Processed in Georgia and Exported to Europe” project under the USAID Economic Governance Program, aimed at generating significant trade benefits for both Georgia and Kazakhstan.

Specifically, its aim was to identify certain goods to be transported from Kazakhstan to Georgia, processed to meet the EU's rules of origin requirements under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), and then exported with/under the “Made in Georgia” brand. The intention behind doing so was to strengthen Georgia's trade capacity, stimulate domestic production, and expand export opportunities. Moreover, the project has helped Georgia to enhance its strategic role as a key transportation and logistics hub along the Trans-Caspian Corridor.

In particular, PMCG provided technical expertise to analyze and implement strategies to identify the most suitable products from Kazakhstan for this endeavor, in line with the EU's DCFTA rules of origin. In this regard, PMCG scrutinized potential value-adding operations, prepared a user-friendly guidebook for stakeholders, and held workshops to increase the capacity of private sector representatives.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

ADVANCING ECONOMIC REFORMS IN JORDAN

Throughout 2024, we worked to enhance economic competitiveness, economic reforms, and the business-enabling environment (BEE) in Jordan under the USAID Economic Reform Activity, as a subcontractor of Chemonics.

Enhancing the Business-enabling Environment (BEE) in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA)

To attract investment and foster economic activity, PMCG conducted an investor journey assessment, developed a BEE reform concept, and drafted an action plan aimed at improving regulatory efficiency, transparency, and institutional effectiveness in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA).

Accordingly, we developed a reform concept for vocational licensing reform based on the ZPM framework evaluated against specific, measurable, realistic, and relevant criteria. Ultimately, it recommended the elimination of over 60% of existing licenses. Meanwhile, we also worked on institutional reformation of an investment promotion unit to attract and facilitate investments effectively. Some of the key areas to which we have contributed are outlined below:

- **Regulatory framework and procedures related to starting a business** - The reforms will help the ASEZA to simplify procedures, reduce bureaucracy, enhance transparency, and ultimately improve the business registration experience while reducing entrepreneurs' time and financial costs.
- **Transfer (ownership/lease) of property (land, buildings, etc.)** - The reform will increase efficiency and transparency in property-related issues, create a better

understanding of investment opportunities, and reduce time and financial cost of acquiring state-owned property.

- **Building permit-related regulatory framework and procedures** - This reform will significantly increase the efficiency and transparency of the permit issuance process, making it cheaper and quicker for businesses seeking to develop properties within the zone.
- **Investment promotion services** - PMCG provided recommendations on capacity building and staff onboarding to ensure that the investment promotion unit would have the necessary skills and knowledge to attract investors to the zone and support them effectively.
- **Business ombudsperson unit** - PMCG developed a reform concept for a new grievance mechanism for businesses, including the creation of a business ombudsperson unit's organizational structure, grievance process, and related standard operating procedures (SOPs). Moreover, PMCG supported institutional development by preparing SOPs and guidelines, and contributed to the development and implementation of a communication strategy related to the reform package.



Reform Prioritization Tool for the ASEZA

As part of the program, PMCG tailored and applied a prioritization tool for the ASEZA, and conducted a five-day capacity-building workshop to train the ASEZA's top and middle management how to use the tool.

Crucially, the tool assesses projects based on two core axes: potential impact; and implementation feasibility. First, for the ASEZA, the potential impact score is based on measurements of the anticipated benefits of each reform/project in terms of economic growth, job creation, enhanced quality of life, and sustainability, which is in line with the EMV pillars and the ASEZA's strategic vision. Second, the implementation feasibility score is derived from an evaluation of the practicality of project execution, factoring in complexity and associated risks, as well as aligning with the risks stipulated in the ASEZA's strategic plan.

Such a multidimensional assessment enables the ASEZA to pinpoint priority reforms/projects, as well as to optimize implementation efforts based on the current operational and strategic context.

This prioritization exercise was carried out in close collaboration with the ASEZA Delivery Unit, relied on valuable input from the directorates, and ensured that the methodology and priority assessment of individual projects fully reflected the ASEZA's expertise and unique operational dynamics.

Thereafter, Samah Nabulsi (Senior Technical Advisor at the USAID Activity), Mikheil Janelidze (Trade Sector Lead at PMCG), and Giorgi Papava (Senior Economist) led sessions,

training attendees on the use of different components of the prioritization tool, encompassing a comprehensive survey tool and an analytical framework. In the course of the activity, a user guidebook was also developed.

In particular, trainees were guided through the tool's functionality and taught how to apply it to evaluate projects efficiently. The workshop also covered the theoretical foundations underpinning the prioritization methodology, its practical application across various directorates, and backend operations, including how to generate prioritization results.

Enhancing Export Competitiveness and Trade Policy Effectiveness

PMCG worked on an FTA awareness-raising campaign with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply (MoITS) to boost understanding and utilization of Jordan's eight active FTAs.



In doing so, PMCG developed and disseminated fact sheets highlighting tariffs, quotas, legal regulations, and certification requirements for each FTA, and created 10 case studies showcasing real examples of Jordanian exporters successfully leveraging FTAs.

Thereafter, we trained MoITS staff through a ToT program, conducted training for 30 Jordanian diplomats on the subject of economic diplomacy, which included FDI promotion, export strategy, trade policy, global positioning, and bridging foreign policy with economic development.



NURTURING STARTUP GROWTH

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of the Baltic Innovation Agency (BIA), **evaluated 300 selected business plan proposals for the 12th and 13th rounds of the Startup Matching Grants program. We also delivered a five-day training session for 50 finalist startups, and organized "Information Days" for 100 unsuccessful applicants** at Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) Tech Park in Tbilisi.

The comprehensive evaluation, training, and information dissemination activities across rounds 12 and 13 aimed to enhance the overall quality of submissions, equip finalists with essential skills, and ensure that even some of those whose applications had been rejected still received valuable

feedback and resources to develop and improve.

As an extracurricular initiative, PMCG, in partnership with Startup Buro, took advantage of the visit by international entrepreneurs and industry experts to Georgia by organizing an interactive event at which to share unique insights and perspectives. Notably, the assembled speakers included Frank Hannigan from Ireland (partner at Strategy Crowd and member of the Innovation Fund in Serbia's Investment Committee), Timur Daudpota from the US (CEO of 2080 Ventures and long-term expert at 500 Global), and Alex M. Dascalu from Romania (lead director of Founder Institute's Eastern European program).

GEORGIA-KAZAKHSTAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

In 2024, we launched a quarterly publication entitled "Profiles of Bilateral Relations." One edition was dedicated to examining the evolving partnership between Georgia and Kazakhstan. These two countries share longstanding ties that date back to when the historic Silk Road was in its pomp. Today, they are linked through strategic transport routes such as the Trans-Caspian Corridor and the Middle Corridor, both of which have seen growing interest in recent years. Indeed, since 2022, Georgia has substantially deepened its engagement with Kazakhstan, positioning it as a key trade partner through new logistics agreements and making significant advances in transportation and infrastructure.

In our second issue of "Profiles of Bilateral Relations," our in-depth analysis covered the historical background of bilateral ties, as well as current trade dynamics between Georgia and Kazakhstan, transportation trends, and the common trade routes linking Georgia to Central Asia. The publication also explored the strategic role of the Middle Corridor, identified profitable products for trade between the two nations, and presented an outlook on their future cooperation.



ENHANCING THE FINANCIAL MARKET'S REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2024, as a subcontractor of Palladium International, we continued working extensively on the USAID Financial Innovation Program, seeking to boost Georgia's **private sector by increasing access to diverse investment resources and innovative financial products.**

At its inception, the Program aimed to secure additional financing of USD 325 million for Georgia's private sector, create 2,500 new jobs, and develop three new fintech solutions as well as three private equity or quasi-equity instruments designed for non-bank financial institutions. In addition, it planned to facilitate transactions between 250 startups/SMEs and finance providers through business advisory service providers (BASPs) and establish a master fund based on EU rules to catalyze the attraction of additional investment into Georgia.

One of the key Program activities in which we were engaged in 2024 was supporting the **elaboration of comprehensive technical documents for mobile applications (Android and iOS) and changes to the web-portal.** In particular, the documents were to guide developers and stakeholders on the functionality, architecture, deployment, and other technical aspects of the mobile applications. To ensure the document would meet readers' requirements, stakeholder collaboration, interviews, and reviews of relevant existing platforms (like my.pension.ge) were undertaken. Ultimately, a detailed structure and outline was developed for the technical documents, whose content was to be accurate, concise, and adherent to industry standards. The documents were thoroughly reviewed and revised to incorporate feedback and ensure they contained the necessary level of detail, while they were also formatted and styled to enhance readability and consistency. Finally, the completed documents were delivered, along with necessary resources with which to make future updates to the applications.

Furthermore, we prepared two MoUs with the Association of Commercial Banks and the Leasing Association. **The former MoU focused on legal and regulatory issues, building financial institutions' capacity for asset-based products, and addressing financing challenges for SMEs through fintech.** The Program also planned to connect fintechs with banks to develop sustainable solutions and increase financial literacy. Meanwhile, the latter MoU aimed to create a digital database of leased items to reduce leasing costs, provide technical support, promote best practices, and develop the leasing market.

Aiming to support fintech accelerator programs in Georgia to enhance the startup ecosystem, which was identified as one of the root causes in the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Report, the Program issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for an accelerator grants program.

