

The role and functions of the centre of government in the European Neighbourhood Policy East region



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The institutions that make up the centre of government (CoG) play a crucial role in the policymaking process and help to ensure that government decisions are timely, evidence-informed, strategic and consistent. Despite this prominent role, the CoG often has the reputation of being somewhat opaque in terms of its structure and ways of working. This report presents an overview of the role and functions of the CoG of five European Neighbourhood Policy East countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – from a comparative perspective, both with respect to each other and in comparison with CoGs in OECD and EU countries. The report explores the CoG's role in policy co-ordination, how it supports quality decision making, its contribution to strategic planning and its role in managing European integration issues. The report highlights strengths and challenges in the ways that the CoG institutions operate in the five countries and suggests areas for which policy dialogue and exchange of experience with OECD and EU Members could help to enhance outcomes.

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This paper was authorised for publication by Elsa Pilichowski, Director, Public Governance Directorate.

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Foreword

This report presents an overview of the role and functions of the centre of government of five European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) East countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova (hereafter ‘Moldova’) and Ukraine -- from a comparative perspective, both with respect to each other and in comparison with centres of government in OECD and EU countries. The aim of the report is to open a dialogue at international level to help the five countries address key challenges.

The information is based on responses to a survey of the functioning of the centre of government in ENP East countries carried out by SIGMA in 2022 for the purposes of this report. The survey mirrors a similar survey circulated to OECD countries, the results of which were published in *Centre Stage: The organisation and functions of the centre of government in OECD Countries*¹. The responses to the survey of centres of government in ENP East countries have been complemented by a review of the main legal and regulatory texts that define and circumscribe the tasks and operations of the centre of government (CoG) in these countries.

The report is organised in five main chapters that explore, respectively, the range of functions of the CoG in ENP East countries, its role in policy co-ordination, how it supports quality decision-making, its contribution to strategic planning and its role in managing European integration issues. In each case, the report looks at the main similarities and differences in approach and practice across the region and with respect to OECD and EU countries. The report also includes a short case study that looks at the role that the CoG played in each country in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, which sheds light on the ability of the CoG to adapt to new, unanticipated policy challenges for which central co-ordination was at a premium.

This report provides a snapshot but does not constitute an in-depth assessment of performance. Nonetheless, the information highlights some strengths and challenges in the ways that the CoG institutions operate in the five countries and suggests some areas for which policy dialogue and exchange of experience with OECD and EU member countries could help to enhance outcomes.

The report was prepared the SIGMA Programme, which is a joint initiative of the OECD and EU, principally financed by the EU. SIGMA is part of the OECD Directorate for Public Governance (GOV). It was written by Andrew Davies and Péter Vági, SIGMA experts, under the supervision of Gregor Virant, Head of the SIGMA Programme, and with input and comments from other SIGMA experts, in particular Martins Krievins. Country experts for this study were Hovhannes Avetisyan (Armenia), Nazrin Baghirova (Azerbaijan), Anna Gvenetadze and Maya Tskitishvili (Georgia), Ion Gumene (Moldova), and Arsen Popel (Ukraine). SIGMA would also like to thank colleagues from the European Commission for their review and comments on the final draft.

¹ OECD (2018) *Centre Stage 2: The organisation and functions of the centre of government in OECD Countries*, OECD, www.oecd.org/gov/centre-stage-2.pdf. For more information on the role of the CoG in good public governance, see also OECD (2020), *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en> and examples of good practice in OECD centres of government in OECD (forthcoming), *Compendium on Strategic Decision-Making at the Centre of Government*.

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Executive Summary

The legal framework that underpins the activities of the CoG in ENP East countries is in place and the main challenges relate to implementation in practice. The main CoG functions are clearly allocated in each of the ENP East countries through laws on government and similar framework legislation. These basic legal texts are complemented in all ENP countries by a series of regulations and decisions that provide greater precision on roles and responsibilities. In some cases, there are also specific statutes for the constituent units of the CoG. The CoG-related roles of other bodies that fulfil CoG functions are also usually enshrined within the general regulations or rulebooks of the institutions concerned. Nonetheless, there are common implementation challenges in practice that are present to different degrees in all five countries, relating to co-ordination of activities across the different institutions that contribute to CoG functions, consistency in the application of procedures, quality control and alignment of key strategic documents, among other things.

The institutional approach to managing CoG work varies markedly across the region in terms of the level of centralisation of powers, but co-ordination remains a challenge in all cases. Strong centralisation of most CoG functions in a single, relatively powerful CoG body in Armenia or Georgia compares with a more dispersed allocation of functions to different key organisations in Azerbaijan or Ukraine (though the nature of this relative decentralisation is also very different between the latter two countries). It is clear from this report that centralisation does not, *per se*, resolve all co-ordination issues, as problems of internal co-ordination are present in both Armenia and Georgia.

In general, the CoGs of ENP East countries carry out the same core functions as their counterparts in OECD and EU member countries and identify similar functions as their top priorities. Strong similarities are visible as regards the 'classical' functions such as co-ordination of cabinet session agendas, acting as gatekeeper for policy proposals or communication of the key messages of the government.

