

**In the process of revising the strategy:**

**ICCN's external evaluation**

**June 2006 – January 2007**

**Tbilisi, 2006**

**Final Report**

**Dated January, 31, 2007**

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**Colophon**

This report is the outcome of the external evaluation of ICCN, Tbilisi, Georgia (June 2006 – January 2007), in which staff members of ICCN and a group of external consultants participated. The report has been written by Mr Alexandre Kukhianidze, Ms Shorena Lortkipanidze, Ms Marieke Sterenborg, Ms Nana Topuridze and Mr Fons van der Velden. The study was sponsored by Cordaid, The Hague, The Netherlands and EED, Bonn, Germany. Mr Fons van der Velden acted as the coordinator of the study.

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### **Box I: Users' guide**

#### **Composition of the report**

##### *Main chapters*

The present report basically consists of three clusters. The main substance of the report is provided in Chapters III – VI containing data collected from the study of dossiers, visits to the organisations, interviews and workshops. In Chapter I a brief overview of the study process is presented. In Chapter II an overview is given of ICCN. Chapter VII presents reflections on the major learning's and some thoughts for future action.

##### *Summary, conclusions and major reflections*

The report starts with an executive summary including the major findings, conclusions and reflections of the study team.

##### *Annexes and footnotes*

The report contains – in a separate document – annexes with empirical data related to ICCN and the evaluation process. Footnotes in the text provide in a number of cases empirical evidence for statements in the text, references to documents, and/or a further elaboration of arguments. Both the annexes and the footnotes are meant for the more interested and/or involved reader.

## Acknowledgement

The International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) in Georgia was set up in 1994 as a peace-making and conflict resolution organisation. Over the years the organisation has developed into a well-known NGO in the Georgian society. In view of many changes in the past few years in Georgia ICCN is aiming at revising its strategy. The present evaluation was to assist ICCN in this process. A team of four external consultants and a staff member of ICCN carried out the study in close collaboration with other ICCN staff members.

Many people assisted the study team in the evaluation process. We first of all like to thank staff members of ICCN who provided important input and assistance throughout the entire evaluation process. The team had - in the form of a participatory workshop, focus group discussions and bilateral interviews - dialogues with most staff members. A special word of thanks is due to the counterpart Ms Irina Sulkhaniashvili who acted as a contact person between ICCN and the study team and also provided valuable assistance with regard to logistical issues. Furthermore Ms Rusudan Mshvidobadze and Ms Nina Tsikhistavi were so kind to take part in the Steering Committee that met at regular intervals during the study process to review the progress of the review.

The project officers concerned from the side of Cordaid and EED (Caucasus) kindly provided input with regard to the formulation of the Terms of Reference (ToR). We are grateful to all stakeholders and partners of ICCN who were so kind to spend valuable time on the study process by sharing information with the study team through face-to-face interviews. During these meetings and visits there was always preparedness to share experiences related to the relevance of ICCN's work and the collaboration with ICCN. Furthermore Cordaid, EED and ICCN provided valuable feedback to the draft version of the present report.

At all levels the team experienced a collaborative attitude and openness, which enabled the evaluators to take up numerous issues in a relatively short period of time. We are grateful for this professional and personal support given to us; it made the participation in this external evaluation a pleasant learning experience.

Last but certainly not least: as coordinator of the study, I want to thank very sincerely the co-members of the evaluation team Mr Alexander Kukhianidze (independent consultant, Tblisi), Ms Nana Topuridze (independent consultant, Tblisi), Ms Shorena Lortkipanidze (ICCN) and Ms Marieke Sterenborg (Context, international cooperation) for the pleasant and professional collaboration during all stages of the study process.

It speaks for itself that despite this intensive collaboration the content of this final report is solely the responsibility of the evaluation team. Feedback is welcome at: [mst@developmenttraining.org](mailto:mst@developmenttraining.org).



Fons van der Velden  
Coordinator of the study  
*Context, international cooperation*, Utrecht, the Netherlands  
January 31, 2007

## Abbreviations

BIG	Building Integrity in Georgia
CIPDD	Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWN	Caucasus Women's Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EC	European Commission
EED	Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst
HR	Human Rights
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCN	International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Institutional Development
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MARIG	Movement Against Religious Intolerance in Georgia
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MT	Management Team
NAP	National Action Plan
NGDO	Non Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OD	Organisational Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PR	Public Relations
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers

## **Executive summary**

### **1. Introduction**

The International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) in Georgia was set up in 1994 as an independent and not-for-profit peace-making and conflict resolution organisation. In view of many changes in the past few years both in Georgia and at the level of the organisation, ICCN is aiming at revising its strategy. The major purpose of the present evaluation is to assist ICCN in the process of developing a revised strategy that will be based on the renewed position and strategic changes of the organisation and on learning's which can be identified on the basis of past experience.

During the preparatory process it was decided that the external evaluation would basically focus on five areas: (a) developmental relevance; (b) programme performance of the EED and Cordaid supported projects; (c) organisational analysis; (d) relationships and linkages; (e) future directions.

The team consisted of five members. Mr Fons van der Velden acted as the overall coordinator of the study. He worked closely together with Mr Alexandre Kukhianidze, Shorena Lortkipanidze, Ms Marieke Sterenborg and Ms Nana Topuridze.

### **2. Developmental relevance**

The Rose Revolution in November 2003 brought some important changes to the Georgian society. The impact has generally been positive; the new government is fighting corruption, strengthening governmental institutions and promoting economic development. At the same time Georgia still faces difficulties with regard to intolerance and neglect of political dialogue with the opposition, violations of human rights and tension in conflict zones.

In the opinion of the study team the overall mission and objectives formulated by ICCN (consolidation of democracy and civil society; positive peacekeeping and conflict prevention; promotion of human rights; promoting tolerance and gender equality) are highly relevant in view of the current socio-political and economic development scenario in Georgia. ICCN plays a role as a watchdog while at the same time having good relations with the government. ICCN also has a function as a 'think tank' by way of its research projects and programmes and publications.

### **3. Organisational review**

Over the years ICCN has manifested itself as a 'living' organisation, which has changed its strategic orientation and its programmes and relationships in view of changes in the development scenario in Georgia. It has highly committed and dedicated staff members who are well connected with, and involved in, other societal institutions.

Within the context of appreciation for these positive features the study team has the opinion that there is space for improvement with regard to organisational development as well. The overall strategy and core purpose of ICCN has become quite broad. It might therefore be advisable to rethink the organisational strategy and (re)define the core purpose. It might furthermore be advisable to bring the governance structure in line with the day-to-day reality

in Georgia and to aim at a gradual transition from self-governance to constituency-based governance. The structure of the organisation needs to be addressed in order to do justice to the characteristics of ICCN as a professional development organisation. In this regard the issue of leadership also needs to be addressed. Competencies in the area of project cycle management require attention and the organisational learning function of the organisation needs to be strengthened.

ICCN is a project- and programme-oriented organisation. In terms of stages of organisational evaluation the study team feels it would be advisable to pay proper attention to the institutional capacity of ICCN as such. This should both by ICCN and its funding partners be defined as a priority in order to enhance the organisational sustainability.

#### **4. Programme performance**

During the last three years ICCN has implemented nine different projects which include a wide variety of activities such as trainings, network building, publications, lobby, advocacy, research, et cetera. The programmes which are being implemented are relevant in view of the current socio-political, economical and cultural development of Georgia and it should be appreciated that the organisation has the capacity to implement such a wide variety of activities. At the same time it should be observed that an overall programme strategy which guides this choice of programmes and prioritisation of activities appears to be missing.

The study team analysed the effectiveness and efficiency of the four programmes funded by Cordaid (The Netherlands) and EED (Germany) and implemented by ICCN during the last three years: Building Integration in Georgia, Rose Revolution, Georgia NGO Congress and From Tolerance to Civil Integration. The evaluation team is under the impression that most of the ICCN programmes are worth the investment. It should however be noted that the efficiency could not be analysed in detail due to the absence of sufficient data, lack of time and the research design for the present evaluation. With regard to the effectiveness of these programmes quite a diverse picture has emerged. As two of the programmes (Rose Revolution and From Tolerance to Civil Integration) have not been finalised it is not yet possible to assess the effectiveness. The effectiveness of the Georgia NGO Congress programme is perceived as high due to its outreach, level of participation and potential long term results. The outcome of the Building Integrity in Georgia programme is satisfactory; it is unfortunate however that some of the training programmes could not be given a proper follow-up.

The overall performance with regard to the implementation of various programmes is satisfactory. The main challenge in this area is that effectiveness of programmes can be enhanced through more adequate project cycle management.

#### **5. Relationships and linkages**

Linkages have been established with stakeholders at primary, secondary and tertiary level. In most of its programmes and projects ICCN is playing a unique role bringing together where possible all three categories of stakeholders, or initiate meetings and cooperation of different stakeholders from one or two categories. It helps to build and develop linkages both between ICCN and stakeholders, and among stakeholders, which in current conditions of a lack of dialogue between the new revolutionary government and civil society is extremely valuable.

Building cooperative relations with governmental structures is perceived to be not an easy task. The evaluation team however has the opinion that ICCN has established very productive relations with diverse governmental bodies.

The relationship between ICCN and its support agencies is also well developed and appreciated by ICCN. The study team does however feel that ICCN could develop a more pro-active management of the relationship with the donor agencies and negotiate more out of a position of strength.

## **6. Recommendations for the future**

In the preceding paragraphs an assessment has been provided of the relevance and strategic positioning of ICCN in the current context in Georgia; its organisational set-up; programme performance and linkages. It is a story of an organisation with a highly relevant vision and mission, a wide range of programmes with good relationships at different levels of the society and an excellent reputation with regard to gender issues. In organisational terms ICCN is an organisation with a high level of engagement and cooperation among the staff members.

There is scope for improvement with regard to the overall strategy of ICCN as a non-state actor, the internal governance of the organisation, the internal structure, clarity on the leadership of the organisation, human resource development in general and competencies with regard to project cycle management in particular, organisational learning and some practical issues such as office space and technical support systems.

The main recommendation of the study team is that the organisation and its support agencies should invest in the further institutional development of the organisation. In this institutional development process it is important to address higher levels of complexity (i.e. organisational strategy) before getting involved in dealing with issues at lower levels (such as systems and procedures).

## **Chapter I Introduction: parameters of the study**

### **1. Introduction**

The International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) is an independent, not-for-profit and non-partisan peace-making, research and training institution founded in 1994. In the years 2003 - 2006 some important changes took place both at the level of society at large in Georgia and at the level of the organisation in particular.

The Rose Revolution of November 2003 introduced a number of dramatic changes to the national governance, replacing the old elite with a younger and much more active generation. During these years ICCN continued its work as a peace-promoting organisation with a broad focus and a wide range of activities. Currently ICCN is aiming at revising its strategy and introducing a few modifications so that the organisation can continue to work effectively in the changed environment.

Since 2000, Cordaid has been a major donor of ICCN. However, due to the changes in its funding possibilities and in relation to its geographic coverage, Cordaid will be leaving Georgia in 2008. This evaluation is therefore also important in the light of further relations of the organisation with both its current and future donors.

### **2. Purpose of the evaluation**

The major purpose of the evaluation is to assist ICCN in the process of developing a revised strategy that will derive from the renewed position and strategic changes of the organisation and on learning's which can be identified on the basis of past experience.

During the preparatory process, ICCN, Cordaid and EED along with the evaluation team decided that the evaluation would basically focus on five interrelated areas:<sup>1</sup>

- Developmental relevance
- Programme performance with regard to the EED and Cordaid supported projects
- Organisational analysis
- Relationships/Linkages
- Future directions

### **3. Evaluation process**

In general, evaluations are meant to be a learning exercise that provides an opportunity to reflect on the past in order to define future policy and actions. It is essentially a mutual learning exercise that enables all partners - in this particular case ICCN and its stakeholders - to emerge stronger and with a better appreciation of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

In the process leading to the evaluation it was decided that the exercise would be 'external' in nature, but with an active involvement of ICCN staff and inputs from Cordaid and EED. This will lead to a better appreciation of the complexities in which the organisation itself and its constituent organisations are involved. Moreover, such an approach will enhance the

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<sup>1</sup> For details reference may be made to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the study in Annex I.

ownership of the evaluation and may contribute to the ongoing organisational learning of ICCN.