The accelerator encouraged a focus on strategy and growth, investor relations, and fundraising. Unlike any other accelerator programs available in Georgia at the time, this one featured a pilot element, designed in conjunction with the financial services industry, to support the scalability of products and services developed by fintech companies. Accordingly, participating fintechs worked on real-world problems faced by financial institutions and other stakeholders. The created solutions were expected to improve access to capital for SMEs and corporations. The Program team vowed to award the winner a grant of USD 150,000, and the accelerator program was expected to commence in 2025.

Later, the team issued an RFA for the first round of its FinTech Solutions Development Grants Program, which aimed to support the development and/or deployment of fintech solutions created locally or those developed internationally and adapted to the local market. The grant-supported solutions were to reduce the cost of financial intermediation, thereby easing access to finance for enterprises, especially SMEs. The two grantees awarded in the first round were Data Mind and Optio.



ENHANCING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION

In 2024, PMCG engaged in the Georgian-Swiss Intellectual Property Project (GESIP) to enhance Georgia's socio-economic development by improving utilization of geographical indications (GIs) and increasing the quality of government services for Georgian intellectual property (IP) users.

PMCG represents the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) in Georgia and has been ensuring the timely and professional implementation of project activities, delivering project outputs efficiently, and managing project funds in a cost-effective manner. Through close coordination

with projects funded by Swiss and other international organizations, as well as with the IP-specialized agencies of the Georgian government, PMCG ensures aid effectiveness, harmonization, policy coherence, and alignment. In the process, we also promote the visibility of Switzerland's international cooperation.

The GESIP was initiated by the IPI at the Georgian government's request and in accordance with the mandate of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) under the Global Program on Intellectual Property Rights (GPIPR).

FOSTERING PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Throughout 2024, we supported the Georgian municipalities of Batumi, Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri, Kutaisi, Mestia, Lentekhi, Tkibuli, Rustavi, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, and Oni in effectively engaging with the private sector under the USAID Local Governance Program (LGP), led by Tetra Tech ARD.

PMCG assessed and analyzed the current state, capacity, strengths, and weaknesses of private sector engagement in each partner municipality, conducted an in-depth landscape analysis, and prepared investment profiles for each partner municipality. Moreover, PMCG worked towards identifying key stakeholders and building a public sector engagement network among primary counterparts, developing capacity-building training programs for 12 municipalities and conducting training, analyzing potential public-private dialogue (PPD)

frameworks, developing a draft statute as a guide for municipalities, and conducting case study presentations.

Thereafter, PMCG set out to identify and prioritize two projects per municipality, and elaborate action plans to help them implement those projects, selecting at least one pilot municipal/intermunicipal public-private partnership project, reporting on mapping viable opportunities for public-private partnerships, and facilitating a high-level multistakeholder conference at the national level.

ENHANCING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, we completed a project in Oni Municipality in Georgia to improve its social and economic conditions to be demonstrated by the operation of more competitive MSMEs as well as increased levels of employment and investment. The project targeted the following three main groups: local MSMEs, regional and municipal public officials, and the population of Oni Municipality.

To pursue the project goals, to begin with we prioritized tourism and the food industry and established two corresponding clusters. Thereafter, we selected cluster managers and enhanced their capacities as well as those of MSME representatives through various workshops and study

tours to the EU. Moreover, we helped to boost the visibility of the municipality for potential investors by training local and regional officials, and began planning the creation of a website showcasing Oni's investment potential.

"The project has proved the importance of unification of people from diverse sectors working toward common aims. Shared motivation gives us hope. As I see it, the clusters can motivate development among members. I think that this marks a great opportunity to bring about successful practice and experience, and that my municipality can evolve as a hub for exchanging experiences," said Giorgi Beruchashvili, a beekeeper in Oni Municipality.

STRENGTHENING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO BOOST BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

Toward the end of 2024, we started working on the "QUIS – Better Goods and Services" project, which aims to ensure safety and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Georgia by enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector and supporting the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and related EU commitments. In particular, the project focuses on business, trade, the environment, and skills matching.

The project is jointly co-financed by the EU, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Czech Development Cooperation (CDC), and is implemented by GIZ and CzDA.

Elsewhere, we are implementing the "Private Sector Needs Assessment for Conformity, Gap Analysis in Quality Infrastructure Services and Development of Supporting

Mechanisms" project, addressing the disconnect between private sector demand for conformity assessment services and the capacity of existing service providers to meet these needs in Georgia's economic landscape.

During the initial phase, we focused on preparatory activities, including meetings with key stakeholders and desk research. This involved a review of existing economic studies, developments in Georgia's quality infrastructure (QI), and the operations of key public sector stakeholders engaged in the activities.

The second phase covered the collection of data through surveys, interviews, and desk reviews. A key component here was a comprehensive supply-demand gap analysis in selected priority testing fields. This phase also included the development of financial support mechanisms such as grants

and loans to assist laboratories in expanding or modernizing their facilities.

In the third phase, PMCG presented the proposed mechanisms and findings to stakeholders through dedicated workshops. These provided a platform for sharing information and gauging stakeholder interest. All project activities are to culminate in a comprehensive final report summarizing the deliverables, findings, and recommendations, and consolidating the

insights and proposed solutions developed throughout the project.

In the final phase of the assignment, PMCG will translate the Blue Guide – a key European Commission guidance document on EU product rules. In addition, the PMCG team will prepare a short guidebook and conduct workshops to introduce the Blue Guide and explain its importance to the key QI stakeholders, including the students of relevant university courses.



ENSURING ECONOMIC SECURITY

PMCG, as a subcontractor to DAI Global, completed the five-year USAID Economic Security Program in 2024. It supported diversification and fostered the growth of MSMEs in tourism, creative industries, light manufacturing, solid waste

management, shared intellectual services, and crosscutting sectors (ICT, logistics, and transport) in Georgia to create jobs and ensure more productive economic activities.



- **Value Chain Prioritization and Gaps Assessment:** PMCG supported the implementation of this assessment during the Program's inception phase to select up to three priority value chains and sectors in addition to tourism. Here, we gathered data, conducted analysis, and held stakeholder validation workshops.
- **Association Capacity Building:** We worked to enhance the business-enabling environment for targeted value chains and build institutional capacity. In the latter regard, we worked with chambers of commerce, clusters, and business associations to increase their capacity and sustainability. Specifically, the organizational capacity of targeted business support organizations (BSOs) was assessed and strategic plans were developed.
- **Sustainability of Sector and Value Chain Analytics and PPD Initiatives Through BSOs:** To make sector and value chain analytics and public-private dialogue (PPD) initiatives more sustainable, PMCG helped the Program to build on past achievements and respond adequately to BSOs' interests and needs. After identifying interested BSOs, PMCG used its expertise to streamline the value chain analysis (VCA) and created research templates, followed by workshops for around 15 business associations, four of which were chosen for coaching on producing their own VCA reports.
- **PPD/Stakeholder Facilitation:** We supported multi-stakeholder collaboration to address policy challenges in priority sectors, enhance private sector involvement in economic policymaking, and boost sector competitiveness.

Through long- and short-term technical assistance and PPD initiatives, we strengthened ties between and among the private sector, the Government of Georgia, and other stakeholders.

- Between 2020 and 2022, a project we implemented served to foster dialogue between and among the private and public sectors, civil society, and political representatives on key policy and regulatory challenges in target sectors and value chains. To identify and address priority policy issues, PMCG developed a multi-stakeholder PPD approach and methodology. Ultimately, six policy briefs were produced, each with recommended actions backed by data and international best practices, and expected outcomes for different groups. Furthermore, six PPD processes were conducted, including five high-level sessions at the Parliament of Georgia.
- **PPD Manual:** To enhance the quality of stakeholder participation in policymaking, PMCG led the development of a PPD and advocacy resource manual and conducted a PPD course for Georgian BSOs and CSOs. Overall, 32 representatives from 28 organizations attended the course.
- **Export Promotion and Investment Attraction:** PMCG's mixed-method research identified the most promising sectors and value chains, as well as specific goods. Eventually, 16 goods were deemed economically attractive for diagonal cumulation (i.e. manufacturing in Georgia using Turkish raw materials and intermediate products and then exporting to the EU).

- **Solid Waste Management Sector Research:** We aimed to develop Georgia's recycling industry by strengthening producer responsibility organizations (PROs) and market linkages in solid waste management. Our comprehensive study identified the most promising export markets for Georgia, analyzing various waste types as potential raw materials, along with recycled materials and products currently produced or with production potential in the country.
- **Gender Inclusion and Youth Engagement:** PMCG supported systematic integration of gender and youth empowerment in design, implementation, and monitoring, and led activities boosting women's participation in ICT and developing youth skills. These included internships for youth and people with disabilities (PwDs), the "We-Tech" initiative the "500 Women in Tech" Program, the Grace Hopper Award Program, the Women Who Tech Working Group (WWT WG), and the #Go4It internship initiative.

The Grace Hopper Award Program raised over GEL 250,000, gained coverage in 40 media outlets, and reached 4.45 million views. Meanwhile, "We-Tech" and "500 Women in Tech" provided training to 90 women on design, development, and tech skills, while the WWT WG comprising businesses, NGOs, and international organizations was formed to foster community support for women's empowerment in ICT.

Through the Georgian Women in Technology (GWIT) initiative, "She's Next" by Visa, and the Women's Entrepreneurship Program, five women-led startups completed six months of training in Silicon Valley and secured multi-million GEL investments from a Georgian bank. Furthermore, 10 women received business training, three obtained funding to launch their ventures, and four entrepreneurs were financially assisted to upgrade production.