ENP East CoGs are less likely to lead policy initiatives directly, and where they do play these strategic roles, the issue is to what extent adequate resources are in place. OECD/EU CoGs have evolved in recent years to manage certain strategic functions (such as growth strategies, digital transformation, gender equality and climate) that, in general, are not roles formally assigned to the CoG in ENP East countries. There are some examples from the region, however. The CoG in Georgia drives the Open Government Partnership action plan, Strategic Development Goal implementation, the human rights strategy, as well as public administration reform (PAR) co-ordination (with the Ministry of Justice). Similarly, the State Chancellery of Moldova can develop policies in the area of PAR and e-government, human rights and open government. The issue remains, however, to what extent human resources and political weight are available to fully take on these non-traditional roles (basically, how many staff actually work on these topics). The case study on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic suggests, nonetheless, that CoG institutions in the five countries were able to adapt to a rapidly evolving policy environment and adopt new, more complex strategic management functions.

Given the increasing ties with the EU, ENP countries will need to focus more on European integration-related activities and, where necessary, adjust structures and processes. European integration is an aspect of the work of the CoG that is likely to evolve rapidly over the coming period given the events of 2022 following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A 2017 SIGMA review of the role and functions of the CoG in the Western Balkans highlighted the impact of European integration on the activities

of the CoG as the nature of the integration changed over time². For the moment, the structures in place largely correspond to association and partnership agreement requirements, but these are likely to be inadequate as candidate-status procedures generate an increasing (technical and organisational) workload.

Over time, where this is not already the case, it would be advisable to assign to the CoG the lead co-ordination role for European integration policy in order to ensure that it is effectively co-ordinated and planned in close alignment with domestic policy making. Currently only Ukraine and Armenia assign full responsibility for EU-related affairs to the CoG. Others assign the lead role to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Economy, which could, over time, represent a technical and administrative challenge for these bodies. In general, the distribution of roles across multiple bodies that deal with EU negotiations, domestic legal compliance, alignment with domestic policy planning, sector-level integration plans, etc. without a strong co-ordinating body is not ideal, particularly if the nature of the relationship with the EU generates more time-sensitive, formal and politically driven policy development expectations. Some changes are already visible. Armenia indicated a substantial shift with transferring most of the EU-related functions to the Office of the Prime Minister (under a responsible Deputy Prime Minister), while in Moldova, the legal harmonisation aspect has already been moved to the State Chancellery even though European integration (EI) co-ordination remains in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For the two candidate countries, the granting of candidate status has energised debate on how to manage EI-related policy, and there are some choices to be made. In Ukraine, given the relative weakness of the key CoG department for EI co-ordination, GOEEIA, despite its broad mandate on paper, the key question is how to either strengthen its role or build capacity through a broader co-ordinated system linking key actors (including the office of the President and the Parliament, as well as CMU). In Moldova, the debate has also been galvanised by candidate status, with a key issue being how to overcome the fragmentation that seems to characterise the current system. In particular, better alignment between domestic policy planning and EI planning will require a more streamlined institutional setup than is the case now, for example with Ministry of Foreign Affairs focusing on its core functions and with policy development, alignment and co-ordination unified elsewhere, most logically in the State Chancellery.

The main CoG bodies of the ENP East countries are in continual evolution and have all expended in size and mandate over the past five years. Ukraine and Armenia have the largest CoG bodies, with 761 and 692 staff respectively, which is similar to Spain³. The Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (SCMU) has 31 organisational units (separate offices, directorates and departments), while the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) of Armenia has 29 “staff departments”. The other three countries’ CoGs are smaller, similar in size to the CoGs of Lithuania and Slovenia and have simpler structures. In all of the countries, the CoG stands out as a particularly large government department. The State Chancellery in Moldova, for example, has around 200 staff, which makes it much larger than line ministries. Since 2018, the key CoG bodies have expanded in all ENP East countries in terms of both staff numbers and number of units/departments. The expansion was most dramatic in Armenia (because of the amalgamation of units from the President’s office into the OPM) but visible in the other countries as well, as new functions were taken on.

CoGs in ENP countries are staffed with permanent civil servants, with little or no rotation or secondments, which promotes continuity but suggests missed opportunities for new ideas and expertise. A majority of OECD countries report that the CoG has significant numbers of staff from other departments and/or external experts/specialists. This promotes stability but lacks the flexibility and

² Vági, P. and K. Kasemets (2017), “Functioning of the Centres of Government in the Western Balkans”, *SIGMA Papers*, No. 53, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2bad1e9c-en>.

³ As of 2021, according to data provided by the country administration.

expertise-pooling that many OECD CoGs now favour with more open human resource strategies. The scale of replacement of CoG staff with the arrival of a new government is also low (less than 25% of staff turnover). This is in line with the finding that ENP East CoGs have wide administrative functions but are less involved in policy development on strategic agendas (for which line ministry specialists or consultants are often brought in by OECD CoGs).

ENP East CoGs are led by a political appointee rather than a civil servant, which implies a strong link with the political level. Around half of OECD countries follow the same model, with the others led by the most senior civil servant. In most cases, the head of the CoG has ministerial rank and is therefore present and can intervene in government meetings. In Ukraine, the SCMU is led by a civil servant, but there is also a Minister for the CoG.