As a first step in the evaluation process ICCN and Cordaid provided the members of the evaluation team with important background documents related to the development context in Georgia, ICCN as an organisation and programmes which are being implemented by ICCN. During this stage of the study process the Terms of Reference for the evaluation were drafted. A briefing workshop<sup>2</sup> was organised with members of the evaluation team and staff members of ICCN in order to inform the members of the study team about the context, organisation, programmes and linkages of ICCN, to get acquainted with each other and subsequently exchange expectations. Furthermore the guiding principles for the evaluation were set, the ToR were finalised and the planning for the primary data collection process was started. At the request of EED (Bonn, Germany) the ToR were subsequently substantially elaborated in order to accommodate the issues which had been suggested by EED.

Against the above-mentioned background, the evaluation process went through various stages, which may be summarised as follows.

- a. Preparatory stage (September-October 2006): briefing workshop, finalisation of the ToR and research methodology, study of documents, preparation interviews, coordination between ICCN, Cordaid and EED, finalisation of the detailed planning of the study.
- b. Primary data collection (November-December 2006): briefing ICCN, self-assessment workshop ICCN; interviews with primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders, study of files, report writing, debriefing.
- c. Analysis and reporting (December-January 2007): analysis primary and secondary sources; triangulation and writing of the evaluation report.

#### **4. Methodology**

In line with the ToR for this study the members of the study team and the participating organisations collected data from primary sources (open and semi-structured interviews and meetings, field visits, participatory workshops, et cetera) and secondary sources (such as progress and annual reports of ICCN, internal documents, internal and external reviews, position papers, et cetera).

Data were collected at the level of staff and management of ICCN and primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders of ICCN. The selection of persons and organisations to be met by the evaluation team was done by ICCN. The understanding was that a variety of stakeholders and groups would be included in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the relevance, programme performance and complexities at organisational level.<sup>3</sup>

The study team mainly used qualitative methods such as interviews, self-appraisal techniques, focus group discussions and SWOT analysis. These were completed with an analysis of annual and progress reports and additional background material.

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<sup>2</sup> Reference may be made to the report of the briefing workshop in Annex VII.

<sup>3</sup> Reference may be made to the itinerary in Annex II.

## **5. Composition of the evaluation team**

Initially it was envisaged that the evaluation team would consist of two consultants. Once the issues that had been raised by EED were included in the ToR it was decided that the composition of the study team would consist of four members: Mr Alexander Kukhianidze, Mr Fons van der Velden, Ms Shorena Lortkipanidze and Ms Marieke Sterenborg. At the request of EED Ms Nana Topuridze was later on added to the study team.<sup>4</sup>

Mr Fons van der Velden acted as the overall coordinator of the study. He worked closely together with Mr Kukhianidze, Ms Nana Topuridze, Ms Shorena Lortkipanidze and Ms Marieke Sterenborg. The five members of the team worked together in an interactive manner with the ICCN staff; they were all involved in the primary data collection, shared notes and observations and did a joint analysis.

An informal Steering Committee comprising the members of the evaluation team and two core staff members of ICCN, Ms Rusudan Mshvidobadze and Ms Nina Tsikhistavi, met at regular intervals during the study progress to review the progress of the study. Furthermore Irina Sulkhaniashvili acted as the counterpart for the evaluation team.

## **6. Reporting**

At the end of the primary data collection process a debriefing meeting was held on December 6, 2006 in Mtskheta (Georgia). in which ICCN staff members and the members of the study team participated. During this meeting the evaluation team received valuable feedback with regard to its major observations; facts and figures in the 'report in progress'; analysis with regard to the relevance of ICCN, its programmes and its organisational arrangement; the tentative conclusions and the study process.<sup>5</sup> Based on this feedback and a further internal reflection with the study team, the draft report has been finalised by the study team.

The draft report was send to the Cordaid, EED and ICCN on December 20, 2006. ICCN and representatives of Cordaid and EED provided valuable written feedback to the draft report; subsequently the present final report has been formulated.

The structure the report follows a slightly different sequence than the ToR. The item list in Annex IV covers the sequence of the report.

## **7. Reflections on the study process**

In retrospective it may be said that it was a good decision to carry out the evaluation in two stages as this may have led to a better understanding, acceptance and internalisation of the study process and may therefore contribute to the ongoing organisational learning of ICCN.

In spite of the strong commitment and involvement of all parties concerned to make the evaluation a success as well as the enabling factors mentioned in the previous sections of this

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<sup>4</sup> For details reference may be made to paragraph 7 of the ToR in Annex I.

<sup>5</sup> See Annex VIII for the report of this debriefing meeting.

Chapter some factors limited the execution of the study. The following major issues need to be mentioned.

- Many of the staff members of ICCN had never before participated in an external evaluation process with a participatory character. It appeared that they had limited experience with and initially sometimes inadequate understanding of the process and content of a comprehensive participatory external evaluation. This may have led to some apprehensions especially during the initial phases of the study.
- The detailed itinerary for the primary data collection was not ready as required at the beginning of the primary data collection process. As members of the study team had to get involved this led to some delay at the beginning of the primary data collection.
- The absence of a central filing system at ICCN made it difficult to trace some documents at short notice.
- Generally progress reports of ICCN do not contain much information at the level of output and outcome. Hence in the programme analysis it was difficult to build on existing data.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these shortcomings the evaluation team holds the opinion that by and large justice could be done to the ToR for this study.

The fact that some of the evaluators did not speak some of the local languages did not have a negative impact as on some occasions ICCN staff members and two of the co-evaluators acted as able interpreters.

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<sup>6</sup> See also chapter IV on Programme Cycle Management and chapter V on Programmes. In this context it should be mentioned that ICCN publications form an interesting source of information, but there are no comprehensive data available about the actual use of these documents.

## Chapter II Description of ICCN<sup>7</sup>

### 1. Context

Development of democratic institutions and the rule of law remain main objectives to achieve the national goal of turning Georgia into a stable and economically strong liberal-democratic state. ‘The Revolution of Roses’ opened a new stage in Georgian history by launching deep-reaching reforms in all major spheres, although it also became clear that this will be curbed by many obstacles. Apart from the difficult legacy left by the totalitarian system and the first post-Soviet years – ethno-territorial conflicts, ruined infrastructure, rampant corruption and the fragmented society – there are many deeply rooted problems related to mentality and habits of behaviour, including those of subjective and psychological nature that show up and could be successfully addressed: xenophobia and discriminative perception of non-titular ethnic groups, aggression and intolerance towards religious, sexual and other minorities, gender issues (especially in the countryside) and widespread domestic violence. Modernisation of social life that would bring Georgia closer to European standards, bringing countryside closer to the level of urban centres, implementation of the strategic plan of development of capital Tbilisi and other important goals cannot be compatible with retarded and harmful norms of behaviour, weak values and underdeveloped ability of collaborative action.

It is understandable therefore that conflict sensitivity, tolerance and integration lately became acknowledged priority objectives for most of the donors operating in our region. Major donors and international organisations note the lack of consistency in Georgian state policies with regard to the unresolved conflicts. On the other hand, there is a lot of criticism of the lack of coordination between the numerous and costly programmes implemented in Georgia, especially in the ethnically diverse regions such as Marneuli (Kvemo Kartli) and Ahalkalaki (Javakheti) that often duplicate each other and lack the result orientation and a proper evaluation process.

In the actual process of social reforms much emphasis is laid on the development of the economic sector. Despite the fact that economic growth is important for social progress, the initiators of ICCN believe that the establishment of a civil society needs more than just a free market. The results of local and international efforts to overcome the economic and social crisis remain unsatisfactory. The discrepancy between a small privileged group and the large majority of the population with an income below the minimum of existence is even increasing.

Organisations and stakeholders acting in the field of development lack relevant information and tools to deal with the highly complex problem fields. Skills in systematic problem analysis, strategic planning and all other fields of professional management are hardly developed in governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The mission of ICCN is fostering democratic reforms and overcoming the problems that prevent Georgia from successfully completing the transition period from the post-Soviet stage to a democratic and law-based state respecting liberal values, protecting human rights and fulfilling state obligations and commitments toward local and international communities.

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<sup>7</sup> This chapter has been contributed by staff members of ICCN.

Civil society in Georgia is strong, numerous and developed enough to materialise the mission, but its potential is not adequately applied or sufficiently activated in that direction. Significant difference from the period before 2004 is the existence of political will in the government of Georgia to fight corruption, discrimination of minorities, non-violently resolve the conflicts and build open society. However, the tasks of the third sector are far from being completed.

Unexpectedly, since the Rose Revolution of November 2003 most Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) lost their civic momentum, became more fragmented and localised in poorly connected groups. While open aggression cases towards religious minority groups have significantly diminished, social life is still marred by xenophobia, ethnic nationalism and indirect (or sometimes direct) discrimination of ethnic, religious and gender minorities.

Since the revolution, as was expected, the government has incorporated and co-opted many NGO activists and leaders, but instead of bringing the civil society spirit into the ruling circles exalted by the ‘people power’, they rather grew into the process of establishment of new bureaucracy. Still the vision of ICCN is that the civil sector of Georgia has enough potential and skills to activate Georgian society towards fulfilling the mission.

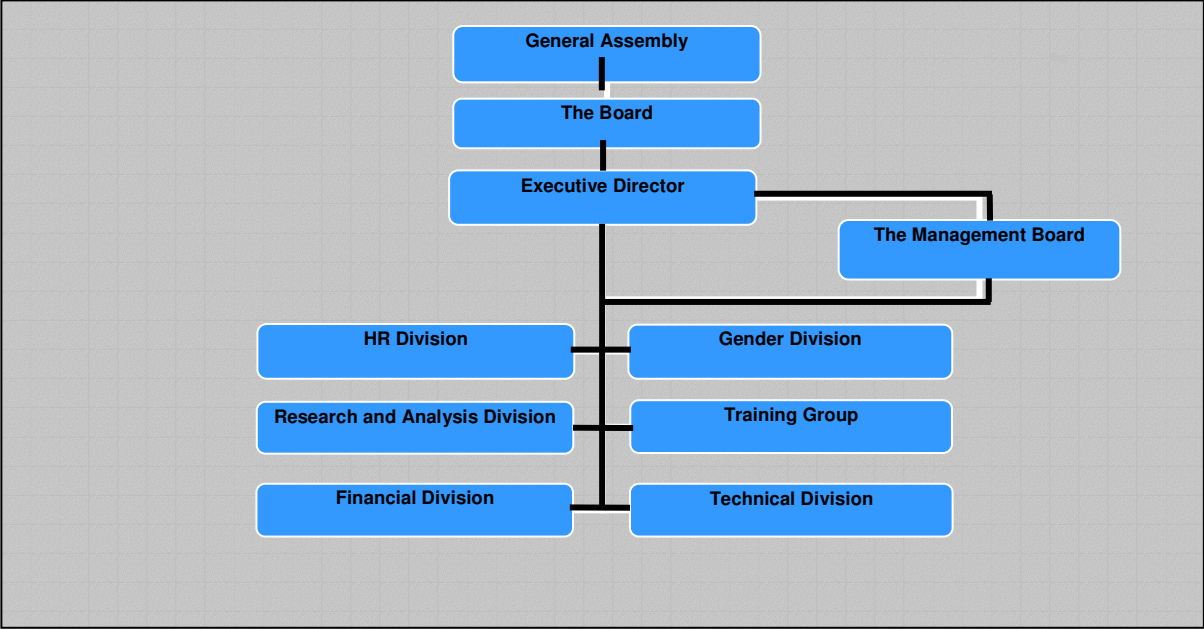
## **2. Organisational set-up**

ICCN is governed by an external board which at the same time represents ICCN’s constituency. The MEDE evaluation<sup>8</sup> conducted in 2003 (among other recommendations) recommended ICCN to establish an external governing body for the better implementation of a ‘checks and balances’ system in the process of governing of ICCN and ensure its openness and accountability to the outside world. The position of executive director was also introduced after MEDE recommendations, before ICCN was self-governed entity. The executive director of the organisation is responsible to the board and supervises ICCN internal organisational processes, controls the implementation of programmes and supervises the financial and administrative aspects of the organisational set-up. The management board of the organisation is responsible for the implementation of strategy, programme performance and supervises more content-wise aspects of organisation activities. The heads of each division are represented in the management board, except the heads of financial and administrative divisions. The executive director is member of this body within the structure of ICCN with one vote. The following divisions work at ICCN: human rights, gender, training, finances, research and analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> See MEDE evaluation report, 2003.