Moreover, the Business to Student Program and Assistive Technology initiative funded student teams and secured paid internships and employment for PwDs.

Overall, the USAID Economic Security Program achieved the following:

2,265 organizations received technical support;

4,916 new full-time equivalent jobs were created;

602 firms improved their management practices;

597 organizations increased their annual salaries;

4,934 individuals were trained;

45 innovations were supported;

28 new programs/services were offered by sectoral/business associations;

31 new educational programs were established; and

A sales increase of **USD 65.3 million** was generated by the Program's assisted enterprises.



PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT (PFM)

ENHANCING POLICY DIALOGUE IN MONGOLIA

In 2024, under the EU SIEA Framework contract and in cooperation with ADE, we supported the Government of Mongolia and the Cooperation Section of the EU Delegation to Mongolia by sharing our expertise in priority policy areas such as macroeconomics, public finance management (PFM), budget processes, and employment.

Specifically, in the course of the project, PMCG assisted the Ministry and the Delegation in drafting and submitting the

required files for the EU Sector Budget Support Programme. The team conducted in-depth analytical work related to macroeconomic, PFM, and employment matters, tailored to the needs of the EU Delegation. Furthermore, the team provided support in translating key strategic documents concerning the Budget Support disbursement, and by interpreting during meetings in the context of the annual review.



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT (PFM) IN EGYPT

Throughout 2024, PMCG worked in Egypt on an EU-funded program to contribute to the PFM reform process initiated by the Egyptian government and the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

The program revolves around two main components. The first entails demand-driven support to the Government of Egypt, and specifically the MoF and its affiliated entities, on its path towards further reforming the PFM system with a focus on program-based budgeting (PBB). This component envisaged ad-hoc technical and legal advice as well as capacity building for beneficiaries.

The second component involves direct support to the EU Delegation in Egypt in budget support eligibility assessment, identification of EU actions to support the Government's efforts, and enhancement of the policy dialogue with the MoF. Specifically, the project has contributed to assessing the PFM reform in Egypt and updating the PFM annual monitoring reports.

ASSESSING PFM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT USING THE PEFA FRAMEWORK

Throughout 2024, PMCG engaged in the assessment of PFM in the Georgian municipalities of Kutaisi, Marneuli, and Oni using the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework.

The project supported the chosen municipalities to strengthen their PFM credentials by assessing their PFM systems using PEFA indicators and comparing the results with those of the 2019 assessment. Accordingly, a summary of changes over the last three years was prepared, including goals achieved and progress made. Meanwhile, certain needs to be met to ensure further PFM improvement were highlighted, with a practical sequence of actions devised to strengthen reform and capacity development.

The project team worked on assessing the PFM systems using supplementary guidance for subnational PEFA assessments, developing specific systems using additional gender indicators to promote gender-responsive PFM, as well as revising Government Resolution N2735 and the related Memorandums of Understanding to align with the MoF's vision.

This project was implemented by PMCG as a subcontractor of Tetra Tech, under the USAID Local Governance Program.



ENHANCING PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT (PFM) IN JORDAN

PMCG, as a subcontractor of DAI Global, as part of a USAID-funded 5-year program, supported the Government of Jordan (GoJ) in strengthening public procurement, inventory management, expenditure efficiency, and institutional transparency. The engagement spanned legal, institutional, and technological reforms, working directly with multiple government entities including the General Procurement Department (GPD), the Government Tenders Department (GTD), and the Procurement Policy Committee (PPC).

In terms of **strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the public procurement inventory**, we conducted a comprehensive gap analysis of Jordan's procurement and inventory frameworks, and contributed to the development of the Public Procurement By-law No. 8/2022 and supporting instructions. We also developed Jordan's first unified procedural guideline covering procurement, inventory, warehousing, and contract administration across eight key modules, and supported the Procurement Complaints Committee (PCC) and in modernizing their operational frameworks and drafting new strategic reforms.

Under the program, we supported a full **rollout of JONEPS for public works** across the GTD in 2022, increasing usage from 47% to 100%. Moreover, we extended JONEPS implementation to decentralized entities (81 GoJ institutions), with 753 tenders issued and 300 government staff and 119 private sector staff trained. JONEPS was also expanded for municipalities, while we supported module development and advised on JONEPS integration with other systems (GFMIS, GIMCS, ISTD, SSD, and CCD) to support data exchange and bolster financial integrity.

To optimize inventory management and data integration, we developed an action plan to enhance the **Government Inventory Management and Control System (GIMCS)**. That

included supporting the design and communication strategy for **e-inventory rollout** (now partially implemented despite later ERP policy shifts), as well as initiating planning for integration with the GFMIS to ensure seamless links among procurement, payment, and inventory cycles.

To improve cost estimation and market transparency, we developed the **Construction Materials Price Index (2024)** for the building sector, and laid the groundwork for future indices for roads, water, and electromechanical projects. Meanwhile, we also supported itemization and standard specification development for construction projects (BoQs), creating a codified baseline aligned with international standards and Jordan's Green Book.

With regard to advancing inclusive and sustainable procurement, we developed strategic fundamentals for MSME, women, youth, and disability participation in procurement, embedded eligibility criteria, social responsibility clauses, and incentives into GoJ procurement planning, trained a gender-responsive GPD team to institutionalize inclusive procurement practices.

In the area of institutional development and capacity building, we supported the GPD team in designing and implementing a new strategic and operational plan (approved by the Cabinet), established a planning and analysis unit, and improved internal audit through risk-based methods and training on budgeting, procurement law, InCo-terms, and internal controls. In addition, we developed a comprehensive solution for the GPD service desk, providing technical assistance to its design, infrastructure, and ITSM system.

On policy and modernization and pharmaceutical reform, we led the update of the **National Medicines and Medical**

Supplies Policy (2024) in coordination with the MoF and Food & Drug Administration.

Meanwhile, we also supported the integration of procurement planning with budget execution, launched efforts to unify and codify procedures for approving medical consumables, and developed technical matrices and dashboards to monitor procurement KPIs across GoJ entities.

“This training will have a pivotal impact on my work in technical committees and auditing procurement processes. The content was well-organized, and the bylaw provisions were demonstrated in a logical sequence, which made it easy to comprehend the material,”

RANA SULEIMAN,
An Engineer from the AB.



PUBLIC SECURITY

HOSTING CONFERENCE ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

In March, PMCG hosted a conference entitled “Advancing Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Policy in Georgia.” The first part was devoted to the presentation of PMCG Research’s “Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience in Georgia: State of Play and Future Prospects” policy paper, co-authored by Alessandro Lazari (Researcher and Fellow in Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience at the University of Salento) and Nana Tabagua (Rule of Law and Security Policy Consultant at PMCG), while the second part revolved around a panel discussion.

The conference gathered a wide range of stakeholders including representatives of academia, businesses, and government, as well as field experts, to share insights and learn more about the latest trends in critical infrastructure security and resilience (CISR) policy.

The paper contributed to the ongoing discourse on CISR by offering a blend of analysis, comparative insights, and forward-looking recommendations. Reflecting the global relevance of CISR, the paper refers to the cases of Croatia and Romania, and examines how their handling of threats facing critical infrastructures could guide Georgia in its ongoing reform efforts. After presenting the paper, the co-authors

fielded questions from the audience on the various issues raised therein. Of note, these included the key players in CISR policy, the impacts of cyber warfare during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Russia’s coercive economic tactics.

Thereafter, a panel discussion titled “The Imperative of Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience and Global Insights” was moderated by Lazari, providing a more global perspective.



“Critical infrastructure is the backbone of our society. Society relies heavily on critical infrastructure, which includes the energy sector, the transportation sector, the banking and financial system, and healthcare. So everything we are surrounded by is critical infrastructure,”

ALESSANDRO LAZARI



Josefine Kühnel Alba (Political Officer of the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia), Giorgi Iashvili (Senior Cyber Security Expert at PMCG, Co-founder of Cyber Trust), Shorena Lortkipanidze (Co-founder and Board Member of Civil Council on Defense and Security), Mikheil Golijashvili (Assistant Professor of the Business and Technology University), and Nikoloz Gagnidze (Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity Advisor, USAID National Governance Program) all partook in the discussion on CISR at the global level.

BOOSTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DIGITALIZATION AND RESILIENCE

Throughout 2024, we continued working on the USAID-funded Critical Infrastructure Digitalization and Resilience (CIDR) program, enhancing cyber resilience across critical infrastructure sectors within the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region. The program supported national governments and sectoral regulators in adopting best cybersecurity practices in organizational operations, planning, and procurement. It also helped them to prioritize cybersecurity investment needs, set appropriate standards and corresponding security controls, and establish a basis for region-wide cybersecurity information-sharing.

As a subcontractor of DAI Global, we focused on aligning national regulations in Georgia with the Law on Information Security (LIS) and the EU's NIS/NIS2 Directive to bolster the cyber resilience of critical infrastructure. Accordingly, we conducted a cybersecurity maturity assessment of Georgia's finance and banking sector, and provided expert guidance on developing legislation, regulations, and industry standards.

Our work here enhanced cyber resilience by supporting national and sectoral regulators in creating international-standard legal frameworks, operational practices, and technical guidelines. That included issuing recommendations for critical infrastructure regulation and incident response, facilitating sector-wide threat information-sharing, and helping to develop policies in line with global best practices.