All ENP East CoGs stressed their role in co-ordinating policy development and leading cross-departmental consultation and negotiation, with a strong focus on ensuring smooth government meetings/cabinet sessions. For each ENP East country, the regular cabinet/government meeting is the focal point of their day-to-day work, as it is for more than 90% of OECD countries. A wide range of different cross-departmental committees, thematic councils and working groups are used as platforms for policy discussions, both to discuss cabinet agendas and validate proposals and then to design the implementation of a decision. Differences across the countries relate to the formality/informality of the co-ordination entities, how often they meet, and who chairs them. For example, in Armenia, the Deputy Prime Ministers are heavily involved in managing thematic areas through CoG co-ordination forums, while in Moldova and Ukraine the head of the CoG chairs cross-departmental prep meetings that are the principal forum for consensus-building around government meeting preparation. Similarly, in Moldova, the head of CoG chairs a weekly meeting of the general secretaries of the ministries to examine and decide on the relevance of the policy drafts proposed by each ministry. In Azerbaijan, the agendas of Cabinet meetings are developed jointly between the Cabinet of Ministers and the President, hence the need for a formal co-ordination mechanism between the staff of the Cabinet of Ministers and of the President.

The mandate of the main CoG bodies to review the quality of policy proposals comprehensively and decisively is established in statutes and rules of procedure in all ENP countries, but less clearly exercised in practice. While CoGs are usually mandated to send back documents to the proposing ministry if they consider that the material does not meet certain standards of quality or procedure, the scope of the review and whether the CoG opinion has to be taken into account is uneven. While, overall, the reviewing capacity of the CoGs in ENP East countries is adequate in comparison to OECD and EU countries, there is some evidence that the quality of drafts is not optimal, as a significant number of new legislative acts introduced by the governments require amendment after adoption.

The effectiveness of the ENP CoGs in co-ordinating strategic planning seems to be undermined by problems relating to alignment of key planning documents and in reporting on progress. Annual government-level operational planning – a common practice in EU countries -- is in place only in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, while in other ENP East countries multi-annual government programming is used, usually without annual revision. Similarly, reporting on the work of the government against these plans is not undertaken in a systematic manner in the five ENP East countries. The public availability of both strategic plans and reports on their implementation is also not ensured. The quality of these operational plans also appears to be mixed, often with a high degree of repetition between consecutive plans or misalignment between what has been planned and what actually happens. In some cases, such as Georgia, ministries report on implementation of their action plans periodically. However, this does not replace the need for more synthetic presentations of progress. All of these elements suggest that the scope of the CoG's activities could be enhanced in order to provide a more complete service in the area of cross-sectoral policy planning and monitoring. Strengthening the capacity of the CoG in this area would be highly beneficial to the head of government/Cabinet as it would provide better, more reliable and up-to-date information to ensure evidence-based policy making, as well as improving the flow of information across the government and to external stakeholders and the public.

Sectoral plans could also benefit from more consistent review by the CoG to ensure a harmonised structure and level of detail. For most countries, sectoral strategies tend to be inconsistent in terms of quality, and the role of the CoG in guiding the preparation of the strategies seems somewhat limited. For example, in Armenia, the CoG does not always review sectoral strategies and there is no specific guidance or manual for their preparation. In other countries, such as Moldova, the system is well defined in terms of rules and procedures, and the emphasis now is on training and capacity building at the level of ministries. A more regular approach to drafting, quality control and consultation – possibly built around an IT system as in many EU countries – would help to ensure coherence among sectoral strategies and between sectoral strategies and higher-level strategic documents.

ENP East CoGs are not at present heavily involved in monitoring performance and tracking implementation. This contrasts with OECD and EU countries where over half assign prime responsibility for monitoring implementation to the CoG, and for nearly one-third of OECD countries (e.g. Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia), this monitoring role represents one of the four priority tasks of the centre. This is an area where strengthening of capacity could be helpful for the overall performance of the government, particularly as IT tools now make it possible to monitor progress and extract data easily for decision-makers, as is now the case in many EU countries. One such example from the region is PlanPRO in Moldova, which is used by ministries to submit information, which is then validated by officials from the State Chancellery.

The case study of the CoG response to the COVID-19 pandemic confirms that the CoG of each of the ENP East countries was heavily involved in managing the COVID-19 crisis, without having been initially mandated for the tasks and without the allocation of additional resources or reduction in their other duties. The fact that most of the CoGs in the region were not explicitly responsible for risk or crisis management did not stop them from playing a key role in the response. Since that crisis, the co-ordination capacity of the CoGs in the ENP East have been further tested by displacement of refugees, high energy prices, rising inflation and other consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Ways forward

While this report does not provide a detailed assessment of the functioning of each country's centre of government, the following general suggestions for ways forward emerge:

Armenia

- Continue with the reforms envisaged in the PAR Strategy adopted earlier this year and emphasise reform of the CoG as a key element of this.
- Review the functioning of the CoG from the perspective of internal co-ordination processes and accountability among the key units within the Office of the Prime Minister and across functions under the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and other ministries, notably the Ministry of Justice.
- Strengthen the role of the CoG in ensuring that public consultation procedures for key planning documents, including sectoral strategies, are respected.
- Strengthen review of sector strategies to ensure that all strategic documents are well aligned with government priorities and include benchmarks and progress indicators, as well as costing.

Azerbaijan

- Review the co-ordination of CoG functions across the different CoG institutions, particularly with respect to strategic planning and management/reform of the public administration.