**Box II: Organogram ICCN**



**3. ICCN’s programmes**

ICCN was established with the aim of building peace and accord in the divided post-totalitarian society, putting the main effort on conflict prevention and resolution in the Caucasian region, with special focus on Georgia. In the following years empowering civil society, advocating human rights, tightly cooperating with other important actors became crucial in realising its purpose to strengthen civil society, to promote human rights, tolerance and gender equity and to participate in peaceful conflict resolution. All current and planned programmes and projects have been conceptually reconsidered and planned to respond the main purposes of the organisation. Stakeholders have been selected to fit the programme goals. ICCN has diversified its activities and partnership to achieve a desirable impact through the selected stakeholders (primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders<sup>9</sup>).

During the last three years (2003-2006) the dimensions of strategic intervention of ICCN has been widened and it included advocacy and lobbying, use of opinion multipliers, networking and NGO coalitions, public campaigning, third party intervention: consultancy, facilitation and mediation. The watchdog function of ICCN became one of the most important directions along with research and training since the Rose Revolution.

ICCN also works in field in the regions of Georgia, especially South-Eastern and Southern parts of Georgia mainly inhabited by ethnic and religious minorities. The community development was new kind of activity for the organisation like ICCN. ICCN staff successfully redesigned, modified and adapted training modules for the local communities. ICCN is interested to deepen its knowledge and experience in community development. To work in the regions of Georgia is a very important element of general civil society and democracy establishing and supporting.

<sup>9</sup> See also paragraph 4 of the present Chapter.

The human rights division works towards promoting a dialogue between minority and majority groups by organising seminars and workshops. The topics covered during the workshops address sensitive issues such as the registration law of religious establishments, status of religious establishments and religious education in the secondary schools of Georgia. Guests coming to ICCN in order to meet religious minority representatives often represent high governmental officials who are directly involved in the decision-making process. The idea to establish the Movement for the Protection of Basic Rights and Freedoms is the result of the work carried out in the framework of the project. A movement against religious intolerance that started back in 2002 as a spontaneous response to the ongoing process, gradually reshaped itself into a structured body, the Civil Council for the Protection of Basic Rights and Freedoms.

The programmes implemented by ICCN are diverse in nature.<sup>10</sup> But the aims of the organisation allow ICCN to be represented on the diverse levels and sectors of society; ICCN Programmes mainly target minority communities (religious, ethnic, gender) and aim at providing these communities with appropriate skills and knowledge, empowering them for active integration into Georgian society. Even with programmes on market and social linkages in Akhalkhalaki region, when working with farmers associations, ICCN contributed to its mission and vision.

ICCN gender division represents task force organisation providing gender mainstreaming in all programmes and projects of ICCN. Elaboration of gender training modules in the frames of ICCN ongoing programmes for different stakeholders is one of the main activities of gender direction.

#### **4. Relationships**

Stakeholders of ICCN are divided into three general categories:

##### *a. Primary stakeholders*

Those who are ultimately and primarily affected by the programme activities, i.e. who expect to benefit from or be adversely affected by the change. In this category ICCN put the following groups: religious communities (minority church leaders, majority church), ethnic minorities (community-based organisations in multi-ethnic regions of Georgia, farmers associations in multi-ethnic regions of Georgia), women groups (minority women's groups (religious and ethnic women) victim women, youth group (political parties, young leaders, religious minority and majority young leaders groups). In other words the primary stakeholders of ICCN could be identified as ICCN reference community, who at the same time are target groups and beneficiaries, and with whom ICCN directly works in field.

##### *b. Secondary stakeholders*

Those with an intermediary role between ICCN, primary and tertiary stakeholders, i.e. who are playing the active role in the field. In this category ICCN put the following groups: local NGOs, local governments, local political parties, local mass media, local NGO networks.

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<sup>10</sup> For a description of the different programmes implemented by ICCN see Annex VI.

c. *Tertiary stakeholders*

Those who are playing the role of decision maker and/or directly influence the decision making process. In this category we put the parliament of Georgia, the executive branch, the Public Defenders' Office and international organisations.

Each programme implemented by ICCN has its stakeholders according to organisation's mission, vision, aim and strategy. ICCN as it was mentioned above works in several different thematic spheres. The area of stakeholders was widening due to involvement in new programmes. The increased intention of ICCN to influence decision making in its relevant spheres is very well reflected in the list of ICCN's main stakeholders.

## **5. Achievements and complexities**

When speaking about the achievements and complexities, one has to point out that the relatively weak influence of the non-governmental sector on the executive branch and the parliament of Georgia remains a serious problem. Thus, one of the complexities of ICCN's work is the relatively weak ties it has with certain branches of the government.

Promoting the institutionalisation of bodies established with the initiative and under the umbrella of ICCN is one of the key achievements of the organisation over the period 2003-2006. When addressing the issue of institutionalisation, one has to point out that towards the end of the Building Integrity in Georgia (BIG) programme, one of the major achievements of ICCN, particularly the human rights division, is the establishment and activity of two separate bodies: The Civil Council for the Protection of Basic Rights and Freedoms and the Christian Women's Centre.

At the end of the three year long programme, one of the key questions and challenges facing ICCN is whether these bodies can start functioning as independent entities with their own, defined and concrete mission, vision, goals and resources needed to perform the work.

ICCN is in the process of revising its identity and strategy. The organisation is active on public scene and it is more oriented to implement programme based activities according to its mission and vision (support democratic processes and civil integration). Internal organisational development is paid relatively less attention to.

## **Chapter III Development relevance**

### **1. Introduction**

As per the Terms of Reference for this study the first question the evaluation team has to deal with is ‘is ICCN doing the right thing?’ This question implies that attention needs to be given to the context in which the organisation is working, the interrelatedness of this context and the vision and mission of ICCN and the strategic positioning of ICCN within this broader framework.

### **2. Context: socio-political, economic and cultural developments in Georgia**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent turmoil in Georgia with series of civil and ethno-political conflicts, and more than a decade of Eduard Shevardnadze’s rule created favourable conditions for corruption and neglect of democratic values among members of his ruling team. During years of turmoil law-enforcement structures themselves had been extremely demoralised. In addition to unresolved conflicts, violations of human rights, torture, illegal arrests, extortion of money from business people, drivers and criminals, bribery, falsification of the results of investigations, involvement in crimes and assassinations became the usual practice of the police force.

Conflict regulation, human rights, ethnic and religious intolerance, and consolidation of liberal-democratic values became priority agendas in Georgia in 1991-2003 for newly created Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Due to a lack of political will, the Government of Georgia neither did wish to fight seriously corruption, money laundering and organised crime nor did it very efficiently. The reason was obvious: after his return from Moscow to Tbilisi in 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze restored the Soviet type of government, and returned his communist nomenclature in power. The same people returned to the same offices and they brought with them a corrupt mentality and neglect of democratic values. Instead of the communist rhetoric they used a combination of democratic and nationalistic ones.

On the one hand despite of eleven years of financial support from Western donor organisations, mostly from the US and Western European governments and private foundations, Shevardnadze had become more and more dependent on his corrupt surrounding which helped him to falsify presidential, parliamentary and local elections and maintain power. A consequent result of the created situation was the criminalisation of the government, mostly through illegal or unfair redistribution of state property (privatisation, auctions, ‘voucherisation’, etc.), ‘milking’ Western donors instead of Moscow, rampant corruption, and direct links with criminal groupings or businesses engaged in smuggling via badly-managed and transparent Georgian borders.

On the other hand Western donor organisations’ most important input in democratisation processes in Georgia has been their invaluable contribution to the creation, formation, and consolidation of the Georgian civil society as a counterbalance to the anti-democratic Government of Georgia.

The Rose Revolution which took place on November 23, 2003 and led to essential political, economic, social and cultural changes, was a logical result of the growing contradiction between the corrupt ruling political group and the civil society of Georgia. Actually it was the

first anti-corruption revolution on post-Soviet territory which proclaimed values of liberal democracy, rule of law, and integration into North Atlantic structures, though practical implementation of these values is not as easy as their declaration.

The impact of the Rose Revolution has generally been positive for fighting corruption and strengthening governmental institutions in the country, economic development, and implementation of social programmes. At the same time, together with a new young political elite, this revolution brought revolutionary methods of government, intolerance and neglect of a political dialogue of a majority with the opposition and civil society, a new wave of violations of human rights, collisions concerning independence of the judiciary system and freedom of mass media (especially television), and tensions in conflict zones. Political intolerance has an impact on religious and ethnic intolerance as a model of behaviour. Radical reforms caused a growing need for new forms of negotiations between dismissed employees and government or administration.

Apart from free and fair elections, distribution of power, checks and balances and decentralisation, democracy also means gender equality and tolerance. Georgia is a traditional society with serious gender problems. Although not realised fully by all Georgians it is an issue that deserves attention, especially in the south-western and eastern parts of the country where the population is predominantly Muslim.

### **3. Relevance of the objectives of ICCN**

As described in Chapter II ICCN formulated the following basic objectives for the organisation:

- Consolidation of democracy and civil society;
- Positive peacekeeping and conflict prevention/management in divided society;
- Human rights;
- Tolerance and gender equality.<sup>11</sup>

In the interviews conducted during the primary data collection process of this study<sup>12</sup> respondents from both governmental and non-governmental sectors stated that implementation of the goals ICCN proclaimed after its creation in 1994, became even more relevant after the Rose Revolution. Implementation of these objectives would be most efficient through a flexible application of ICCN's role both as watchdog and as think tank. Some respondents stated that ICCN's objectives are important and generally coincide with objectives of the government regarding conflict resolution issues. For government officials ICCN's history and especially its activities related to gender, tolerance and confidence building are well-known and appreciated and considered positive contributions to Georgia.

The interviewees all agreed on the importance of ICCN's objective of consolidation of democracy and civil society. The objectives related to positive peacekeeping and conflict prevention, management in a divided society, human rights, tolerance and gender equality were also perceived very important, but prioritised differently according to the current political situation, geographical sphere of interest, or the sphere of their activities.

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<sup>11</sup> See the power point presentation by ICCN, dated November 27, 2006

<sup>12</sup> See Annex III for the itinerary and a description of the respondents.

*a. Consolidation of democracy and civil society*

According to some experts, in Shevardnadze time civil society activists were not eager to work for the government due to low salaries and a need to become involved in corruption schemes for survival. Today many civil society activists are in the government which is positive, but also has a negative side; a lower level of civil control of the government. In general Georgian civil society was built on the weakness of the state. Because the state could not achieve many of its goals, many people went to civil society. Today there is a migration from civil society to state organisations. State is becoming more important and currently this migration is weakening civil society. Before the Rose Revolution Georgian NGOs were also weak, but now it becomes more evident because of the strengthening of the state. At present date civil society organisations are no longer like opposition to the government, but democracy is not consolidated yet and there is a necessity for NGOs to redefine themselves. Most respondents think that civil organisations are more fragile today in comparison to the Shevardnadze era which creates civil conflict and alienation of civil society from the government. ICCN's main objectives are especially relevant in the current situation as democracy building means peaceful resolution of all conflicts through negotiations and because of threat from the government to civil peace.

*b. Positive peacekeeping and conflict prevention/management in a divided society*

Positive peacekeeping and conflict prevention are important especially in some of the regions of Georgia, e.g. Javakheti. Absence of normal communications with Javakheti is an important issue and this is a ground for conflict prevention. The work in this direction is especially important for NGOs like ICCN because they can play a mediation role between the Georgian government and the Armenian community in Javakheti. Conflict prevention in Javakheti will remain an important issue also due to the closure of the Russian military base in Akhalkalaki in 2008. The Russian military base is the biggest employer, and its withdrawal needs special attention to integration processes in Javakheti region. Authorities are very passive in the region and ICCN could play a key role in conflict prevention and integration through discussions and trainings and the provision of relevant services.

In Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region ICCN is a well known and respected organisation. A group of NGOs was created in the Ministry for Conflict Resolution Issues, and ICCN was the most active one, according to its former Minister. The governmental policy was not obvious three years ago, but now it is clear that there is no alternative to peaceful resolution of conflicts, and here ICCN's role is extremely important.

The problem of so-called 'Meskhetian Turks' who were deported from Georgia to Central Asia in 1944 during the Stalinist period needs a solution and the role of ICCN in the integration of these people during their return would be invaluable. Also the Ministry of Civil Integration works on the integration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and ICCN's participation would be very useful.