Elsewhere, PMCG addressed capacity-building needs by identifying cybersecurity gaps, mapping tailored solutions, and organizing workshops, expert exchanges, and training sessions to strengthen sectoral cybersecurity and regulatory coordination.

Our ultimate goal here was to strengthen the resilience of Georgia's critical infrastructure sectors, ensuring their international-level readiness to manage cybersecurity threats.

BOOSTING RESILIENCE OF GEORGIAN CYBER ECOSYSTEM AND MITIGATING NATIONWIDE RISKS

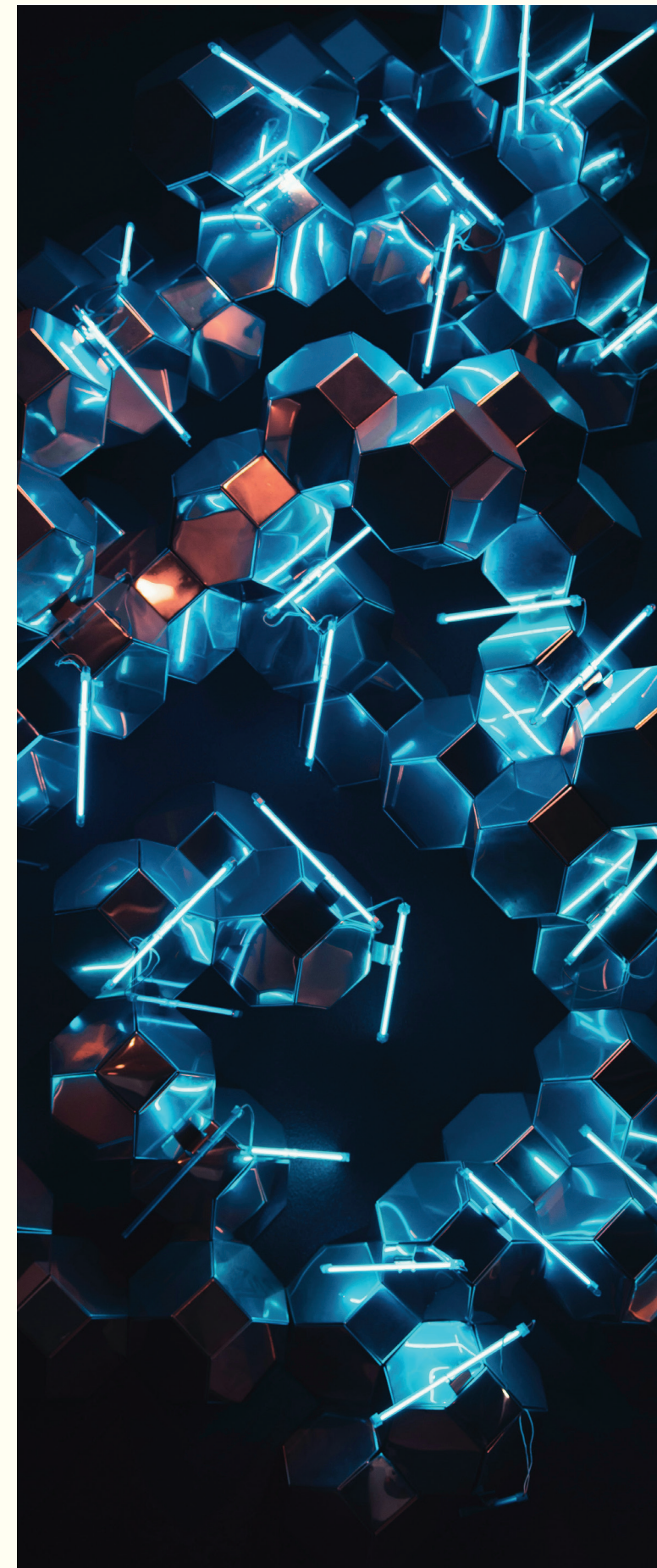
In 2024, together with TAG International, we continued implementing the UK-Georgia Cyber Partnership Programme funded by the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). The primary goal of the Programme is to enhance the resilience of the Georgian cyber ecosystem and reduce cyber risks countrywide. Pursuing that aim, and with support from the UK Embassy in Tbilisi, we have been engaging with a wide range of Georgian beneficiaries and stakeholders, to maximize impact.

Significantly, the Programme has been aiding in the implementation and coordination of Georgia's National Cybersecurity Strategy (NCSS). In that regard, working closely with cross-government stakeholders, we have collaborated with the Office of the National Security Council's (ONSC's) Information and Cyber Security Department to coordinate delivery of the strategy. To the latter end, monitoring and evaluation guidelines have been developed, and we have also conducted training sessions to enhance the analytical capabilities of Georgian state agencies in cybersecurity.

During the year, the Program supported the Office of the ONSC's Portfolio Management Unit (PMU) by empowering and strengthening its capabilities to oversee the NCSS's implementation, assisting in its management and delivery and developing legal mechanisms to enable efficient and secure information exchange between and among stakeholders. On top of that, a structured management information-sharing program was established to foster coordination across government and partner entities.

In terms of informing the public and strategic communications, the Programme helped the Georgian government to launch a multi-media campaign to raise awareness about various types of cyber threat among selected target groups, and engage communities and foster broader public awareness on cybersecurity risks. In this initiative, we ensured localized and inclusive communication for ethnic minorities.

The Program has also placed an emphasis on including youth and women. Indeed, it has sparked interest in cybersecurity careers among youth, particularly in rural and underserved regions, while female students and trainers have increased their awareness of cybersecurity.



EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF EGYPTIAN VET STUDENTS

In 2024, we worked in Egypt, conducting an extensive review of the feasibility of introducing online language training programs for vocational education and training (VET) students in Egypt to increase their employability at home and abroad.

To devise a practical framework, the study evaluated both current and potential tuition models, including online language courses. Based on these findings, we issued recommendations on the most effective ways to implement English, German, and/or Italian language training for VET students.

Specifically, in the course of the project, PMCG, together with Economic Policy and Regional Development (EPRD), was involved in: elaborating a methodology and finalizing an agreement with the European Training Foundation (ETF); completing desk research and engaging with stakeholders to ascertain the models of online language training currently in use for VET students in Egypt; conducting a feasibility study on the implementation of language courses tailored to the Egyptian VET system and presenting its findings at a workshop for Egyptian stakeholders; and finalizing recommendations for a feasible model of online language training for Egyptian VET students.

MIXED-METHOD EVALUATION OF US EMBASSY’S FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Throughout 2024, PMCG continued to evaluate the US Embassy’s public affairs foreign assistance programs in Georgia, namely the English Access Micro-Scholarship Program (ACCESS) and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Support Program (TVET), funded by the United States Department of State (DoS).

Employing a mixed-method evaluation (comprising both quantitative and qualitative data), the aim is to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of these programs in relation to the desired results of building skills, developing positive attitudes, and increasing awareness among participants. In addition, the extent to which participants had been harnessing the acquired skills, attitudes, and awareness after partaking in a given program was reviewed. Relatedly, the evaluation also gauged whether participants, after concluding their program, were implementing activities making use of the knowledge gained.



ENHANCING LEARNING OUTCOMES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

In 2024, PMCG continued its work on a project assisting the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its initiatives supporting the Government of Georgia’s (GoG) implementation of a new curriculum for the advanced stages of secondary education (grades 10-12). During the project, PMCG, along with JVA partner Particip GmbH, has been developing a comprehensive program for proposed policy-based loans and investment project loans, while also building the necessary implementation capacity.

We have been providing the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with advice, assessments, and technical inputs contributing to the design and finalization of evidence-based policy reforms under the policy-based loan program. In addition, PMCG has also been devising a detailed policy matrix for policy-based loans and a detailed design of the investment project, while also fulfilling due diligence requirements. Its wide-ranging involvement also encompasses designing and planning program implementation arrangements, and assisting in the preparation of all documents required for the program’s approval by the ADB board and the GoG.

In this realm, we have engaged in a wide range of activities, including analytical work, comprehensive due diligence reports on technical, financial, economic, institutional, gender, and socioeconomic aspects, providing guidance and support to ensure the prompt and smooth implementation of the investment project, as well as boosting the GoG’s capacity.

Facilitating Resilient Infrastructure Operations and Promoting Environmental Sustainability

2

ENVIRONMENT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT

Facilitating Resilient Infrastructure Operations and Promoting Environmental Sustainability

To promote a seamless infrastructure and foster a sustainable environment, we concentrate on the following sectors:

- Climate Change and Biodiversity;
- Environmental Risks / Disaster Management;
- Urban Environment;
- Pollution;
- Natural Resource Management;
- Water and Wastewater Management;
- Waste Management;
- Energy Policy;
- Renewable Energy;
- Power Plants;
- Energy Transmission and Distribution;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Mining;
- Spatial Planning and Urban Development;
- Land Policy;
- Housing;
- Urban Transport; and
- Roads and Highways.

Specializing in

- Feasibility study;
- Biogas Extraction;
- Environmental Analysis;
- Land Use Plan;
- Technical Due Diligence;
- Resettlement;
- Fee Estimation;
- Asset Management;
- Water Resource Planning;
- Hydraulic Consulting;
- Health and safety;
- Permit Management;
- Construction Supervision;
- Plant Concept.