- Develop guidance for line ministries on the preparation of policy documents to improve the quality and consistency of submissions from ministries.
- Strengthen the role of the CoG in leading cross-departmental policy co-ordination meetings to promote better consultation on policy proposals, including with the office of the President.

Georgia

- Review the resources available for the CoG and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to enable it to fulfil its mandate. Identify policy areas where capacity is too low to provide a meaningful service.
- Verify that the new policy planning regulations are respected by line ministries to ensure that policy documents follow guidelines and that the quality and consistency of policy documents is improved.
- Review existing mechanisms and procedures for EI co-ordination and develop a plan to gradually strengthening the framework, to be ready for the next phase of the EI processes.

Moldova

- Review resources and capacity to deliver across the range of functions assigned to the CoG and identify policy areas for which the CoG does not have adequate resources to fulfil its mandate.
- Strengthen the co-ordination forums among CoG institutions to ensure better alignment.
- Continue to strengthen and streamline the system for managing EI-related affairs to prepare for a more intensive workload generated by candidate status. Review the allocation of responsibilities and verify capacity to deliver. Clarify roles with respect to legal harmonisation, costing and policy alignment across the different institutions involved.

Ukraine

- Review the system for managing EI-related affairs to ensure that co-ordination within the SCMU and across institutions (in particular the office of the President and the Parliament) is effective and able to manage an increased workflow.
- Clarify the strategic/technical role of the SCMU's EI unit (GOCEEI) within the overall system and ensure that it is fully staffed and well led.
- Establish guidelines for developing and monitoring sector strategies and clarify the procedure for verifying quality through the CoG.

Main centre of government institutions

Country	Key CoG institution	Other bodies performing CoG functions
Armenia	Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Azerbaijan	Office of the Council of Ministers (ACoM)	Ministry of Finance, Presidential Administration
Georgia	Administration of Government (AoG)	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Moldova	State Chancellery (SC)	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
Ukraine	Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (SCMU)	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, State Regulatory Service, Ministry of Economy

Introduction: the role of the centre of government in good public governance

The institutions that make up the CoG play a crucial role in the policy making process (but how they do it is not always well understood). The basic objective of the CoG is to support the executive branch in directing the resources of the state (financial, legal, regulatory, physical, etc.) to achieve a mission that reflects a political vision and responds to a mandate from citizens. The executive – a relatively small group of politicians, in which perhaps only half a dozen individuals are responsible for the major decisions – depends on a highly professional support structure in order to cope with the scope and complexity of modern government. This support structure – which can be termed the centre of government -- is there to ensure that government are not *ad hoc*, imprudent or inconsistent. The objective of the CoG is thus to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies. As such, the CoG can be seen as a champion of good governance practices. Despite this prominent role, the CoG often has the reputation of being somewhat opaque in terms of its structure and ways of working.⁴

Despite different constitutional forms, institutional architecture and administrative tradition, strong similarities emerge across the OECD and EU member countries with respect to the functions that the CoG performs. These functions combine two main elements: (i) facilitating the decision-making process by government (and in particular by the Head of Government), and (ii) overseeing the policy cycle, from co-ordinating policy development to monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. While the former can be seen as the traditional role of the CoG, the review of the functions of the CoG in OECD countries revealed that the latter has now become a key task of the CoG in many countries. Indeed, the role of the CoG today has expanded significantly and is now close to “full service”, extending well beyond overseeing rules of procedure to encompass the entire policy cycle (though to different degrees).

The CoG is usually a constellation of bodies working together, rather than one single institution. A key challenge when studying the CoG is to define what exactly it is. In functional terms, the CoG’s role is usually played by a principal institution, which carries out most of the functions of the CoG. This institution can have many different names -- Chancellery, Government Office, Prime Minister’s Office, Cabinet Office, Privy Council, etc. This main CoG institution usually works in close partnership with other bodies that provide specific, specialised “services”. These specialised activities mainly relate to financial, legal, regulatory or diplomatic functions and are either carried out by units of the respective ministries (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Justice or Foreign Affairs) or are the remit of an agency or separate body (e.g., regulatory oversight body, civil service commission, and so on). The quality of the CoG depends on the ability of this system to work coherently and in co-ordination.

The CoG spans the political-administrative interface. Working between the political and bureaucratic levels of the state administration, the CoG is both a highly political entity in terms of its negotiating and consensus-building activities and also an inherently bureaucratic institution, the steward and guardian of procedure and conformity. The advice offered by the CoG to the head of government or Cabinet needs to be both

⁴ OECD (2018) *Centre Stage 2: The organisation and functions of the centre of government in OECD Countries*, OECD, www.oecd.org/gov/centre-stage-2.pdf.

analytically sound but also politically aware. Officials in the CoG are expected to master the political economy of reform, i.e., how to expedite laws and other decisions through the legislative process and across the administration as effectively as possible.

If the CoG functions efficiently, it can have a strong, positive impact on policy outcomes and on good governance. The pivotal role of the CoG in successful policy outcomes is clear. Problems of poor co-ordination or excessive delays following a government decision can mean that the translation of the decision into a positive outcome on the ground can take too long for citizens and business. The CoG is involved in devising a strategy of persuasion, negotiation and compromise to shepherd key reforms through complex consultation and legislative processes.