Conflicts in Georgia have often destroyed families and established communities. The violence in which they have lived has brutalised the participants, breaking down norms and values of the community. Organised crime groups in conflict zones, traffic in arms and drugs, leading to a proliferation of drug abuse and violence in their region could also be a concern for ICCN.

ICCN's training in peacekeeping is also important because of the militaristic attitude of the president of Georgia (e.g. mentioned pacifists as bad guys). ICCN activists are important in this respect.

*c. Human rights*

The most difficult problem for present Georgian authorities is the human rights issue, and law enforcement structures do not stand the test. Clear steps need to be taken: those who violate human rights should be punished and tolerance should be educated through training and open discussions, including with members of the Parliament. As a dialogue on human rights issues is especially difficult with the current government and ICCN is one of the most experienced NGOs, ICCN's role is invaluable.

Other NGOs should be more active in practical activities like protests against the assassination by the police of Sandro Girgvliani, a young employer of one of the Georgian banks. ICCN takes a lead in this process and its role should be strengthened.

*d. Tolerance and gender equality*

Tolerance is one of the priority issues because the present government is not tolerant concerning opposition and this problem will remain tense in the close future. Government leaders' intolerance also has its impact on other sectors of social relations – religious and ethnic, for example.

Concerning religious intolerance the situation in Georgia is better now because open violence has ceased. Militant groupings of religious Orthodox fanatics led by Vasil Mkalavishvili do not organise pogroms against other religious sects (like Baptists or Jehovah Witnesses), and the dominant Georgian Orthodox Church is less active against other religious confessions. This is because law-enforcement structures demonstrated their power. The society itself still is not tolerant however and that is a structural issue. Representatives of different religious sects and churches still complain about oppression. ICCN and CIPDD implemented a joint training programme on religious tolerance.

ICCN's strategy in the Marneuli region could also have an additional direction to work with the local electorate. During the 2006 local elections all 18 candidates had no alternative competitors. The problem of Azeri electorate is that it supports only those candidates who belong to the ruling political force. It seems that the electorate is tolerant to unfair elections and trying to avoid any political pressure from other (Georgian) political forces.

Government decisions concerning gender issues are improving – there are more women appointed to government positions and in the Parliament. Gender issues are especially urgent in the region of Marneuli with a predominantly Azeri Muslim population where it overshadows religious intolerance. The gender programme is seen as ICCN's most active.

It is difficult to say that gender problems or tolerance are very popular in Georgian society. Many Georgians do not realise deeply these problems and mistakenly think that they are tolerant and do not need any training or participation in events, and that gender issues even do not exist in Georgia. Educational efforts therefore continue to be important. One of the respondents stressed that it is important not only to involve in theoretical discussions but that it is better to participate in protests or courts and be more active as watchdogs.

#### 4. Positioning

ICCN plays its role as watchdog NGO and at the same time cooperates with Georgian government which is a good mix. ICCN also tries to professionally implement its research projects and programmes, publish results, and that makes it also a 'think tank' NGO which strengthens its competitiveness. According to some experts, ICCN has never been strong in general civil society building, but it is strong in conflict resolution, tolerance, and works better in the regions and that is very valuable. ICCN's strengths are in the training component; research component; advocacy and consulting services and in this it is stronger than other NGOs.

Since the Rose Revolution ICCN and many other NGOs are trying to find a new position and role in the Georgian society. Many NGOs now work closely with the government, or became a part of governmental initiatives and activities. As a response to the weakening of the civil society and the feeling that the government is against them several leading NGOs in 2006 united their efforts and created the coalition 'Civil Society for Democratic Georgia'. The Georgia NGO Congress has played an important role in the cooperation between NGOs.<sup>13</sup>

In 2003-2005 Constitutional changes took place and the all power was concentrated in hands of one person – the president of Georgia. It makes strategic goals even more relevant in the current situation when we deal with a frightened society. The goal of the first Congress was demonstration of influence and power of the NGO sector in Georgia – up to 200 organisations took place in this Congress. One of the core strategies for ICCN should be the creation of NGO networks in the regions of Georgia and registration as lobbyist in the Parliament of Georgia.

According to experts interviewed, ICCN is not close to the government and was never known as a pro-governmental NGO. While ICCN successfully carries out a function as a watchdog NGO, it could more actively - where possible - cooperate with governmental structures without being identified as pro-governmental NGO. For instance, some experts think that the government of Georgia does not have a well-elaborated strategy for conflict resolution and here ICCN could play an important role in helping the government to improve this strategy.

ICCN and other NGOs are mostly project and programme-oriented NGOs supported by Western donors. The resources of these donors are limited and together with economic improvement in Georgia their interest will decrease and some of them may withdraw from the country. ICCN could therefore build closer relations with the corporate sector until national donor organisations are created.

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<sup>13</sup> See also chapter V, paragraph 3.d.

## Chapter IV Organisational review

### 1. Introduction

As per the ToR for this assignment in the present chapter an analysis will be given of the organisational characteristics of ICCN.<sup>14</sup> The information for this chapter has mainly been obtained from a review of major reference documents<sup>15</sup>, bilateral interviews with staff members of ICCN and the organisational self-assessment workshop which was carried out by the core team of ICCN on November 30 – December 1, 2006 in Tbilisi.<sup>16</sup>

### 2. Vision, mission and strategy

The overall vision and mission of ICCN have been described in Chapter II and can be summarised as ‘contributing to the democratic development and peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia’. In Chapter III it has already been concluded that this mission may be considered as relevant in view of the current socio-political and economic development of the country.

In the documentation of ICCN information about the overall organisational strategy is virtually absent.<sup>17</sup> During an interview with the present ICCN Management Board<sup>18</sup> senior staff members of ICCN explained that during the pioneering stage of the organisation (1994 – 1998) the emphasis was on ‘training programmes for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); public diplomacy and conflict resolution; scientific monitoring of political developments; publication of research results’.

From 1998 onwards the focus broadened and expanded to other social groups (such as journalists, young political leaders, and state structures such as army, police and security forces). In terms of content the programme of ICCN has also been broadened and from around the year 2000 onwards religious minorities have been included as an important reference community. Members of the Management Board explained that these changes occurred on the basis of perceived needs in the Georgian society.<sup>19</sup>

In hindsight it may be observed that the overall strategy of ICCN is that the organisation combines (sound) academic research in the field of civil society with developmental activities in the area of training, publications, lobby, advocacy and socio-political action. It would be helpful however if the overall strategy of the organisation could be articulated clearly, so that such a statement may serve as a guideline for internal decision making and as a tool for communication with external stakeholders.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Reference may be made to paragraph 5.b of the Tor (see Annex I). In order to adhere to the principle form follows contents, issues of higher level of complexity will be dealt with first. This implies that the present Chapter deals with the issues which have been mentioned in paragraph 5.b in a slightly different order.

<sup>15</sup> See Annex X.

<sup>16</sup> See the report of the self-assessment workshop, Annex VII.

<sup>17</sup> ICCN has a rather elaborate mission statement (see Chapter II) and ‘jumps’ from the mission statement into long-term activities and methodology. The ‘how question’, strategy, does not receive much attention in the documentation.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Management Board, dated November 28, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> This recommendation is not new: see also the report of the external evaluation which was carried out in 2002 (MEDE, 2003: 4).

The fact that the overall strategy of ICCN has changed over the years may be seen as a sign of a healthy living organisation which is well connected with, and responding to, changes in the environment.<sup>21</sup> Such an ability of ICCN may be considered as a major asset. At the same time it should be acknowledged that the overall strategy, long term aims and programme activities of ICCN have become quite broad, which actually leads among other things to the question: ‘what is core?’ and puts a lot of pressure on the organisational capacities of the organisation. It may be considered to re-think the core purpose of the organisation in terms of focus in order to achieve more optimal results.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Governance

In the literature about governance of NGDOs it is mentioned that there are basically three common governing structures: self-regulated; self-selected oligarchy; constituency based. These three models have their pro’s and con’s.<sup>23</sup> One of the major recommendations of the external evaluation which was carried out in 2002 was ‘... strengthening the board and separation of the functions chair – executive director’.<sup>24</sup> These changes have also been incorporated in the Charter of ICCN.<sup>25</sup> Senior staff members of ICCN shared with members of the evaluation team that the MEDE team and staff members of Cordaid basically felt that the board of ICCN should consist of outsiders and that as a matter of principle the then director should step down in order to obtain a clear division between the legislative and executive powers within ICCN.

The above-mentioned changes were implemented in the period 2003 – 2006 and went through different stages. The then director-cum-chairperson of the board resigned from the chairmanship and later from the board and as executive director; a new executive director was appointed in 2004. At present the General Body and the Board are the highest decision making authorities within the organisation. A new board was installed in May 2006. It takes decisions with regard to the strategic direction of ICCN; manages the assets of the organisation; takes decisions on the establishment of branches; decides on the adoption of new members; calls the General Body meeting.<sup>26</sup> The executive director, who is not directly involved in programme implementation, manages basically the internal organisation and is, together with the Head of Finance, responsible for the authorisation of payments. In that sense there exists a proper separation of functions within the organisation. An internal management team (called Management Board) which consists of the executive director, heads of some, not all, divisions, coordinates and oversees the implementation of the various projects and programmes and is an institutional arrangement to safeguard coherence and synergy. (See also the next paragraphs.)

It should be appreciated that ICCN provided such systematic follow-up to the recommendations of the MEDE-evaluation. At the same time it should be mentioned that Georgia does not have a long tradition of voluntary service, and the present governance

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<sup>21</sup> De Geus (1997) has argued that such a capacity is one of the major strengths of a living organisation.

<sup>22</sup> Reference may also be made to the interview with Mr Gia Nodia, CIPDD. This issue was also brought forward by some staff members during the organisational self-assessment workshop, see paragraph 7 of the report of the self-assessment workshop (Annex VII). It is basically the issue of finding the balance between sufficient diversity and homogeneity.

<sup>23</sup> Fowler, 1997: 37.

<sup>24</sup> See: MEDE, 2003: 4.

<sup>25</sup> See: ICCN, *Charter of International Center of Conflictology and Negotiations*, Tbilisi, 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid paragraph 8. See also the power point presentation ‘The International Center on Conflict and Negotiation’ which was presented to the evaluation team on November 27, 2006.

structure is a relatively new phenomenon in the society which makes it difficult to find competent, committed people who are prepared to act as honorary board members. Moreover, the political context remains quite volatile.<sup>27</sup> Staff members of ICCN do not hold one and the same view with regard to the present system of governance within the organisation. On the one hand it is being appreciated that the board oversees the activities of the organisation and that there are 'no conflicts of interest'. At the same time the ins and outs of the present governance structure are poorly understood by stakeholders (board, staff, external stakeholders) and the Board and General Body appear to be rather formal, pro-forma, institutions which are not really well informed about, and committed to the work of ICCN.<sup>28</sup>

The evaluation team is of the opinion that the separation of functions (in terms of finance and programmes) has really contributed to the overall accountability and checks and balances within the ICCN. At the same time the team wonders whether the present governance structure has improved the legitimacy, accountability and credibility of ICCN, as the Board and General Body seem to be rather pro-forma institutions aimed at donor compliance and incorporating constituency-based accountability. This should – according to the evaluation team - not be idealised or seen as a substitute for other equally valid methods especially in a country where state, civil society and corporate sector are still in the process of finding the right balance.<sup>29</sup> Under such circumstances self-regulation in combination with peer control<sup>30</sup> complemented by an ombudsman as an independent watchdog and involvement of some qualified and committed outsiders may be an alternative for a transition period.

#### **4. Structure**

The structure of the organisation, described in Chapter II, may be summarised as follows.

It was explained to the evaluation team that members of the Management Board<sup>31</sup> work on the basis of consensus and that the executive director does not hold any hierarchical position within this Board.<sup>32</sup>

The structure of ICCN was also reviewed during several stages of the self-assessment workshop and a number of strengths and weakness of the present structure were mentioned.<sup>33</sup> Apart from the observations about the role and function of the Board which have been mentioned in the previous paragraph the observations of the evaluation team can be summarised as follows:

- It is quite remarkable that no difference is made between staff and line functions. The finance and technical division need to be considered as staff departments which provide services to other divisions within ICCN.

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<sup>27</sup> This leads to the fact that political affiliations (of board members also) may change in the course of time.