HOSTING GREEN CITY PANEL DISCUSSION AT ADB'S ANNUAL MEETING

On May 4, 2024, PMCG hosted the "Green City: Transforming Urban Landscapes for a Sustainable Tomorrow" panel discussion as part of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) 57th Annual Meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Bearing the slogan "Bridge to the Future," this year's edition of the ADB's Annual Meeting spanned May 2-5 and convened

around 4,000 participants from over 60 countries. Therein, sustainability, the green economy, and climate change mitigation were among several hot topics covered across dozens of well-attended seminars, panel discussions, and other events.



Green City Concept – Addressing Urban Population Growth

Although they cover only 3 percent of the Earth's land area, cities accommodate more than half of the world's population and consume between 60 and 80 percent of its vital resources, including energy and water. In addition, they are major contributors of carbon emissions as well as air and water pollution, thereby accelerating climate change and environmental degradation.



Over the past few decades in particular, urban populations worldwide have surged. Indeed, according to UN projections, approximately 70 percent of the world's population will reside in cities by 2050. Alarming, many cities are already struggling to provide residents with sustainable economic, social, and environmental support, as encapsulated in the idea of a “green city.”

The concept of a green city revolves around its ability to sustain itself by leveraging the natural environment, leaving the smallest possible ecological footprint and causing minimal pollution. Notably, the journey to becoming a green city involves increasing the efficiency of land use. In addition, it entails harnessing renewable energy sources, composting organic waste, recycling materials, and converting waste into energy. Meanwhile, responsible water management, eco-friendly buildings, sustainable urban transport (including electrified mobility), as well as cultivating local food sources and shortening supply chains are all integral parts of any truly green city. At the same time, investing in research and education and preserving cultural heritage are other key aspects of the green city concept.



Green Cities on the Rise, but Challenges Remain

Ultimately, green cities do not focus exclusively on physical infrastructure; they are equally concerned with social sustainability, emphasizing inclusivity and equality, and fostering healthy communities.

Even though the green city concept is growing in popularity worldwide and green city action plans are being widely adopted, challenges persist. In this regard, international financial institutions, including prominently the ADB, have been instrumental in supporting cities to pursue the sustainable goals underpinning the green city idea. However, despite such substantial efforts, obstacles remain.

With these developments and challenges in mind, PMCG – Policy and Management Consulting Group hosted a panel discussion featuring an illustrated range of speakers from international financial institutions, governments, and private businesses. Revealing many insights, the discussion explored effective strategies to enhance urban living standards and minimize cities' environmental impacts.

To kick off the discussion, welcoming remarks were delivered by Aleksi Aleksishvili (CEO and Chairman, PMCG), Mzia Giorgobiani (Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia), and Andria Basilaia (Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi).

Thereafter, Giorgobiani stayed on for the discussion, along with **Kate Hughes (Principal Climate Change Specialist, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB), Atze Verkennis (Director, Global Practice Regional and Urban Development, Ecorys), Jan von Vogt (Regional Director, Urban Water Management/Waste Division, Fichtner Water & Transportation GmbH), Zviad Kharebava (Environment and Infrastructure Development Director, PMCG), and Ondrej Kokes (Projects Principal, Mott MacDonald).**

The speakers discussed various aspects of green cities, including energy, waste management, water management, urban transport, the circular economy, and climate change.

Keeping the dialogue flowing was moderator Nino Erukidze (Rector, Business and Technology University).

LEVERAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ADVANCE CLIMATE-RESILIENT HOUSING

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of a consortium led by Castalia Ltd, started implementing the ADB-funded “Leveraging the Private Sector to Deliver Inclusive, Affordable, and Climate-resilient Housing in Central and West Asia” project.

Overall, the project sets out to explore and recommend actionable steps for governments and private sector entities to contribute more effectively to inclusive, affordable, and climate-resilient housing ecosystems in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Specifically, during the year PMCG was engaged in Component 1, where it conducted a situation analysis of the Georgian housing sector. In this process, PMCG examined government standards, strategies, and programs related to climate-resilient housing, as well as existing construction and housing finance mechanisms. Furthermore, PMCG investigated green financing mechanisms available for housing development in the country, clarified the housing sector's supply chain, and identified corresponding challenges at each stage.

PMCG also identified all key organizations involved in the housing sector in Georgia. In addition, it reviewed affordable housing projects included in the national government's plans and examined the laws supporting collaboration between the public and private sectors (or public-private partnerships (PPPs)).

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING DOCUMENTATION

During 2024, PMCG contributed to enhancing the spatial and economic development of the Georgian city of Batumi in cooperation with the City Institute, through planning new urban developments, maintaining historical values and cultural heritage, rehabilitating and reconstructing degraded areas, and interconnecting various parts of the city. In particular, **PMCG has analyzed the economic profile of the city and conducted research in urban planning**, while continuing to help developing a general and spatial plan, including a strategy and viability assessment of Batumi municipality.

As part of the project, PMCG has been **identifying and studying the most competitive sectors in Adjara region as a whole and in the city of Batumi specifically, assessing their competitiveness at the regional level** and presenting their medium- and long-term development prospects.

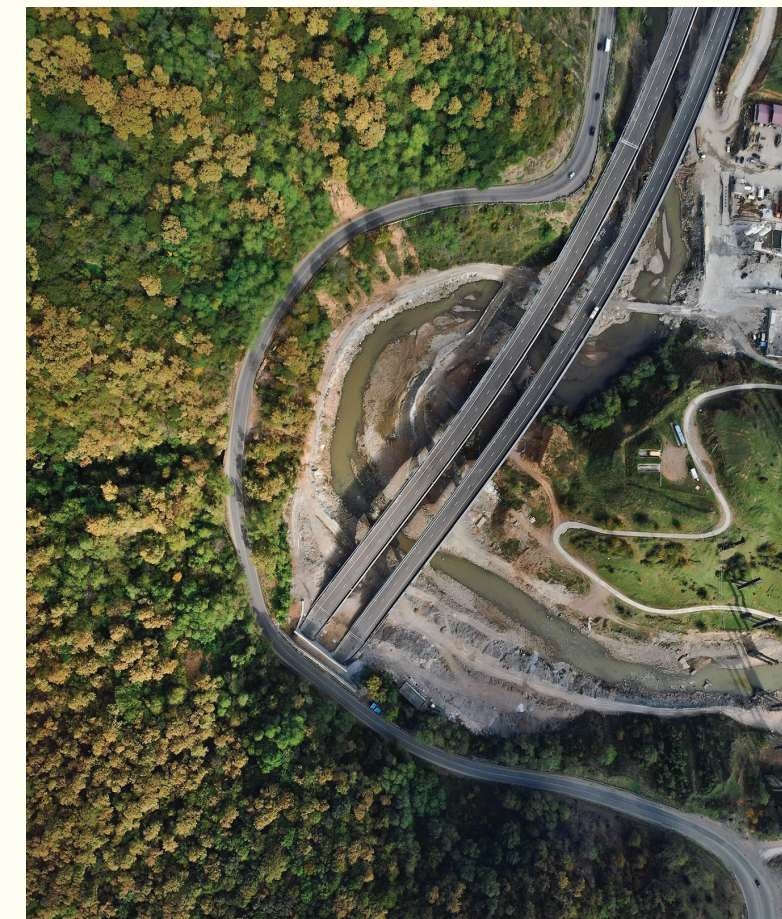
STRENGTHENING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHWAY-ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

In 2024, we focused on enhancing socio-economic development in communities along the Khevi-Ubisa and Shorapani-Argveta sections of the East-West Highway in Georgia, in a project led by the Roads Department of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI) and funded by ADB.

In pursuit of the project goals, PMCG assessed the training needs of local entrepreneurs, and created gender-sensitive training modules. Moreover, PMCG developed and delivered specialized two-day training modules for micro-entrepreneurs in the two selected highway sections, and ultimately a comprehensive final report was developed.

As a result of the project, microentrepreneurs in the covered areas are now more skilled, empowered, and generally better equipped to contribute to local economic development, leading to increased job creation and income growth. In addition, the skills and knowledge acquired by the project participants is expected to result in a greater number of local businesses succeeding, bringing more economic sustainability.

Ultimately, the project is thought to have catalyzed gender equality advancement and community growth, while encouraging significant contributions to better local and national economic prosperity.





WASTE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

AMONG THE FIRST IN THE REGION: NEW EU-COMPLIANT LANDFILL TO BENEFIT 300,000 RESIDENTS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Throughout 2024, PMCG, as a member of a consortium led by HPC AG and with EBRD funding, supported the Solid Waste Management Company of Georgia (SWMCG) in constructing a modern sanitary landfill in the Kvemo Kartli region. Once operational, the facility will serve approximately 300,000 residents across five municipalities: Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tetritskaro, and Tsalka.

The construction phase officially commenced after a contract was signed in late 2023 between the SWMCG and Atlas Insaat Ltd. The new landfill is designed to fully comply with EU environmental standards, thereby setting a new standard for waste management in the entire South Caucasus region.

This initiative builds on years of previous collaboration, during which the consortium assisted the SWMCG in conducting assessments and preparing the design for the sanitary

landfill. PMCG conducted an array of valuable preparatory work including the elaboration of a scoping report as well as an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) study. The latter encompassed a number of surveys, modeling, and site inspections. In addition, PMCG also completed a cultural heritage assessment report, a biodiversity survey, and air pollution and noise modeling. Meanwhile, in its provision of crucial assistance, PMCG assessed the possible levels of water pollution and compliance with the maximum dischargeable volumes (as set by local legislation). Moreover, PMCG also elaborated all of the environmental and social management monitoring plans in accordance with EBRD requirements.