The CoG is also responsible for ensuring that the government's overall vision and direction are respected. Through a variety of activities related to preparation of the agendas of government meetings, quality control and review of key policy documents and monitoring of implementation, among other things, the CoG is expected to ensure that the government's key commitments are reflected in its policies.

At the same time, much of the time and energy of the CoG is spent managing short-term demands. Another reality of the work of the CoG is its fire-fighting duties, which often dominate its daily work, potentially at the expense of its more strategic role. Given that the daily agendas of the Head of Government and senior ministers are frequently dominated by emergencies on both domestic and international fronts, the CoG has to be able to respond and provide advice at short notice. Its capacity to provide effective support of this kind to senior government officials is likely to be valued more highly than its more administrative functions.

Given the broad scope of its activities and its decisive role in key areas of public policy, the CoG in most countries is surprisingly small. CoGs represent a tiny fraction of total government expenditure – an average of 0.045% across OECD countries – and typically employ less than 0.1% of central government employment. The apparent disconnect between the CoG's broad responsibilities and its limited budget is at least partly explained by the fact that almost all resources and most formal powers lie elsewhere in the public administration. In most of its activities, the CoG works with partner organisations that are much larger and that are responsible and accountable for most if not all spending on those activities.

Strong leadership is essential for an effective CoG. Managing the very limited resources at the centre and leveraging resources from elsewhere to fulfil the CoG's diverse responsibilities is a challenge that involves analytical, political and administrative skills. These skills are required at the apex of the support structure in the person who heads the centre of government, but also need to be present throughout the CoG. The CoG's success in mobilising and influencing larger, budget-holding departments across government depends to a large extent not on formal powers or structures – in these terms the centre tends to be relatively weak – but on its capacity to lead, motivate and innovate.

Benchmarking the CoG is challenging because much of its work relies on informal channels and on negotiation: the outcome is more important than the process. The main difficulty in assessing how the CoG works is that much of its activity is "under the radar". As such, reviewing formal rules gives only a limited view of the effectiveness of the CoG, and the emphasis needs to be on outcomes rather than on process.

SIGMA's Principles of Public Administration⁵ identify some key outcomes that characterise an effective CoG. In terms of what constitutes an effective CoG system, the Principles of Public Administration highlight the following characteristics as being crucial for a well-functioning system. Accordingly, an effective CoG should:

⁵ OECD (2017), *The Principles of Public Administration*, OECD, Paris
<https://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration-2017-edition-ENG.pdf>

- ensure a policy framework that will help to ensure that individual policies are consistent with national goals and priorities;
- provide the necessary capacity and procedures for advanced planning of policy and legislative outputs;
- provide institutional capacity for overview and co-ordination to ensure horizontal consistency among policies;
- provide decision makers with advice that is based on clear definitions and good analysis of issues, and that contains explicit indications of possible inconsistencies and contradictions and sets out policy options;
- facilitate consultative mechanisms to anticipate, detect and resolve policy conflicts early in the process and improve coherence;
- oversee procedures to achieve effective reconciliation between policy priorities and budget imperatives;
- carry out monitoring to ensure that policies can be adjusted in the light of progress, new information and changing circumstances.

The functioning of the COG depends both on a strong legal and institutional foundation and agile, supple ways of working. Given the complex institutional landscape in which the CoG usually operates, the legal and regulatory framework that defines roles and responsibilities and the rules of procedure that guide day-to-day work are crucial. At the same time, in practice, the unwritten rules and informal channels that the CoG employs are also important in ensuring that problems do not materialise or are anticipate and addressed in advance. As such, the performance of the CoG can be difficult to assess. In many ways, the more effective the CoG is, the less visible its role becomes.

1 Key functions of the centre of government in ENP East countries

The legal and regulatory framework for the CoG

In general, the legal framework that underpins the activities of the CoG in ENP East countries is in place. The main legal texts that govern the role of the CoG are the Constitution of the country and/or legislation that sets out the legal framework for the work of the government (such as the Law on the structures, powers and procedures for the activities of the Government of Georgia or the Law on the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [LCMU]). As is the case also in EU and OECD member countries, these foundation texts provide relatively high-level direction for the work of the CoG.⁶ If the allocation of functions changes, these texts are usually revised. For example, the SCMU in Ukraine was allocated the right to submit draft proposals to the Cabinet directly on issues that are not covered by other ministries (rather than via the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade) and the LCMU was amended accordingly.⁷

These basic legal texts are complemented in all ENP countries by a series of regulations and decisions that provide greater precision on roles and responsibilities. As in most EU countries, rules of procedure of the government exist in most of the ENP East countries to provide detailed instructions for officials with respect to workflow and co-ordination of the main tasks of the CoG.⁸ A more precise definition of the scope of functions of the CoG and issues of internal organisation is, in turn, set out in the statutes of the principal CoG institutions, such as the Statute of the Administration of the Government (AoG) in Georgia or the SCMU in Ukraine.⁹ For example, the Statute of the SCMU stipulates that it is responsible for: (1) preparing Cabinet sessions, (2) co-ordinating the policy content of proposals and ensuring their coherence with the Government's priorities; (3) leading the preparation of the Government's annual work plan; (4) monitoring its performance; (5) communicating with the public; and (6) managing the relationship between the CMU and the President and the Parliament.¹⁰ Recent SIGMA Monitoring Reports concluded that these texts provide an adequate legal basis for the CoG in ENP East countries.¹¹

To ensure a greater degree of internal clarity and co-ordination, in some cases, there are also specific statutes for the constituent units of the CoG. For example, in Georgia, the practical approach to

⁶ See Annex B for a list of key documents that establish the CoG Key documents establishing the CoG in ENP East countries:

⁷ Law No. 2190, adopted by the Parliament of Ukraine on 9 November 2017.