<sup>28</sup> This was also mentioned in the report of the internal self-assessment which was carried out earlier in the year: 'Relatively weak ties with the board of the organisation: so far the involvement of the board has been quite weak' was categorised as a weakness. 'The board's work is not yet effective enough' as a threat. (See: ICCN, Results on the internal evaluation of ICCN, not dated (2006).

<sup>29</sup> For an elaboration of this argument see Fowler, 1999: 180 – 183. Fowler rightly argues that board members should have integrity, commitment, time, insights into the work, as well as statue and useful social links. Such a demand may be a bit too much in the current stage of development in Georgia.

<sup>30</sup> One could think of the involvement of persons who are not employed by ICCN but are actively and directly involved in activities of the organisations (such as the Civil Council, CWN and the NGO coalition).

<sup>31</sup> What is meant is basically a Management Team (MT).

<sup>32</sup> Reference may be made to interviews with the executive director and Management Board held on November 28, 2006 in Tbilisi.

<sup>33</sup> See the report of this workshop paragraph 6 in Annex VII.

- It is remarkable that no distinction is made between divisions (line departments which are responsible for a certain output and outcome) and task forces (such as gender, trainings experts) which deal with cross-cutting issues.
- The issue of leadership within ICCN is a complex one as there seems to be quite a substantial discrepancy between the formal and informal situation and it may be advisable to see to it that the director has a profile within the Georgian civil society, is in a position to lead the programmes in terms of content, and has the responsibility to represent ICCN within Georgia and internationally.
- In view of further internal organisational enhancement it is suggested to also work on second line leadership.
- The mandate, role, function and authority of the Management Board need to be clarified further as well as the position of the executive director within this group.
- It may furthermore be considered to adapt the composition of the Management Board in such a manner that all major divisions and task groups within ICCN are duly represented in this coordinating body.
- It could be considered to appoint an internal office manager who is responsible for the support (staff) functions in the organisation (Human resource Management (HRM), finance, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), office management) and a director who holds the responsibility for programme performance and the external representation of the organisation.<sup>34</sup>

## 5. Coherence and synergy

The issue of organisational coherence can be reviewed from different angles. A first one is the alignment of the vision and mission of ICCN with Georgia's current development scenario. In Chapter III it has been argued already that this coherence is high.

A second way of looking at the coherence and synergy is a review in terms of levels of organisational complexity (vision, mission, strategy, structure, systems et cetera). In the absence of an overall organisational strategy this becomes a slightly difficult affair. The impression however exists that by and large there exists coherence between the various levels of organisational complexity although the range of (strategic) activities has become quite broad (training, research, advocacy, lobby and related activities) and it is necessary to focus more on core issues in order to safeguard this type of coherence.

The 'horizontal' coherence (between divisions and programmes) is anchored in the Management Board of ICCN. Moreover sharing of information, peer consultation and coordination also takes place in the weekly staff meetings. Planning of major projects and programmes is jointly done by staff members. These are the formal structures through which coordination, coherence and synergy are facilitated.

During the primary data collection process staff members of ICCN however emphasised that in view of the history of the organisation, the type, quality and character of the interpersonal relationships and the size of ICCN, achieving coherence is basically an ongoing informal social process.<sup>35</sup> The members of the evaluation team share this observation. At the same time

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<sup>34</sup> Some of these suggestions were also brought forward by ICCN staff members during the self-assessment workshop when the participants were asked to draw an alternative structure of ICCN. See Annex VII, especially paragraph 6. As long as ICCN is being funded on a project and programme basis the costs of these staff functions may be divided pro rate over the different projects and programmes of ICCN.

<sup>35</sup> This most probably takes mainly place in the kitchen and smokers corner of the organisation.

it should be acknowledged (see also further on) that ICCN is, partly due to the funding arrangement, still very much a project- and programme oriented organisation.<sup>36</sup> The coherence and synergy within ICCN may need to be strengthened by investing much more in institutional set-up.<sup>37</sup>

In Chapter VI attention will be paid to the collaboration with various types of stakeholders, but already at this stage it may be mentioned that ICCN has good functional relationships with different civil society organisations within Georgia, NGOs, and the governments at central and regional levels.

### **Box III: Public relations**

Staff members of ICCN are of the opinion that the Public Relations (PR) function of the organisation needs to be strengthened.<sup>38</sup> A PR policy has to be defined and put in operation. In the view of the members of the evaluation team it needs to be investigated further whether organisational performance enhances PR or the other way around.

## **6. Culture and staff**

During the self-assessment workshop the high level of professional freedom for staff members within ICCN was mentioned as an important factor which contributes to professional performance. At the same time the absence of clearly defined roles, responsibilities and authority was also mentioned as a limiting factor.<sup>39</sup> For a professional organisation the challenge is to find the right balance between these two positions.

In terms of culture ICCN has characteristics of an organisation which finds itself in the pioneering stage: rather strong informal interpersonal relationships, a great readiness to provide professional support to colleagues, and not much hierarchy in the organisation. ICCN is, in the view of members of the evaluation team, basically a 'community of practice' which is characterised by mutual engagement of its members, a joint activity and over time, a shared repertoire of routines, tacit rules of conduct and knowledge.<sup>40</sup> Within this context internal transparency and accountability are high.

It should furthermore be mentioned that in general terms, a 'do' culture seems to have become prevalent within ICCN. ICCN appears to be activity and opportunity oriented and programme driven. This has its pros and cons. What seems to be missing is that staff members take joint quality time to question their own performance beyond the routine type day-to-day affairs and engage in systematic and conscious organisational learning. Greater satisfaction could be achieved by collecting in a systematic manner internal and external experiences related to outcomes of the work, allocating ample time and space to internal reflection, putting

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<sup>36</sup> This point was mentioned before in the report of the internal self-assessment which was carried out earlier in the year: 'When planning the projects, more attention should be paid to synergising the work of the divisions'. (See: ICCN, Results on the internal evaluation of ICCN, not dated (2006).

<sup>37</sup> For an elaboration of this argument see Chapter VII.

<sup>38</sup> ICCN needs to be 'a well-known brand'. See report of the self-assessment workshop in Annex VII, paragraph 3.g.

<sup>39</sup> See Annex VII ('Report of the self-assessment workshop') paragraph 5. This was also mentioned in the report of the internal self-assessment which was carried out earlier in the year: 'The nominal division of responsibilities due to the relatively blunt of job descriptions' was categorised as a weakness. (See: ICCN, Results on the internal evaluation of ICCN, not dated (2006).

<sup>40</sup> Capra calls this 'dynamics of culture' (Capra, 2002: 95).

organisational systems in place to analyse deeper and to draw conclusions, et cetera.<sup>41</sup> The existing participatory and open culture within ICCN may be considered as an important asset and starting point with regard to strengthening such learning function within the unit.

An overview of the staff members working within ICCN is provided in Annex V. Interviewees speak high of the professional competencies of staff members of ICCN. This is also the image workers of ICCN have about themselves.<sup>42</sup> The evaluation team is of the opinion that by and large the competencies of staff members of ICCN are in line with their job profiles. Staff performance is however negatively affected by the absence of a comprehensive human resources development policy<sup>43</sup>, and the absence of a culture to celebrate success within the organisation.<sup>44</sup> Another issue which emerged during the interaction with staff members of ICCN is that it may be desirable to think of some more diversification of functions.

## **7. Planning, monitoring and evaluation**

Staff members of ICCN explained to members of the evaluation team that planning of programmes is mainly initiated and guided by ICCN staff members themselves.<sup>45</sup> Subsequently ‘friendly’ (sister) organisations are consulted and consultations with reference communities take place. The next step is that the programme proposals are formalised by ICCN staff members (mainly in a Logical Framework Approach format). Hence different types of stakeholders (partners, target groups and society at large) do up to a certain degree participate in the design of programmes.

Monitoring takes place in staff meetings, through obtaining feedback from partner communities and donors. There is no standard Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) protocol; however there is no evaluation policy in place either. Nevertheless, some internal evaluations are being held, but are not always well documented.<sup>46</sup>

Interactions with staff members reveal that a problem with planning of programmes as in the implementation process sometimes adjustments need to be made which could have been dealt with at the beginning of the (planning) process.<sup>47</sup> This issue may be related to staff competencies, absence of appropriate systems and procedures, a fast changing socio-political environment and sometimes interferences from outside the organisation.<sup>48</sup>

A major problem is furthermore that interpretation, analysis, consolidation and distilling learning’s for future policies and instruments and procedures from data which are collected

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<sup>41</sup> This is point is not new. See the previous evaluation with relation to the ‘project management cycle of plan – implement – check – adapt’. (MEDE, 2003: 9.) See e.g.: Suzuki, 1998: 146 – 155 about the need and methodology for developing (informal) reflections.

<sup>42</sup> See Annex VII (‘Report of the self-assessment workshop’) paragraphs 5 and 7.

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that since January 2006 one person has been appointed to setup a HRM policy. At this moment a draft version of a policy paper has been prepared that among other things deals with job descriptions, contracts and performance appraisal.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Lack of appreciation of good work done by ICCN staff was brought forward as an important issue.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with the programme coordinators of the EED and Cordaid supported programmes, dated November 28, 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. In this context reference was made to the predominant oral communication tradition in Georgia.

<sup>47</sup> Reference may be made to a mini-workshop that was conducted with staff members who are involved in programmes, December 4, 2006. See also the following Chapter about programme performance.

<sup>48</sup> See the developments with regard to the programme ‘The role of civil society in the Rose Revolution in Georgia’ which will be described in the following chapter.

from various programmes is not always done in a conscious and systematic manner. As a result there are hardly any aggregated data available on the outcome of programmes at organisational i.e. ICCN level.<sup>49</sup>

The present evaluation team therefore agrees with the outcome of the evaluation which was carried out in 2003<sup>50</sup> that ICCN needs to strengthen its Project Cycle Management (PCM) capacity, and especially the monitoring function, quite substantially as in due course the legitimacy and credibility of the organisation may be affected due to the limited capacity to demonstrate (and communicate) the results of its work.

This situation is complicated by the absence of a Management Information System (MIS)/data base system, and the apparently limited knowledge and experience of staff members of ICCN with regard to M&E issues. The organisational function of M&E within ICCN is mainly integrated in the line structures of the organisation and needs to be strengthened. Additional measures may need to be taken to safeguard an adequate performance of this organisational function within ICCN.<sup>51</sup>

## **8. Office space and technical problems**

The participatory and open methodologies which were used during the primary data collection on organisational issues created space for ICCN staff members to highlight their priorities. A few of these issues need to be reported here.

Staff members are of the opinion that the lack of adequate office space and equipment has a considerable negative influence on their professional performance.<sup>52</sup> The members of the evaluation team share this observation and have the impression that the physical arrangement has negative effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff. The existence of these problems may be related to the limited institutional development of ICCN.

## **9. Conclusion**

While taking a bird's eye view on ICCN's organisational evolution it may be concluded that over the years the organisation has manifested itself as a 'living' organisation. Important changes and adjustments have been made in the strategic orientation of ICCN and its programmes and relationships with state and non-state actors in view of changes in the development scenario in Georgia. ICCN may be classified as a living organisation due to its

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<sup>49</sup> See also Chapter I especially the paragraph about the limitations of the study and Chapter V about programme performance.

<sup>50</sup> MEDE, 2003: 9.

<sup>51</sup> Some have argued that the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) may be helpful for ICCN (see MEDE, 2003: 9). Members of the present evaluation team are however of the opinion that the LFA has a certain bias towards what is 'expected' and 'agreed upon' and does not always do sufficient justice to the complexity of the implementation of the type of programmes ICCN is involved in; to what has not been agreed upon and what has not been planned, but still does occur. Furthermore, LFA diverts attention to problems and projects, does hardly pay attention to opportunities and concentrates far less on the position of ICCN in the institutional landscape in Georgia and organisational and institutional capacities. Moreover LFA has a rather limited and rigid cause-effect rationality and is hence not very helpful for civil society actors such as ICCN which work in a fast changing and complex environment. (For an elaboration of this argument see: Van der Velden, 2002.)

<sup>52</sup> Too many people are working in one room, the working environment is quite noisy and there is no proper space to work in small groups. Some of the computers are quite old ('ancient') and there is e.g. no proper telephone network in the office. The meeting room in the basement is, due to the absence of fresh air not the right place to meet during a couple of hours.

rather fuzzy boundaries and because its staff members are well connected with, and involved in, other societal institutions.<sup>53</sup> The organisation and its leadership and staff should be given the credit for these characteristics as they may be considered as signs of a healthy organisation.