With respect to engineering, PMCG contributed to developing a detailed design for the landfill, covering various aspects such as disposal areas, the leachate management system,

the biogas management system, stormwater management, internal roads, administrative buildings, the sampling area, and auxiliary infrastructure. Furthermore, PMCG provided a detailed design of the access road and aided the SWMCG in obtaining a national construction permit.

PMCG was also deeply involved here in tendering, as it supported HPC/Paseco in preparing tender documents for the procurement of construction services, and assisted the SWMCG in the evaluation of tender participants and the overall management of the procurement process. Ultimately, an FIDIC contract was signed between the SWMCG and a construction company.

INTRODUCING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In 2024, as part of a consortium led by Fichtner, we continued our contribution to the advancement of environmentally sustainable waste management practices in two of Georgia's regions under a program supported by the KfW Development Bank. Focusing on Kakheti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, the aim has been to establish integrated solid waste management systems that align with European environmental and operational standards.

Comprehensive in its scope, the program includes the construction of regional sanitary landfills and transfer stations, the closure of outdated landfill sites, and the modernization of street sweeping, waste collection, and transportation services. In addition, it supports pilot initiatives in recycling and composting to foster circular economy practices.

An extensive needs assessment has already been conducted, determining the equipment requirements for municipal waste collection and cleaning services. Based on this assessment, essential equipment was procured and delivered to the relevant municipalities.

To ensure the long-term success of these infrastructural improvements, PMCG also conducted capacity-building activities for local municipalities and the SWMCG. Here, the training was designed to enhance the operational capabilities of local actors in efficiently and sustainably managing the new facilities and equipment.

Supporting the financial viability of the upgraded system, PMCG developed comprehensive models for calculating both gate fees (i.e. the cost paid by municipalities to landfill operators per ton of waste) and municipal waste service

costs, including collection and street cleaning. These tools are intended to enable municipalities to budget and plan more effectively, thus improving the financial management of waste services.

With communication key to the successful implementation of this project, we conducted focus group discussions with locals in the course of the site selection process for a new landfill. Furthermore, to enhance public awareness and acceptance, a study tour was organized for stakeholders from Kakheti to visit the Adjara region, where they gained firsthand insights into how a modern sanitary landfill operates.

SUPPORTING THE DIGITALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS

In 2024, we implemented a project aiming to help the Government of Georgia (GoG) in its green transition by integrating a new environmental permits portal into a unified electronic system, aligned with EU standards. This initiative focused on enhancing environmental governance through comprehensive digital integration, while it was funded by EBRD and implemented with support from the National Environment Agency (NEA).

Its main objectives were to analyze the environmental permit process in the country and then propose a digital solution within a single-window system, allowing for the digitalization of the permitting process to improve both efficiency and transparency.

In particular, **PMCG provided a comprehensive range of services, including stakeholder requirements identification and mapping, service functions design (application architecture prototype), legal framework analysis, business and governance model design, IT infrastructure and solutions execution, and a data security blueprint.**

For each of these services, under the single-window principle, PMCG undertook three phases - thorough analysis, strategic planning, and adherence to practical implementation guidelines.



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Since 2022, we have been working on the EU-funded project “Support to Environmental Protection and Fight Against Climate Change in Georgia,” as part of a consortium led by NIRAS. Its aim has been to enhance the health and wellbeing of the Georgian population, to promote climate change adaptation activities, and to support the GoG in developing sustainable regulations and strategies. The project has focused on reducing air and water pollution, supporting public institutions to synergize the strengthened productivity of forestry, aquaculture, the private sector (industry and agriculture), and environmental health through approximation of laws and regulations on uncontrolled activities. Elsewhere, raising awareness and changing behavior regarding climate change and environmental protection have also been key areas of endeavor.

In 2024, we also conducted a workshop on aquaculture governance, which entailed both presentations and focused discussions covering the following areas: good governance in aquaculture; food safety, biosecurity, and aquatic animal health in aquaculture; development of aquaculture BMPs; the AMA's prospects and achievements; and the role of the FAO. Thereafter, participants were assembled into clusters to discuss the cross-cutting prospects of good governance in aquaculture and national building capacity, with the outcomes of such debates summarized on the second day of the workshop.

Our activities here have ensured that aquaculture development aligns with environmental conservation objectives, adheres to both national and international standards, and addresses the socio-economic needs of aquaculture producers.



RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PROMOTING ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SOLID WASTE SERVICES PROVISION

In 2024, within the Kvemo Karti Solid Waste Project and with EBRD financing, PMCG supported the Solid Waste Management Company of Georgia (SWMCG) in heightening public awareness and encouraging active engagement in solid waste services provision in the Kvemo Kartli region.

More specifically, during the year we worked on developing an action plan and a communication methodology taking into account local needs and seeking to motivate greater public participation. Our engagement in implementing the action plan has involved conducting outreach meetings and sectoral trainings on waste management, ensuring adequate media coverage, and preparing a study tour for Kvemo Kartli residents.

Among other benefits, these activities have significantly increased local residents' awareness of waste management issues and environmental protection. Moreover, they have laid the groundwork for long-term improvements. Once the landfill becomes operational, residents will enjoy environmentally friendly and non-hazardous waste management services, enhancing public health and supporting the overall development of the region.

ENERGY

ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL FOR WASTE-TO-ENERGY (WTE) PRODUCTION IN MOLDOVA

Throughout 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of Tetra Tech, contributed to conducting a waste characterization study to determine the potential for waste-to-energy (WTE) production in Moldova, promote energy security, and boost sustainable waste management practices. The project covered two Waste

Management Regions (WMRs) of Moldova (out of a possible eight): Chisinau municipality and its six districts (population of 532,513); and Balti municipality and its seven districts (102,457).



The project was part of the USAID-funded Moldova Energy Security Activity (MESA), which aimed to strengthen Moldova's energy sector by promoting market-oriented reforms, increasing energy efficiency, and developing renewable energy sources.

PMCG's waste characterization study identified the types and amounts of generated waste, which in turn informed an assessment of the feasibility of implementing WTE technologies and the selection of the most effective and environmentally friendly technologies for WTE production.

In the same year, PMCG carried out several other activities, including a national workshop and stakeholder participation events. A draft work plan was developed, a national workshop for relevant stakeholders from the selected WMRs was organized, and a stakeholder participation report was produced to capture feedback. Further efforts included a morphological composition survey covering all four seasons,

an assessment of municipal solid waste and its potential for WTE production, and an analysis and selection of the most effective WTE technologies.



BATTERY STORAGE AND GREEN HYDROGEN: CORNERSTONES OF GEORGIA’S ENERGY TRANSITION

Throughout 2024, PMCG, together with Mercados Aries International and Integration GmbH, and funded by ADB, worked to strengthen electricity grid security, improve the regulatory framework, and pave the way for greater private

sector participation in the development of energy storage and renewable energy including wind, solar, and green hydrogen in Georgia.



The project in which we have been involved set out to provide: policy and regulatory gap analysis and development; a hydrogen potential and deployment strategy; a battery energy storage system (BESS) potential and development strategy; feasibility for the BESS; and environmental and social studies including initial environmental examination, social due diligence, a gender assessment and action plan, surveys, consultations, and evaluation support.

Capacity-building activities have also been carried out to promote the green hydrogen potential of Georgia, encourage private companies to invest in Georgian electricity storage, and boost the development of renewable energy sources including green hydrogen.



ENHANCING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

In 2024, PMCG, in collaboration with Fichtner GMBH, began implementing the KfW-funded “Programme for Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in Georgia.”

The Programme aims to enhance energy efficiency in public buildings, focusing primarily on state-owned schools, to create a more comfortable learning environment and contribute to the achievement of the Government of Georgia’s (GoG) energy efficiency targets including a reduction of CO2 emissions.

In the longer run, the Programme entails the comprehensive screening of 50 state-owned schools, of which 20 will be selected for reconstruction, with significant upgrades including new heating, ventilation, and insulation systems. Crucially, the reconstruction will enhance the safety, durability, and comfort of the selected schools. Moreover, learning environments will be modernized to boost student and teacher satisfaction and improve educational outcomes.

In particular, PMCG has been reviewing and preparing environmental, social, health, and safety (ESHS) project concepts, as well as collecting data and conducting site inspections. Furthermore, PMCG has been providing hazardous material management, elaborating an environmental and social management framework (ESMF), engaging with stakeholders, and establishing grievance mechanisms.

Looking ahead, in the next stages of implementation, we will run communication and visibility campaigns, supervise construction -where we will ensure ESHS compliance - and produce monitoring reports. At the same time, Fichtner GMBH will be developing technical designs and preparing tender documentation.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

STRENGTHENING WASTEWATER SERVICES FOR 180,000 RESIDENTS IN UZBEKISTAN

In 2024, PMCG, as a subcontractor of INTEGRATION environment & energy GmbH, worked on the “Accelerating Sanitation for All in Asia and the Pacific” project funded by the ADB, aiming to enhance urban wastewater services within the city of Djizzak in Uzbekistan by upgrading the existing sewerage system, providing wastewater treatment services, and strengthening institutional capacity, ultimately benefiting approximately 180,000 local residents.