⁸ See Annex B for the key documents that set out the rules of procedure of the CoG.

⁹ See Annex B for a list of the main statutes of the principal CoG institutions\

¹⁰ Statute of the SCMU.

¹¹ www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/monitoring-reports.htm for SIGMA baseline assessments of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

co-ordination of the policy content of proposals submitted for government approval is established through the statute of the AoG's Policy Planning and Governmental Co-ordination Department.¹²

The CoG-related roles of other bodies that fulfil CoG functions are also usually enshrined within the general regulations or rulebooks of the institutions concerned. Specifically, the statutes of relevant ministries, notably Finance, Justice and Foreign Affairs, as well as specialised agencies such as regulatory oversight bodies, also define their responsibilities with respect to typical CoG functions.¹³ Finally, the work of the CoG is also governed by decisions that relate to functions rather than institutions. These typically cover the process for developing and approving strategic documents and these provide additional guidance on who does what and the procedures to be followed with respect, in particular, to consultation and approval.¹⁴ As such, the institutional architecture that supports the CoG seems to be in place.

The main functions that ENP East CoGs carry out

The CoGs of ENP countries carry out the same core functions as their counterparts in OECD and EU member countries, as well as some of the more strategic functions. As shown in Figures 1-3, in comparison with how these functions are established in EU and OECD member countries, the overall setup seems rather similar with respect to the traditional or core tasks of the CoG. Typically, in the ENP East countries, the CoG is in charge of the management of the day-to-day operations of the government. This is the fundamental task of the CoG across most if not all OECD and EU countries and constitutes the core of the activities of the CoG in ENP East countries as well. These core functions relate mainly to preparation and follow up of government meetings and different forms of policy co-ordination, including an important role in co-ordinating the strategic planning system.

ENP CoGs' own perceptions of their priority tasks concur largely with those of OECD and EU member country CoGs. In terms of their own perception of their main tasks, responses to the SIGMA survey confirmed that their role in preparing Cabinet meetings and in policy co-ordination were their two main priorities, alongside implementation of PAR. The first two of these tasks are also reflected as the two top priorities in OECD CoGs (both tasks identified as priorities by over 70% of OECD countries), while implementation of PAR is, in general, a function that is led by a non-CoG body in OECD countries (a top priority for the CoG in only around 20% of OECD countries). The other themes that were identified as priority tasks of the CoG by two or more countries are: strategic planning (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), monitoring the implementation of government policy (Moldova and Ukraine) and relations with the parliament. The tasks that are considered to be the lowest priorities for the CoG are also similar to those

¹² Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 626 on Confirmation of the Statute of the Administration of the Government of Georgia of 19 November 2014

¹³ For each ENP country, there are multiple statutes that prescribe the activities of a specific ministry or agency and that thereby include its CoG functions and have an influence on the functioning of the centre of government. These include the statutes of ministries of Finance, Justice and Foreign Affairs. As an example, in Georgia these statutes include:

Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 168 on Approval of the Statute of the MoF of 31 March 2017.

Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 389 on Approval of the Statute of the MoJ of 30 December 2013.

Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 133 on Approval of the Statute of the Office of the State Minister for EEAI of 31 December 2004.

¹⁴ Examples of such functional or procedural regulations include:

Armenia: Protocol Decision of the Government No. 42, 5 October 2017, on Methodical Directive on Preparation, Submission and Monitoring of Strategic Documents Affecting State Revenues and Direct Expenditure.

Georgia: Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 427 on Approval of strategic planning documents: Public Administration Reform Roadmap 2020 and Policy Planning System Reform Strategy 2015-2017 of 19 August 2015.

Moldova: Government Decision No. 33 on Rules of Development and Unified Requirements for Policy Documents, 11 January 2007, Article 44, Official Gazette Nos. 6-9/2007, 19 January 2007.

identified by OECD countries, that is, policy analysis, risk management and relations with sub-national governments.

Figure 1. The top four priorities of ENP East CoGs (self-assessed)

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
Co-ordinating the preparation of Cabinet meetings	●	○	●	●	○
Communicating government messages to the public and other parts of the administration	○	○	○	○	○
Human resources strategy for the public administration as a whole	○	○	○	○	○
Designing and implementing reform of the public administration	●	○	●	●	●
Strategic planning for the whole of government	○	○	●	○	●
Risk anticipation and management/strategic foresight for the whole of government	○	○	○	○	○
Preparation of the government programme	○	○	○	○	○
Policy formulation	○	●	○	○	○
Policy analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Policy co-ordination across government	●	○	●	●	●
Regulatory policy	○	●	○	○	○
Monitoring the implementation of government policy	○	○	○	●	●
Relations with sub-national levels of government	○	○	○	○	○
Relations with the Parliament / Legislature	●	●	○	○	○
International co-ordination and international policy issues (including relations with EU, G20, etc.)	○	●	○	○	○
Transition planning and management between an outgoing and incoming government	○	○	○	○	○

○ Not top priority

● One of four top priorities

Source: SIGMA survey of the role and functions of the CoG in ENP East Countries, carried out in 2022 (hereafter, "SIGMA, 2022").