#### **Box IV: Image ICCN**

During the organisational self-assessment workshop which was carried out by staff members of ICCN participants were asked to draw the image that comes to their mind when they think of the organisation. Various images were drawn. While having a look at all the drawings the workshop participants were asked to identify commonalities emanating from the images. The resultant agreements were as follows:

- Celebration of diversity
- Sheltering protection
- Space - open - transparent
- Linkage(s)
- Action and interaction – feedback – dynamic
- Perspective and hope – steps and bricks for peaceful future
- Threatening/ambiguous environment
- Context oriented – long way to go
- Harmony
- Common language and values

The evaluation team concludes that the present organisational arrangement is satisfactory in view of the programmes which are being carried out and/or planned. However a more adequate arrangement in terms of (efficiency and effectiveness) and organisational sustainability could be achieved in case a number of interrelated organisational issues would be improved.

In the first place it is important to emphasise that ICCN may need to revisit its overall organisational strategy in order to (re) define the core purpose of the organisation and focus its programme orientation. Since such an exercise will inform lower levels of organisational complexity, the members of the evaluation team consider this to be a priority area for follow-up.

The team is furthermore of the opinion that it is advisable to bring the governance structure in line with the day to day reality in Georgia and to aim at a gradual transition from self-governance to constituency based governance. The structure of the organisation needs to be addressed in order to do justice to the characteristics of ICCN as a professional development organisation. This will also facilitate organisational coherence. Within this framework the issue of leadership of the organisation needs to be rationalised. Competencies in the area of PCM require attention and the organisational learning function of the organisation needs to be strengthened. Some rather down to earth issues (such as office space and equipment) need to be looked into.

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<sup>53</sup> The arrangement with the Caucasus Women's Network (CWN), the close personal and institutional relationships with academic institutions and staff members performing multiple roles are clear manifestations of this situation.

Even if these issues are being addressed ICCN however would still remain a project- and programme-oriented organisation.<sup>54</sup> Such an organisational form may lead to too much donor dependency and have a negative impact on the sustainability of ICCN as a civil society organisation. The evaluation team is therefore of the opinion that it would be advisable to strengthen the organisational- and institutional capacity of ICCN. Also in terms of stages of organisational evolution, it would be advisable if, after around one and a half decade of its existence, the institutional capacity of ICCN as such would receive proper attention and be defined by both the organisation and its funding partners as a priority in order to enhance the organisational sustainability.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> A manifestation of this situation is the fact that in the first briefing of the evaluation team which was held in the period October 23 – 26, 2006 the emphasis was on providing an overview of the various programmes implemented by ICCN and far less on the positioning of ICCN within civil society in Georgia, the institutional set-up and relationships.

<sup>55</sup> For an elaboration of this argument see Chapter VII.

## Chapter V Programme assessment

### 1. Introduction

In the present Chapter an analysis will be given of the ICCN programmes funded by Cordaid (The Netherlands) and EED (Germany) and implemented during the last three years.<sup>56</sup> Information was mainly obtained from a review of major reference documents, bilateral interviews with staff members, stakeholders and a self-assessment exercise carried out by the core programme team of ICCN on December 4, 2006 in Tbilisi.

At the onset it should be observed that during the last three years ICCN has been involved in the preparation and implementation of nine different programmes. For a detailed overview of these programmes reference is made to Chapter II and Annex VI.<sup>57</sup>

### 2. Stakeholders in the ICCN programmes

In Chapter II an overview has been given of the various primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders of ICCN. In table I an overview is provided of the stakeholders of ICCN's core programmes'.

**Table I: List of ICCN's core programmes' stakeholders**

No	Programme	Supported by	Main stakeholders
1	The Role of Civil Society in the 'Rose Revolution'	Cordaid	CSOs, mass media, government, donors, international organisations, academic circles.
2	Building Integrity in Georgia through improved environment for tolerance and religious pluralism	Cordaid	minorities, government, denominations, patriarchy, CSOs, media, international organisations, political parties.
3	Community Investment Programme - West (CIP-W)	Care International	local government, leaders of CSOs
4	Promotion of Tolerance Environment and Religious Pluralism'	Open society Georgia	Ministry of Education, denominations, patriarchy, CSOs.
5	From Tolerance to Civil Integration'	EED	Ministry of Integration
6	Social and Market Linkage in Akhalkhalaki Region'	EC	Ministry of Agriculture, Local government, Communities, Farmers Cooperatives, Farmers' Associations.
7	Creating South Caucasus Regional Coalition for the support of ICC'	World Federalist Movement	Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Parliament of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Local NGOs.

<sup>56</sup> Reference may be made to paragraph 5c of the ToR (see Annex I).

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter II, paragraph 3 of the present report and Annex VI for a description of the programmes.

No	Programme	Supported by	Main stakeholders
8	Global Partnership for prevention of Armed Conflict'	European Centre for Conflict Prevention	State ministry on conflict resolution issues; State Ministry on Civil Integration, State Ministry on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Issues; IDPs.
9	Elaborating of Legal Mechanisms for Combating Domestic Violence to Georgia'	OSCE	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Parliament of Georgia, Coalition of Georgian Women's Organisations

Members of the evaluation team interviewed representatives of all the target groups of the Cordaid and EED funded programmes except the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)/refugees' leaders and activists.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. Programme coherence

The mission of ICCN is to 'Contribute to development in Georgia and South Caucasus by:

- Promoting the values and ideas of peace and civil society building;
- Strengthening democratic development<sup>59</sup>;

As has already been mentioned in chapter III the long-term aims of the organisation are:

- Strengthen democracy and civil society-building;
- Positive peace-building and conflict prevention/management in the divided society;
- Human rights;
- Tolerance and gender equity.

The members of the evaluation team have observed that the objectives of the projects are coherent with the overall vision and mission of ICCN as an organisation. At the same time it should be observed that ICCN is really involved in a broad spectrum of activities (ten different types of projects) and that an overall programme strategy appears to be missing.<sup>60</sup> In table II the project objectives of the Cordaid and EED funded programmes are listed.

**Table II: Project objectives ICCN**

No	Project	Objectives
1.	Building Integration in Georgia	To build integrity, support the processes of liberal democracy and civil society building in Georgia
2.	Rose Revolution	To promote and strengthen civil society and democracy building process in the newly independent states. To give competent objective and substantiated picture of the role of civil society in the Rose Revolution in Georgia. To raise awareness of the international community concerning the potential and the prospects.

<sup>58</sup> IDPs as a primary stakeholder is mentioned in the mid-term reports and in the research conducted during the EED project 'From Tolerance to Civil Integration' implementation. See Chapter II paragraph 4 of the present report.

<sup>59</sup> See the power point presentation by ICCN, dated November 27, 2006

<sup>60</sup> This may lead to quite a bit of pressure on the institution and its staff. See also Chapter IV.

No	Project	Objectives
3.	Georgia NGO Congress	Provide an opportunity for the largest possible spectrum of Georgian NGOs to exchange positions and opinions and consolidate their joint platform on major issues of the nation.  Demonstrate sustainability and high potential of the Georgian civil society questioned by some government officials and media sources since the Rose Revolution.
4.	From Tolerance to Civil Integration	To strengthen civil society in Georgia and overcome the post-totalitarian mentality in population preventing the liberal democratic values to spread in the Georgian society.

#### 4. Efficiency and effectiveness of programmes

The efficiency criterion concerns how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. The effectiveness criterion concerns whether project or programme purposes have been achieved.<sup>61</sup>

##### *a. Project: Building Integrity in Georgia*

The overall purpose of the project 'Building Integrity in Georgia' (BIG) is to create an improved environment for religious tolerance and religious pluralism in Georgia. The goal should be achieved through combating intolerance, obscurantism and religious fundamentalism, and developing a culture of peace and liberal civic values in the Georgian society. The major sub-projects in the framework of the BIG programme focus on three target groups: (a) Development of the Network of Peace Journalism; (b) Training Police in Human Rights, Tolerance and Non-violence; and (c) Working with Young Political Leaders. Other important dimensions include development of the Movement Against Religious Intolerance in Georgia (MARIG).

The Peace Journalism sub-project aims at creating a core group of peace-oriented journalists motivated to spread the tolerance and civil accord ideas, primarily with regard to the issue of religious freedom. The project focuses on the younger generation considering that changing attitudes is more realistic to be achieved with the youth. The envisaged training of police and teachers aims at spreading 'fact-based and realistic information' about religious minorities in order to motivate and enable them to disseminate such information through their networks. The project also aims at empowering the Movement Against Religious Intolerance in Georgia, and encouraging other associations and networks of a similar profile. In order to achieve effects on media capacity the emergence of a network of journalists will be facilitated. According to the project purpose, that network should remain functioning beyond the duration of the project period.

<sup>61</sup> For a more elaborate definition see: [www.oecd.org/evaluation](http://www.oecd.org/evaluation).

Training sessions for journalists were conducted in five regional centres of Georgia between May 2004 and December 2004. Training participants prepared peace-oriented materials and sent them to ICCN in Tbilisi. The training programme was supposed to consist of ten stages. In reality six steps were conducted. ICCN staff members explained that they decided to stop the programme due to the fact that the quality of the articles sent to them was not up to the standard. In the semi-annual report it is stated: 'only two works met certain requirements of the trainer. Thus the trainers skip prize-giving part and 'forget' about establishing peace Journalism corps'.<sup>62</sup> For the evaluation team this is not a cogent argument. The given situation, poor performance by the trainees, could be an argument for further activities and continuation of the training process.

Interviewed respondents were absolutely clear about objectives of the trainings and were able to give examples of how to apply the gained skills in everyday life. Despite they clearly knew about the aim of the programme they still emphasised the life skills (communication, team work, ability to manage conflict) and only after additional questions they were able to mention that they have changed the style of their work in that they are more sensitive about conflict resolution. They also mentioned tolerance as a part of the training and gave examples of changes in their behaviour. The fact that the programme was not properly finished left the participants with a feeling of dissatisfaction. From their point of view more practical exercises followed by discussion and analysis were supposed to be done.

During the trainings some personal relations were established among the journalists from the different regions. But no systematic and continued work was done by ICCN to develop and further facilitate the establishment of a network and/or the emergence of a community of practitioners.

The training programme for young leaders (political and NGOs) was - according the proposal - planned to be implemented in six stages: (1) training in basic knowledge of skills and habits, (2) training to develop the political leadership, (3) preparation of the project via participation in two consultative workshop at ICCN; (4) project presentation; (5) conference; (6) book preparation.

According to research results the young leaders participated in two stages of the planned trainings and some of them also participated in the additional third Training of Trainers (ToT). The programme was however not finished due to different reasons related to changes in the political situation. All interviewed ex-trainers were able to tell what new skills they have gained and how do they them. For instance one of them conducted the trainings on the same topics in his NGO 'Future generation', two others shared that they actively use the newly acquired skills in their every day life (with emphasis on effective communication skills and trainer skills) and only one interviewee admitted that she was earlier quite intolerant toward religious minorities and has changed her attitude and tries to control her behaviour. She emphasised the relevance and usefulness of the new skills, especially effective communication, conflict mediation, and conflict management.

Within the framework of this project ICCN conducted trainings for the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The first training was conducted for the Ministry staff. Given the fact that the Ministry underwent reforms ICCN changed the target group to young lawyers from the NGO 'Law for People' and conducted the training for them in two stages. The respondent from this

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<sup>62</sup> See ICCN semi annual report for Building Integrity in Georgia, December 2005 p. 6

training programme remembered only the main topics. He is of the opinion that he obtained useful skills for everyday life and his main job.<sup>63</sup>

The Civic Council for the Protection of Basic Rights and Freedoms is derived from MARIG.<sup>64</sup> The activities of the Civic Council were highly appreciated by many respondents including the respondent from the Public Defender Office. The Council works very actively and has become a more developed institution than MARIG was. The Council has structure and is divided into three committees: the judicial, educational committees and the committee for public relations and the media, with members selected according to their spheres of interest. During the last years the Council carried out conducted different activities related to raising awareness among religious minority groups on their rights. The Council made them realise that it is ready to address their problems and bring the issue to the general public, the media and the government and demonstrate to the radical side of the mainstream denomination that collaboration between religious minority groups and majority representatives is possible. In this context it is important to mention that the Civil Council comprises of members of the mainstream Church as well. The Civil Council had an indirect output resulting in the creation of the Religious Council under the umbrella of the Public Defender's Office and the creation of a similar Council under the umbrella of the Georgian Patriarchy.