Djizzak Suvtaminot is the entity responsible for providing sewerage services for Djizzak city, including the operation and maintenance of wastewater facilities. Pertinently, during the year PMCG was committed to raising awareness of wastewater management among Djizzak Suvtaminot's employees, emphasizing its significance for the city.



Specifically, to empower Djizzak Suvtaminot's workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute effectively to this sanitation initiative's enduring success, PMCG has collected and processed information and identified existing gaps. Accordingly, we have also prepared tailored materials for our trainings focused on clean water and sanitation,



urban wastewater management, the circular economy, environmental management and monitoring, and health and safety. The trainings, conducted by PMCG's consultants, provided participants with in-depth knowledge and up-to-date information about key areas of health and safety, environmental monitoring, and the hydraulic design of sewerage and stormwater frameworks.



ADVANCING URBAN WATER SERVICES

Throughout 2024, PMCG, in consortium with Hill International and Temelsu, worked on a construction supervision project on water and sewerage systems under the Urban Services Improvement Investment Program, financed by ADB and the Georgian state budget.

The project aims to improve the services of the United Water Supply Company of Georgia (UWSCG) by providing construction, rehabilitation, and renovation works on the water supply and sewage systems of three Georgian towns – Bolnisi, Chiatura, and Marneuli.

During the project, PMCG is supervising construction works on the water supply networks in Chiatura and Marneuli, as well as the construction of sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Bolnisi, Chiatura, and Marneuli, and the construction of sewage systems in Bolnisi and Marneuli. The construction works include the building and rehabilitation of headworks, reservoirs, pumping stations, transmission mains, distribution networks, sewage networks, sewage pumping stations, special constructions (crossings), and all related works.

Specifically, in order to ensure effective project implementation, PMCG's team of engineers, a social safeguards specialist, and an environmental specialist have been

supervising construction activities, evaluating and managing unanticipated involuntary settlement impacts. In addition, we have been monitoring the compliance of the construction process with the contractors' environmental management plans and preparing a post-construction environmental audit.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO A 24-HOUR WATER SUPPLY FOR 6,950 HOUSEHOLDS

Together with Temelsu, under the ADB-funded “Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Development Program,” in 2024 we worked on the Telavi Water Supply Project, ensuring an uninterrupted 24-hour water supply for local residents. Prior to the project's commencement, only 18% of the municipality's population was connected to the network.

The project set out to enhance the water supply system through the rehabilitation and construction of wells, transmission mains, reservoirs, and a distribution network comprising 6,950 household connections. In the process, PMCG reviewed the design and ensured that the works were being done in adherence thereto through daily supervision.

Broadly speaking, PMCG monitored both the physical and financial progress of the project, as well as the implementation of environmental mitigation measures.



Providing Insights to Ensure Tangible Impacts

3

RESEARCH, ANALYTICS AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

Providing Insights to Ensure Tangible Impacts

HOSTING “INVIGORATEU: INVIGORATING ENLARGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY FOR A RESILIENT EUROPE” PROJECT CONFERENCE

Research and Analytics are foundation and critical tools to help nations achieve economic progress. With the right combination of data-driven insights and strategic decision-making, countries around the world can identify opportunities for growth and capitalize on them to create a more prosperous future.

By harnessing the power of research and analytics, nations can develop policies that can bring about positive change in their economies and make informed decisions that can drive investment, reduce poverty, and create jobs.

We conduct research across a wide range of areas, including economics, international trade and investment, labor market and migration, education, social affairs, democracy, and civil society in pursuit of the best possible options for local, regional, or global policy development and implementation.

Meanwhile, measurement is essential for any organization striving to ensure that the programs they run can achieve palpable impacts. Hence, we help governments, companies, and international organizations to not only assess the results of their programs across a wide spectrum of areas but also to detect the challenges they face in their operations in order to identify and grasp opportunities for improvement.

Specifically, as part of our services, we focus on the following:

- Policy Research;
- Baseline Study;
- Quantitative and Qualitative Survey;
- Developing Index;
- Sectoral Research;
- Value Chain Analytics (VCA);
- Program Monitoring;
- Program Evaluation;
- Data Quality Review; and
- Impact Evaluation.

In February, we hosted the kick-off conference for the “InvigoratEU: Invigorating Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy for a Resilient Europe” project in Tbilisi (Georgia), bringing together 18 leading European research organizations, all members of a consortium led by the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE). “InvigoratEU,” coordinated by the EU-Chair at the UDE and the Institute for European Politics (both located in Germany), explores how the EU ought to navigate its future relations with the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Western Balkans.

The first day was devoted to the “InvigoratEU” project’s vision, work program, and timeframe, with every partner of the project consortium presented to the attendees. Opening remarks were given by the host Dr. Giorgi Khishtovani (PMCG Research), as well as coordinator Prof. Dr. Michael Kaeding (UDE) and scientific lead Prof. Dr. Funda Tekin (Institute for European Politics).

“The project has come at the right time. We need good answers on how to integrate the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia into the EU to prepare Europe for the future. What makes InvigoratEU special is that it consists of a consortium that takes into account Europe’s diversity and political perspectives,”

PROF. DR. KAEDING

UDE EU-Chair and coordinator of InvigoratEU

Thereafter, Eugenia Strantz (Project Advisor at the European Research Executive Agency) presented information about the European Research Executive Agency (REA), which is mandated





by the European Commission, and provided details about the framework for Horizon Europe, an ambitious research and innovation program spanning 2021-2027.

On the second day, two panel discussions stimulated insightful and productive debate. The first panel, moderated by Prof. Dr. Tekin, was dubbed “How to reform the EU’s enlargement policy in a new geopolitical phase.”

Here, key contributions were made by Dr. Giselle Bosse (Maastricht University, Netherlands), Mathieu Bousquet (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission, Belgium), Teimuraz Janjalia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgia), Iryna Kosse (Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, Ukraine), and Prof. Dr. Frank Schimmelfenning (ETH Zurich, Switzerland).

In the wake of the first panel discussion, the second swiftly ensued under the title “Geopolitical challenges and opportunities for the EU and the Western Balkans, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova,” moderated by Prof. Dr. Richard Youngs (Carnegie Europe, Belgium).

Again, an array of valuable insights were gleaned from a panel comprising Dr. Matteo Bonomi (Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy), Gogita Gvedashvili (Georgian Center for Strategy and Development, Georgia), Dr. Karlis Bukovskis (Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Finland), and Tamara Tsuleiskiri (Information Center on NATO and EU, Georgia).

Thereafter, concluding remarks were delivered by Victor Burguete (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Spain) and Prof. Dr. Kaeding, and a reception was held at the Presidential Residence in Tbilisi, hosted by Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia.

STUDY ON CORRUPTION AS AN OBSTACLE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

In 2024, PMCG, as part of an international consortium led by ICE EEIG, partook in the implementation of the EU-funded “Study on Corruption as an Obstacle to Economic Development in Enlargement Countries” Project.

The main goal of this study was to prepare and submit a policy paper to the Directorate-General of Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) analyzing the main features of corruption, how it functions, and how it affects economic development in enlargement countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine). The paper also drew up regional and country-specific policy and programming recommendations for DG NEAR’s future engagement in preventing and fighting against corruption in the EU’s enlargement policy, including anti-corruption actions and conditionalities in line with international and European standards and the EU acquis.

Throughout the project’s implementation, the team of consultants mapped the support of the EU and other key funding institutions in the enlargement countries, analyzed and summarized existing recommendations and best practices in anti-corruption, and conducted interviews with stakeholders. Furthermore, the team also organized two coordination workshops for policy and operational coordination with EU delegations/offices and implementing partners involved in major EU bilateral and regional programs combating corruption and state capture in enlargement countries. The aims of the latter activity were to pilot operational coordination among existing and planned EU engagements, and to promote cross-endorsement of key recommendations, with the participation of EU staff and representatives of implementing partners.



ASSESSING SERBIA’S TRANSFORMATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

In 2024, as a subcontractor of Integra LLC, we started implementing the “Transformational Economic Growth Assessment of Serbia” project to establish the analytical foundation for USAID/Serbia’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2026–2031). The project was conducted under the Europe and Eurasia/Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Decision Support (EE/MELDS) Activity, which provided analytical services to USAID/Europe and Eurasia and their respective missions.

In particular, the goal of the assessment was to examine the forms of tailored economic growth assistance with the potential to effectively support Serbia in advancing its EU integration and the implementation of the recently adopted Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. In particular, it aimed to explore the current needs, challenges, and opportunities related to intervention areas in which USAID has historically been engaged. The assessment also aimed to gauge whether there might be additional windows of opportunity to propel Serbia’s EU integration in line with the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.

GREEN FINANCE POLICY PAPER AND DISCUSSION

In 2024, we produced a policy paper entitled “Taking Stock of Greening in the Georgian Financial System” on which a

presentation and public discussion was hosted. The paper analyzed the state of green finance in Georgia, identifying and addressing gaps and opportunities therein. As well as outlining the key players in green finance in Georgia, namely international financial institutions (IFIs), commercial banks, and the National Bank of Georgia (NBG), it also evaluated the role of green finance instruments (for example, green bonds and debt-for-environment swaps) in Georgia, and the green taxonomies already being applied in the country.

At the event, the paper’s co-authors Nana Kajaia (Researcher, PMCG) and Levan Tsulaia (Energy Advisor, GIZ) spelled out its main findings and results, as well as its recommendations to embrace the concept of green finance further. In particular, these recommendations included creating a regulatory base with a clear definition of “greenwashing,” devising a new tool for the NBG Taxonomy, and rewarding banks with the greenest portfolios.