Figure 2. CoG role in executing key functions, ENP East countries

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
Co-ordinating the preparation of Cabinet meetings	●	●	●	●	●
Communicating government messages to the public and other parts of the administration	◐	●	●	◐	●
Human resources strategy for the public administration as a whole	●	◐	◐	◐	●
Designing and implementing reform of the public administration	●	○	●	●	●
Strategic planning for the whole of government	●	◐	●	◐	◐
Risk anticipation and management/strategic foresight for the whole of government	○	◐	●	◐	○
Preparation of the government programme	●	●	●	●	◐
Policy formulation	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Policy analysis	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Policy co-ordination across government	●	●	●	●	●
Regulatory policy	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Monitoring the implementation of government policy	●	●	●	◐	●
Relations with sub-national levels of government	◐	●	◐	◐	●
Relations with the Parliament / Legislature	●	●	●	◐	●
International co-ordination and international policy issues (including relations with EU, G20, etc.)	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Transition planning and management between an outgoing and incoming government	○	○	●	◐	●

○ Not relevant/applicable

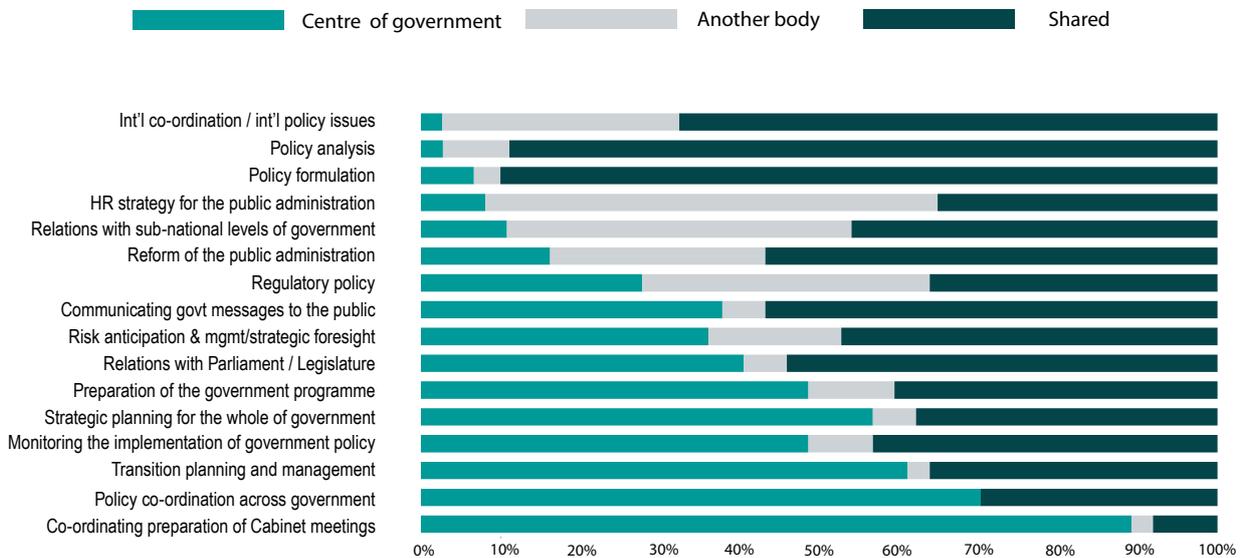
◐ This comes under the responsibility of another body

◑ CoG shares this responsibility with another body

● CoG has primary responsibility in this area

Source: SIGMA, 2022

Figure 3. CoG role in executing key functions, OECD countries



Source: OECD (2018) *Centre Stage 2: The organisation and functions of the centre of government in OECD Countries*, OECD, www.oecd.org/gov/centre-stage-2.pdf.

The level of centralised responsibility for leading work on the 16 most important CoG functions is relatively high, with some variations across the ENP region. According to responses to the SIGMA survey, centralisation of tasks within the CoG is most evident in Georgia, where the AoG oversees 10 out of the 16 key functions, followed by Armenia and Moldova where the OPM and the State Chancellery are both solely responsible for 9 of the key functions. At the other end of the spectrum, the ACoM of Azerbaijan and the SCMU in Ukraine have full responsibility for 7 and 4 of the key functions respectively. The main difference between these two latter cases is that while in Ukraine - except for managing regulatory policy - all other functions are carried out with the participation of the SCMU (hence the CoG has shared responsibility for these functions), in Azerbaijan, four key functions are executed by other state bodies, without responsibility being formally shared with the ACoM. Nonetheless, overall, it is clear that the ENP East administrations are structured in order to ensure strong policy co-ordination capacity through their centres of government.

The main difference is the CoG role in more strategic functions, which is less visible in ENP countries than in OECD or EU countries. While the main CoG body in all countries is involved in the functions most typical and most required for day-to-day operations (e.g., supporting government meetings, communicating the messages of the government, policy formulation, planning the work of the government and monitoring the implementation of government policies), their role in more strategic tasks is mixed. In the majority of the ENP East countries, while whole-of-government strategic planning is led by the central CoG bodies and PAR are also almost always led by the CoG, more specialised strategic tasks are more often assigned to other state bodies. This is the case for managing the human resource strategy of the administration or whole-of-government risk management, strategic foresight and long-range planning (if the function is established at all).