During the process of research it was observed that participants were by and large selected properly for the training. This increases the probability of the efficiency of the training provided. The fact that the training programmes for the journalists and young leaders was not implemented as planned leaves the question 'were the things done the right way – or are there other better ways?'

Regarding the effectiveness it was observed by respondents that the trainings were quite effective in gaining new skills and have led to changing attitudes and behaviour. Journalist participants of the programme have improved the way of presenting information. The fact that the programmes for journalists and young leaders were not fully completed reduced the effect of both programmes. In relation to the Journalist network creation it is obvious that on this level of intervention no meaningful results were achieved.

The Civic Council activities show a good level of efficiency. The Council works on a voluntary basis and perform a very important role in the process of civil society building in Georgia. It is a very innovative structure, which is carrying out many activities which are new for Georgia. The activities with regard to the Council lead to many important learning's for ICCN as an institution.

The transformation (reorganisation) of MARIG into the more sophisticated Civil Council has provided the possibility to enhance the effectiveness of this body. The structure of the Council and division into the three committees gives opportunity to concentrate more on certain fields and be more flexible and effective. The decision-making process does not depend on ICCN. All members have equal rights and have one vote each. The Council is however not yet sustainable, as all events are still facilitated by ICCN. The ICCN staff is however working on a plan to make the Council more sustainable.

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<sup>63</sup> He is private lawyer.

<sup>64</sup> See: ICCN annual report 2005, page 7.

*b. Project: Rose Revolution*

The Rose Revolution project aims to study the period from October 1, 2003 to June 1, 2004. This period is of utmost significance for understanding what happened in Georgia, and establishing the role of the civil society actors in the development and final success of the Rose Revolution. The study includes numerous interviews, round table discussions, consultations and analysis, and uses measurable indicators to provide maximum credibility for the research. According to the project plan the duration of the project is was supposed to be 18 months, starting January, 2005. The end of the project has however been postponed until December 2006. The delay was caused by different factors. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee were only defined six months after the commencement of the project in May 2005. It seems that there was poor coordination between the consultant, Steering Committee and staff. It took time to agree on the core purpose of the project, audience for the book, methods, style of the book and other details related to the final product of the project. According to the project coordinator it took one year to agree on all these aspects and to start the real work. Chapters are ready for preliminary reading.

It was observed both by staff members of ICCN and the evaluation team that poor project planning stretched out the implementation phase of the project. It is, as per the opinion of the evaluation team, too early to analyse efficiency in terms to quality of the study at this stage as the end product of this project is not yet available.

The effectiveness of the project is also difficult to assess at this stage. The results of the study suppose to be reviewed by the experts from the Steering Committee and the donor i.e. Cordaid. This will happen by the end of December 2006. At this stage it is impossible for evaluation team to conclude to which extent project outputs achieve the desired outcome.

*c. Project: From Tolerance to Civil Integration*

The objective of the project From Tolerance to Civic Integration is to foster democratic reforms and overcome the problems that prevent Georgia from successfully completing the transition period from the post-Soviet stage to a democratic and law-based state respecting liberal values, protecting human rights and fulfilling state obligations and commitments toward local and international communities.

ICCN currently works on an Open Orientation Phase (18 months) as a pilot for the following long-term programme. The activities for this stage include:

- Needs assessment, sociological research/analysis based on opinion polls and analytical sources, mapping of the problem areas in Georgia and the measures and efforts already taken, elaboration of log frames/indicator-based analyses, development conflict analysis tools.
- Building the initial coalition of NGOs/CSOs to elaborate the consolidated action programme, create focal points in sub-regional centres of Georgia, and prepare to provide wider ownership for the follow-up programme to be implemented.
- Activities for building interreligious tolerance and protection of religious minority rights including activities to support the ongoing BIG project.
- Development of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Conciliation, Conflict Resolution and Civil Integration.

During the evaluation process it was observed that only part of research has been finished. Initial activities for coalition building have been started. The NGOs have been selected and some preliminary agreements with the leadership of the NGOs have been achieved. NGOs were identified and selected using the following criteria: experience in the field of human rights, sustainable connection with the regions and willingness to participate in the coalition. All NGOs are partners of ICCN from the Coalition Civil Society for Democratic Georgia. Despite the fact that activities have been started the process of network building is still in its very initial phase. Even the most active respondent - who was quite clear about the plans for future collaboration - could not name any other NGO member of the network.

Work on the National Action Plan has not started yet, what is understandable considering the fact that network practically has not yet been established and other preliminary activities have not been done.

According to the progress reports and interviews with ICCN staff more than eighteen major activities for building interreligious tolerance and protection of religious minority rights were conducted including the presentations of all churches and denominations that operate in Georgia, meetings with ethnic and religious minorities, meetings as a response to the violations of rights, meetings on IDPs integration, facilitation of the creation of the Christians Women's Centre, Young Christians for Democracy and Development and other organisations.

The strategy identified by ICCN to build a coalition from NGOs which has focal points in the regions may in the future ensure a good level of efficiency. For instance Multi National Georgia has a focal point in Samtskhe Djavakheti. ICCN has office space in Akhalklaki and experienced trained people who are able to implement activities.

With regard to the current stage of the project implementation it is too early to analyse the efficiency in terms of quality but it was observed that the project is not efficient in terms of quantity and timeliness. Concerning to the effectiveness it is also too early to make a judgement as many of the activities are still in their initial stage (especially the Network building and the National Action Plan creation). All respondents interviewed however underlined largely effective outcome of the activities related to building interreligious tolerance and the protection of human rights.

*d. Project: Georgia NGO Congress*

The Georgia NGO Congress organised by the Coalition Civil Society for Democratic Georgia in June 2006 was the product of six months of joint work and large-scale activities experience. The major topics to be dealt with during the Congress were as follows.

- Presentation of the Coalition Civil Society for Democratic Georgia, its charter, aims, activities and future plans.
- Current experience and achievements of civil society in Georgia.
- The role of civil society in the democratic process in Georgia: challenges and perspectives.
- Regional diversity of current problems – corruption, human rights, independence of judiciary, security issues et cetera.
- The final document (e.g. Declaration) was supposed to address main relevant recommendations elaborated during the NGO Congress.

During the evaluation processes representatives of different NGOs were interviewed, including Article 42 of the Constitution, Former Political prisoners for Human Rights, Human Rights Information and Documentation Centres, Public Movement Multi National Georgia'. All respondents highly appreciated the Congress and expressed that it was the first event of this scale in the country. The Congress provided a forum for wide-scale discussion. It focused on sectoral development challenges, practical solutions and the role of civil society in decision making and its participation in country political, socio-cultural and economic life. The Congress united the NGOs and demonstrated the power of non-governmental development organisations and the civil society sector at large. It should however be noted that no representative from the government participated in the Congress.

The project Georgia NGO Congress appears to have been rather efficient. It gathered NGOs from the different regions and Tbilisi. In total 312 NGOs participated in the Congress. Before the Congress started the coalition 'Civil Society for Democratic Georgia' consisted out of twelve NGOs. Currently the number of active coalition members has increased to 29. The coalition covers not only Tbilisi but also regional organisations. And all members have contributed to coalition activities. As a result of the Congress the Former Political Prisoners for Human Rights received two grants to continue its activities; other organisations also contribute for different activities as rent the venues for meetings et cetera.

It was also observed that the project was largely effective and delivered as expected. The Congress gathered a large spectrum of NGOs from all over Georgia, provided opportunity for consolidation and demonstrated the potential of civil sectors. Within this context it is important to mention that the coalition has continued its activities: it has regular meetings, plans activities, is monitoring violation of human rights, conducts meetings with international organisations as OSCE, EC and embassies in order to provide information about the current situation regarding to the violation of human rights and conducts public action as prompt response to the violation of human rights. The coalition also assesses and analyses the situation related to anti-democratic changes in law.

## **5. Conclusions**

It may be concluded that during the last three years ICCN has implemented nine different projects which include activities, trainings, network building, publications, lobby, advocacy, research, socio-politic actions, et cetera. The programmes which are being implemented are relevant in view of the current socio-political, economical and cultural development of Georgia.<sup>65</sup> It should be appreciated that the organisation has the capacity to implement such a variety of activities.

While taking a bird's eye view of all the projects which are being implemented, what appears to be missing is an overall organisational strategy which guides the choice of programmes and the prioritisation of activities. Such a situation puts the programme coherence under pressure.<sup>66</sup> ICCN may need to reflect upon its identity and profile in the Georgian civil society.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See Chapter III for an elaborate description of the development scenario in Georgia and the positioning of ICCN

<sup>66</sup> This situation is aggravated by the fact that in the organisational structure and systems of ICCN the issue of organisational coherence does not receive optimal attention (see chapter IV, paragraph 5)

<sup>67</sup> The issue is basically 'what is core?' in terms of purpose, activities, process and practice.

The efficiency of the programmes could not be analysed in detail due to the absence of sufficient data, lack of time and the research design for the present evaluation. The evaluation team is however under the impression that most of the ICCN programmes are ‘value for money’ i.e. are worth the investment.

With regard to the effectiveness of the programmes a quite diverse picture has emerged. It is not yet possible to assess the effectiveness of the Rose Revolution programme and the relatively new programme From Tolerance to integration as these programmes are not yet in their final stage. The study team is of the opinion that the effectiveness of the NGO Congress project is high due to its outreach, level of participation and potential for long term results. The outcome of the Building Integrity in Georgia programme is satisfactory; it is unfortunate that some of the trainings programmes could not be given a proper follow-up.

In retrospect it may be concluded that the ‘expectations of target communities’<sup>68</sup> could not always be met. The facilitation of network building provides a quite diverse picture, varying from very successful activities (Civil Council) to attempts which have failed (networks of ex-trainees, journalists).

In terms of integration of gender aspects in the process the work done by ICCN is quite commendable. ICCN’s gender division has, often in consultation with CWN, carried out different relevant activities in an efficient and effective manner. Within this context the following issues may be mentioned: elaboration of gender training modules for the different target groups; trainings for different groups; elaboration of The National Action Plan on gender equality; support in founding the Inter-Religious Centre of Christian Women and Women’s Committee at the Civil Council; elaboration of a gender glossary; different studies and publications; et cetera.

In terms of lobby and advocacy it appears that ICCN has been able to contribute to an increased awareness about a variety of issues; has contributed to debate about these issues within the Georgian civil society; and has contributed to changes in opinions and attitudes and behaviour. It is too early to judge up to what extent these activities have led to a change in policies and up to what extent these changed policies are being implemented.<sup>69</sup>

**Box V: Issues to be taken into account while assessing Lobby & Advocacy output and outcome.**<sup>70</sup>

- Heightened awareness;
- Contribution to debate;
- Changed opinions;
- Changed policy;
- Policy change actually being implemented;
- Positive change in people’s lives.

<sup>68</sup> See the Terms of Reference, paragraph 5 b.

<sup>69</sup> These different levels of output and outcome are taken from an analytical framework for the assessment of lobby and advocacy campaigns which has been described by Roche, 1999: Chapter VI. The underlying theoretical model has emerged from a review of practical experiences of Oxfam and Action Aid.

<sup>70</sup> Roche, 1999: 198

From the above review a few overall organisational learning's may be distilled:

- it appears that the planning stage of projects and programmes needs to be improved;
- monitoring and evaluation of programmes may be enhanced (this relates to systemic, conceptual and operational issues);
- improved monitoring of the programmes may contribute to relevant management information which will assist ICCN to adjust the implementation of ongoing programmes (in stead of 'skipping' activities);
- there is scope for improvement of the synergy between programmes; and
- it appears that gender issues are well integrated in all the programmes and this may be considered as one of the major programme strengths of ICCN.

## **Chapter VI Relationships and linkages**

### **1. Introduction**

In conformity with the ToR for this assignment the present Chapter will look into ICCN's relationships and linkages with primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders. It gives an analysis of the linkages with national and international organisations other NGO's and the government and donor agencies. A description of the relationships and key stakeholders of ICCN has already been provided in chapter II and the major stakeholders for current projects of ICCN have been dealt with in chapter V.