Following the presentation, a panel discussion was moderated by one of the paper’s peer reviewers, Sneha Yadav (Head of ESG and Responsible Investing, Astant Global Management).

“Georgia is making significant strides in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing climate resilience within the financial sector, including policies aimed at safeguarding the financial sector and implementing measures to assess and manage climate-related financial risks,”

SNEHA YADAV,

Head of ESG and Responsible Investing, Astant Global Management

ANALYZING THE GENDER PENSION GAP TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES

In 2024, with the support of UNDP and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), we conducted an analysis of gender dimensions within Georgia's accumulated pension system. This activity was carried out under the "Supporting Public Administration Reform in Georgia" project. Specifically, the research aimed to determine the existence and extent of a gender disparity in pension outcomes between women and men in the country.

Based on the findings, a set of recommendations was developed for relevant agencies to help mitigate the gender pension gap. These recommendations focused on designing and implementing targeted interventions to address the underlying factors contributing to the disparity.

The study identified several key drivers of a gender pension gap in Georgia, including structural differences in the labor market, retirement ages for men and women, variations in average life expectancy, and financial literacy levels. Addressing these systemic issues is essential in promoting a more equitable pension system.



SUBSECTOR AND VALUE CHAIN ASSESSMENTS ENHANCING GEORGIAN SMES' EXPORTS TO EU MARKETS

In 2024, we conducted subsector and value chain assessments together with the ISET Policy Institute under the Inclusive Access to Markets (IA2M) project, funded by EU and UNDP Georgia, in partnership with the Estonian Centre for International Development, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and Enterprise Georgia.

In particular, we analyzed the competitiveness of the following subsectors/value chains (with a specific focus on SMEs): beverage manufacturing; telecommunications, computer, and information services; apparel manufacturing; packaging; pet food and furniture; and toy manufacturing.

Moreover, in the course of assessing the growth potential of these subsectors/value chains and diagnose challenges and opportunities related to exporting products to markets in EU member states and other European countries, PMCG developed a comprehensive list of obstacles and possible advantages identified during the analysis. Thereafter, we formulated specific mitigation measures and validated findings and recommendations with the IA2M project team, Enterprise Georgia, and relevant subsector/value chain stakeholders in Georgia.

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES IN EMISSIONS TRADING SYSTEMS FOR CAREC COUNTRIES

In 2024, we conducted research entitled "Innovative Perspectives: Exploring Opportunities in Emissions Trading Systems for CAREC Countries" under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) CTTN Research Grants Program (RGP).

The goal of this research was to **gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential opportunities, challenges, and implications of linking emissions trading systems (ETSs) within the CAREC region.** This involved mapping current ETS frameworks, exploring the feasibility of regional linkages, and issuing policy recommendations to enhance climate cooperation efforts, drawing upon insights from international experience and a detailed review of the existing literature.

More specifically, within the project, we produced a research-based policy paper, presented key research findings at the CAREC Think Tank Development Forum (CTTDF), and developed a policy brief, article, and/or blog entry to be published on the knowledge platforms of the CAREC Institute and its partners (e.g., CTTN Blog, E-Learning Platform, and Development Asia).

Through this research and other associated activities, we contributed to making decision-making processes more informed and promoted sustainable environmental practices across CAREC countries, ultimately advancing regional development and climate resilience.

EXTERNAL REAL-TIME EVALUATION OF RURAL SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In 2024, PMCG conducted an external real-time evaluation of the Rural Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project (RSMEDP), which aimed to **enhance rural SMEs' access to finance, boost their financial literacy and management skills, as well as strengthen the capacities of support institutions and improve communication among key market actors to foster their overall development.** The purpose of doing so was to inform the Swiss Cooperation Office about the main achievements, challenges, and lessons learned in the course of the project's implementation by analyzing its impact on stakeholders, as well as its sustainability and overall effectiveness.

As part of the evaluation methodology, a contribution analysis assessed the extent to which the RSMEDP had contributed to the observed outcomes among the target groups. This analysis systematically explored the causal links between project activities and outcomes, while bearing in mind factors (external or otherwise) that may have influenced the results.

In particular, PMCG's real-time performance-based evaluation involved desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs), an online survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and semi-structured interviews.

MIXED-METHOD EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL AND ONLINE MEDIA SUPPORT PROGRAM

Throughout 2024, we worked on a project conducted in the course of the U.S. Embassy's Georgian Regional and Online Media Support Program, empowering regional and online media through content development and the production of a series of investigative articles. Under this program, we have been responsible for the evaluation of five projects for five media organizations. In particular, the research team has been combining two evaluation approaches: performance-based and summative.

The performance-based evaluation has been examining the implementation process, the achievement of intended outputs and outcomes, and unintended outcomes (positive and negative) for each implementing organization.

Meanwhile, the summative evaluation has been addressing the extent to which, collectively, each of the five separate projects have contributed to achieving the U.S. Embassy's aforementioned program goals. The performance-based and summative evaluations have entailed mainly qualitative data, along with a relatively small amount of quantitative data.

In particular, we have been implementing a desk review of project-related documents, initial debriefing meetings with each implementor, KIIs with key staff, a ripple effects mapping (REM) workshop with each implementor, and the collection of quantitative data using social media engagement tools and a survey.

EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF EU FTAS

In 2024, as a subcontractor of Ecorys, we contributed to the implementation of an EU-funded ex-post evaluation of the impact of EU trade agreements on key environmental areas. Notably, the evaluation aimed to assess how the environmental provisions of such agreements contributed to environmental protection and sustainability.

Specifically, the project entailed evaluating the implementation of environmental provisions in bilateral EU trade agreements, as well as identifying and assessing the qualitative contribution of those provisions. Meanwhile, 20 short case studies were showcased, highlighting the impact of EU trade agreements on climate and other key environmental aspects. Furthermore, in-depth analysis was conducted and recommendations were issued to maximize the benefits of these agreements.

Drawing from the insightful case studies and comprehensive analyses, the project's conclusion provided the European Commission and stakeholders with a robust understanding of the environmental implications of EU trade agreements. The knowledge obtained here is expected to support more informed decision-making to bring about more sustainable trade policies, thereby fostering positive environmental contributions.

REGULAR ASSESSMENT OF THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

All across 2024, PMCG continued its long-running and vital contribution to the quarterly Business Association of Georgia (BAG) Index and Employment Barometer as well as the biannual Investment Survey, all of which have been regularly released since 2019 in collaboration with the BAG and the ifo Institute for Economic Research.

For many years, using quantitative data as well as carefully chosen approaches and methodologies, our researchers have been studying the business environment in Georgia in individual sectors, such as construction, trade, manufacturing, and service. Among the aims of such research are to assess the present business situation and outline the expectations of private sector representatives. It also evaluates such companies' planned responses to the changing environment, and assesses the impact of their interventions, while identifying some of the major challenges facing the Georgian economy.



MIXED-METHOD EVALUATION OF AMCHAM'S CAMPAIGN ON US INVESTMENT

In 2024, we completed the United States Department of State (DOS)-funded evaluation of the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Georgia's campaign focused on promoting a US investment project.

The project set out to enhance public awareness about the scale of Western investment in Georgia, its impact on employment, pricing, and service standards, as well as the transformative role of Western expertise in improving the Georgian private sector and the economy overall. It also sought to highlight the opportunities Western investment

presents for Georgian businesses and citizens, and to build public support for deeper economic integration with the West.

To assess whether the project activities had been implemented as planned and whether the intended outcomes had been achieved, we conducted a comprehensive desk review and KIs with relevant stakeholders. Our findings provided insights and informed recommendations that will guide AmCham in implementing similar projects more effectively in the future.

SECTOR AND VALUE CHAIN ANALYTICS HELPING DIFFERENT SECTORS TO ADVANCE

In 2024, we completed various sector and value chain analytics, including on **Tourism, light manufacturing, creative industries, solid waste management and recycling, shared intellectual services**, and crosscutting services under the USAID Economic Security Program.

In partnership with the ISET Policy Institute, PMCG collected industry-related data and analyzed economic challenges and opportunities, and also identified industry-related economic trends in regional and global contexts to highlight challenges and potential opportunities for economic growth. Moreover, we increased the capacity of the business associations of selected sectors/value chains to collect and process industry-related quantitative and qualitative data, to plan and implement research, as well as to advocate for their interests. The final outputs of the assignment were published on a semiannual basis.

"Preparing such analytical reports on the one hand strengthens the public interest in these industries, and on the other it provides access to statistics, helping businesses to make rational and favorable decisions and, consequently, grow," said Tamo Gogolashvili, Head of Voice of E-Commerce.



PMCG's Milestones throughout its 17-Year History

2023	UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Framework
2021	First Project in Latin America
2020	Establishment of PMCG and PMC Research in Ukraine
2018	"Responsible Employer" Award at Georgia's Responsible Business Awards Meliora
2017	Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation International Award "Consulting Without Borders"
2014	First Project in South Asia
2013	Establishment of PMCG US; First Projects in the Middle East and Eastern Europe
2012	Establishment of Infrastructure and Environment Department at PMCG; First Project in East Asia
2011	First Projects in Africa and the Balkans
2010	Establishment of PMC Research
2009	First Project in Central Asia
2007	Establishment of PMCG



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