Since its creation in 1994 ICCN has established broad and many-sided relations with stakeholders at the levels of government, civil society and the corporate sector. Members of the evaluation team have met with people and organisations which cooperate with ICCN from all three categories of stakeholders.<sup>71</sup> In an absolute majority of the cases the interviewed stakeholders' opinions about the role of ICCN in the Georgian society are very positive, and among representatives of governmental and non-governmental sectors ICCN is known as one of the most influential NGOs in Georgia.

### **2. Relationships with the government**

It is important that in most of its programmes and projects ICCN is playing a unique role bringing together where it is possible all three categories of stakeholders, or initiates meetings and cooperation of different stakeholders from one or two categories. It helps to build and develop linkages both between ICCN and stakeholders, and among stakeholders, which in current conditions of a lack of dialogue between the new revolutionary government and civil society is extremely valuable. Thanks to this strategy, after the Rose Revolution the role of ICCN in civil society did not weaken.

A good demonstration of government-civil society linkages is the project Creating South Caucasus Regional Coalition for the Support of International Criminal Court, in which the target groups of the project include: human rights groups, conflict prevention and management NGOs, and relevant government structures (Ministry of Justice, Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, the Judiciary Committee of the parliament, etc). Another good example of building government-civil society linkages is the programme Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. The stakeholders of this programme are civil society organisations, academics from South Caucasus republics, the State Ministry of Conflict Resolution and the State Ministry of Civil Integration.

Usually building cooperative relations and linkages with governmental structures is not an easy task, especially with the current post-revolutionary Government of Georgia. The evaluation team however has the opinion that ICCN has established very productive relations with the Public Defender's Office, State Ministry on Conflict Resolution, Ministry of Civil Integration, Ministry of European Integration, Vice-Governors in Imereti Region, and other governmental structures. According to interviews with government officials, some people who are working now in the government participated in previous years in different ICCN projects and are open to and very cooperative concerning ongoing ICCN programmes.

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<sup>71</sup> See also the itinerary in Annex III.

Despite some difficulties in relations with some government officials, ICCN could use flexible tactics combining when necessary think tank and watchdog NGO functions.

### **3. Linkages within civil society**

ICCN initiated also several projects aimed at building linkages among NGOs to strengthen civil society after the Rose Revolution in which NGOs from the capital city of Tbilisi and from the regions participated. A good example is The Georgia NGO Congress which has led to a creation of a coalition which comprises over 70 NGOs and CSOs in Georgia. ICCN's regional linkages are impressive especially compared to other Tbilisi based NGOs that rarely have such developed relations with NGOs, local and regional authorities, religious, ethnic and gender groups from the regions. These linkages cover the most difficult regions including the Armenian-populated Javakheti region, the Azeri-populated Marneuli district and the city of Kutaisi with its religious minorities.

There are also different programmes which have demonstrated that ICCN brings together stakeholders from different religious and ethnic minority groups, for example Building Integrity in Georgia; From Tolerance to Civil Integration, Collaborative Action Towards Conciliation and Democratic Development in Georgia', and European Commission supported programme Social and Market Linkage in Akhalkhalaki Region'.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, ICCN faces difficulties which are often caused by unwillingness of potential stakeholders to cooperate rather than by ICCN itself. In Kutaisi and Tbilisi the evaluation team interviewed a group of stakeholders from religious communities, but only minority church leaders took part in this meeting. The problem was unwillingness of local representatives of the Orthodox Church to participate in a dialogue with minority church leaders.

### **4. Relationship vis a vis supporting agencies**

The relationships between ICCN and its support agencies are also well developed and appreciated by ICCN. The study team does however feel that ICCN could develop a more pro-active management of the relationship with the donor agencies and negotiate more out of a position of strength.

### **5. Corporate sector**

ICCN has established some relations with the corporate sector as well, e.g. participation in the implementation of a BP project. Usually NGOs' linkages with the local corporate sector in Georgia are very limited due to underdevelopment of local private businesses, their reluctance to cooperate with civil society, and also because it is risky due to the criminal origin of private Georgian capital in most cases. But in current changing conditions, when more and more Western businesses are interested in investment to Georgia, building relations with the corporate sector would be one of the possible priorities for ICCN's activities.

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<sup>72</sup> For a description of these projects see also Annex VI.

## Chapter VII Major learning's, reflections and conclusions

### 1. Introduction

Georgia is a lower income country. After independence in 1991 the economy collapsed due to civil war and loss of both the preferential access to former Soviet markets and large budgetary transfers from Moscow. The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia took a significant toll with about 300.000 people displaced.

In November 2003 many Georgians took part in a peaceful and democratic uprising known as the 'Rose Revolution', spurred by rampant corruption and a failing state. The new government has launched a major anti-corruption campaign, initiated educational reform, reorganised government structures and reduced red tape for business. There is a commitment to poverty reduction. The recent economic growth is high: 8.5% GDP growth in 2005.<sup>73</sup>

Around a year ago Transparency International Georgia revealed that 'the overall rate of optimism regarding Georgia's future levels of corruption has dropped' and that '... people recognise the need for future reforms'.<sup>74</sup> Recently Amnesty International reports continued concern about human rights in Georgia. During the last few months Russia's meddling, its support for separatists in the enclaves of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, has led to tension between Georgia and Russia and a Russian embargo.<sup>75</sup> At the same time research reveals '... a medium-level structure of civil society [in Georgia] with somewhat limited values and moderate impact, against the background of a somewhat weak and hindering environment'.<sup>76</sup>

It is against this background that the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) plays since 1994 an active role in the further development of democracy within Georgia, in strengthening civil society and in peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia and the Caucasus.

### 2. Overall findings of the evaluation

During its first decade of existence ICCN has been able to achieve a number of important, relevant issues of which ICCN, its founding members, leadership, staff and board may be proud.

The overall vision and mission of ICCN are relevant in view of the current general political context in Georgia. The performance with regard to the implementation of various programmes is satisfactory. The main challenge in this area is that effectiveness of programmes can be enhanced through more adequate Project Cycle Management. In organisational terms ICCN has characteristics of an organisation that is about to leave the pioneering stage (which may be characterised among other things by high commitment of the staff, informal lines of communication and limited formalised systems and procedures).<sup>77</sup> The organisation has good functional relationships with different civil society organisations within Georgia, with NGOs, and with governments at central and regional levels. ICCN is one of the leading organisations in Georgia with regard to gender issues.

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<sup>73</sup> See: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

<sup>74</sup> See: <http://www.transparency.ge>

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. The Economist, October 5, 2006. ('The mouse that roared')

<sup>76</sup> See: [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org) ('Civicus Civil Society Index Report for Georgia: Executive summary' Tbilisi, 2005)

<sup>77</sup> See: Lievegoed, 1969.

In view of the above the evaluation team is of the opinion that the present programme implementation capacity of ICCN is sufficient in view of the programmes which are being carried out and/or planned.<sup>78</sup>

### **3. Sustainability of ICCN**

Liberal democracy, civil society and peaceful conflict resolution are relatively new phenomena within Georgian history and society. Recent research indicates that ‘... the organisational development of the [civil society sector] sector is rather weak’.<sup>79</sup>

ICCN is a relatively young organisation and in a way the programme performance of ICCN is quite remarkable in view of the current organisational and institutional arrangement. The study team however believes that it is time that various stakeholders that are involved in ICCN invest substantially in the further organisational- and institutional development of the organisation. Such a trajectory will enable ICCN to develop from a project- and programme orientated organisation towards a sustainable civil society institution within the Georgian society and to move to the next (differentiation) stage of organisational growth. Such a process will not only be an important contribution to the future organisational and institutional growth of ICCN but also to the civil society sector in Georgia at large.<sup>80</sup>

### **4. Main suggestion: institutional development process**

The members of the study team would like to suggest that ICCN and its major partners get involved in a so-called institutional development process. There are many definitions of such a course of action but ‘...institutional development is here defined as the process by which individuals, organisations and institutions [i.e. ICCN] increase their abilities and performance in relation to their goals, resources and environment’.<sup>81</sup> It is basically ‘...the facilitation of the organisation's capacity to self-reflect, self-regulate, and take control of its own process of improvement and learning ...’.<sup>82</sup>

In view of the issues which have been mentioned in the preceding chapters a number of issues need to be maintained and improved. In the first category are the high relevance of the overall positioning within the Georgian society, the ability to respond to changes in the environment, the wide range of linkages ICCN has with a wide variety of stakeholders at different levels in the society and internationally, the high level of engagement and cooperation among staff members of ICCN, the knowledge and expertise with regard to gender issues and the ability to translate these into concrete action.

There is scope for improvement with regard to the overall strategy of ICCN as a non-state actor, the internal governance of the organisation, the internal structure, clarity on the leadership of the organisation, human resources development in general and competencies

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<sup>78</sup> See also Chapter IV, paragraph 9.

<sup>79</sup> Civicus, 2005.

<sup>80</sup> Experience teaches that it is not desirable to neglect institutional issues up to the extent it is being done within ICCN as this may in due course affect programme performance, and the legitimacy and credibility of the organisation.

<sup>81</sup> Kruse, 1998.

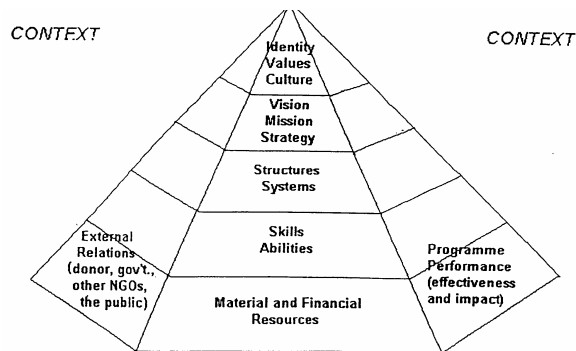
<sup>82</sup> Kaplan, 1994. The difference between Human Resource Development (HRD), Organisational Development (OD) and Institutional Development (ID) is further elaborated in Annex IX.

with regard to project cycle management in particular, organisational learning and some practical issues such as office space and technical support systems.

## 5. The character of an institutional development process for ICCN

At the same time it should be mentioned that an institutional development process is not an instant solution and/or panacea for all the paradoxes, dilemma's and 'uneasy questions' that exist. Organisations such as ICCN develop through various stages of organisational evolution, which can – according to members of the evaluation team - not be accelerated too much in an artificial manner and/or by external pressure. However, organisational change does at the same time not emerge automatically but needs to be planned. It will be necessary for ICCN and its support agencies to live with, and live through, some of these uncomfortable questions in the years to come. During these years ICCN may require support from outside<sup>83</sup> both in terms of accompaniment for the institutional development process and finances.

It is thereby important to do 'first things first'. Different levels of organisational complexity should be distinguished (see figure below). 'Being', in terms of organisational identity core values, comes first, followed by 'doing' (programmes) and 'relating' (linkages).



There is for ICCN not much point in dealing with issues at lower levels (such as systems, procedures, and infrastructure), if there are still significant issues at higher level(s) (such as the overall organisational strategy), which need to be addressed. This follows the old principle that 'form follows function'.

<sup>83</sup> This does not imply that the evaluation team is of the opinion that such support should be automatically be obtained from outside Georgia or the region. It may be advisable to involve a local capacity development service provider and 'peer group' organisations in order to contextualise the issue, enhance ownership and strengthen mutual learning. In such an approach local capacities may be strengthened as well.

### **Box VI: Suggested sequence of activities ICCN's institutional development process**

In the suggested institutional development process for ICCN the following sequence of activities could be followed.

1. Strategy
2. Issue of governance
3. Leadership
4. Structure
5. Systems
6. Practicalities (office space et cetera)
7. Support from funding agencies

Within this context it is important to emphasise that during the suggested institutional development process, which may take two to three years, the ongoing activities of ICCN should not be affected as the best learning is learning by doing.<sup>84</sup>

### **6. The role of support agencies**

The long-standing relationship between ICCN and its (funding) partners should be appreciated. The organisations have stood by each other in difficult times.

Within the above-mentioned recommendation there is according to the study team a distinct and important role for the organisations which are supporting ICCN financially, i.e. Cordaid and EED. In the first place the ownership of the institutional development process should be left with ICCN. At the same time adequate funding for such a process needs to be made available. Furthermore, such a course of action may not only focus on the functioning of ICCN, but also on the interaction between ICCN and the resource-sharing agencies.

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<sup>84</sup> See: Horton & Freire, *We make the road by walking*, 1990.