Similarly, whereas the CoG in OECD countries often drives priority or cross-cutting agendas, this is less evident in ENP CoGs. Examples of priority agendas driven by the CoG in EU and OECD countries include growth strategies, digital transformation, gender equality and climate, for which high levels of cross-departmental co-operation is required. While central leadership of such agendas can have positive results, it is also dependent on having the requisite resources and mandates assigned to the CoG. There are some

examples from the region. For example, the CoG in Georgia drives, among other things, the Open Government Partnership Strategy, co-ordination of the e-Government and Public Service Delivery Strategy, Human Rights Strategy, as well as PAR co-ordination.¹⁵ The State Chancellery of Moldova has a similar remit.¹⁶ As discussed below, the nature of the CoG is to adapt to new challenges and so in today's volatile and rapidly evolving policy environment, there is scope for CoG institutions in ENP countries to take on new roles in the case of emerging cross-sectoral policy agendas.

A significant number of functions are shared with other bodies. As is evident from Figure 2, a number of key CoG functions are performed either solely by other bodies or are shared between the CoG and another entity. The most common cases are with regard to legal conformity and to financial affordability, for which Ministries of Justice and Finance respectively are usually heavily involved. For example, in Georgia, the Ministry of Justice is assigned to perform the function of ensuring legal conformity of draft proposals and also has the specific task of checking alignment of new domestic legislation with the EU *acquis*. However, this is a shared competence as legal compliance checks are also carried out by the AoG itself.¹⁷ The Ministry of Finance of Georgia has sole responsibility for ensuring the affordability of policies and co-ordinating public sector resource planning. Similarly, in Ukraine, the Ministry of Justice is responsible for ensuring the legal conformity of proposals, while the Ministry of Finance is tasked with ensuring that policies are affordable and the State Regulatory Service verifies the quality of impact assessments for a prescribed set of regulations that affect the business sector.¹⁸ Co-ordinating across institutions is a major challenge for the CoG in cases in which functions are shared or fully allocated to another body. Recent SIGMA monitoring reports of ENP East countries, for example, have highlighted problems of co-ordination between policy planning and budget planning, particularly with respect to alignment between strategic documents and the medium-term budget/expenditure frameworks, as well as lack of consistency between the statutes, mandates and rules of procedure of bodies sharing CoG functions. Moreover, problems of co-ordination can occur in cases in which different bodies are reviewing different aspects of a policy document (for example, legal conformity vs. compatibility with EU *acquis* vs. alignment with domestic policy priorities) that are interrelated.

The structure of the CoG, in OECD and ENP countries, is constantly evolving to meet new challenges. With respect to the overall functions of the CoG, a key finding of the recent OECD CoG surveys has been the continuous evolution of CoGs and, as a general trend, their expansion in terms of numbers of staff, budgets and numbers of organisational units in order to respond to evolving responsibilities/priorities. For example, the most recent CoG survey showed that more than two-thirds of CoGs had seen their size increase over the preceding five years. At the same time, the report also concluded that this general expansion masked many cases in which functions were transferred out of OECD CoGs in order to increase focus at the centre, improve coherence or relocate priority agendas such as digital or gender back to line ministries.

Since 2018, the key CoG bodies have changed and, on average, expanded in all ENP East countries. While in the case of Armenia this was mainly due to the constitutional changes leading the country from a

¹⁵ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5188204?publication=0>

¹⁶ <https://cancelaria.gov.md/en/advanced-page-type/domeniile-de-competenta>

¹⁷ Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 389 on Approval of the Statute of the MoJ of 30 December 2013, Articles 3 and 4.

¹⁸ As set out in the Rules of Procedure of the CMU, paragraphs 44-46, Statute of the MoJ, paragraph 4.3 and Statute of the MoF, paragraph 4.3. The role of the SRS is set out in the Law on the Principles of Regulatory Policy in Economic Activity

presidential to a parliamentary system¹⁹, which required a full-scale revision of the legal and regulatory framework for the CoG. This involved the integration of planning functions from the President's office into the OPM, along with functions relating to regulatory impact assessment from an agency responsible for administrative burden reduction. In Moldova, the changes mainly involved transferring certain functions related to legal harmonisation with EU *acquis* to the State Chancellery from the Centre for Legal Harmonisation, which was previously subordinated to the Ministry of Justice²⁰. In Ukraine and Georgia, the changes in the structure of the main CoG institutions were related to taking over additional functions, including stronger co-ordination of PAR and investment-related tasks²¹. Thus, a fundamental characteristic of CoGs – their continual adaptation to new circumstances, to bolster capacity or redress weaknesses – is also visible across the ENP East CoGs.

Despite playing a decisive role in key areas of public policy, OECD surveys indicate that most CoGs are surprisingly small. CoGs in OECD countries represent a tiny fraction of total government expenditure – an average of 0.045% across OECD countries – and typically employ less than 0.1% of central government staff. Total staff rarely exceed 1000, including both professional and support staff, except in the United States and larger unitary states (France, Italy, Turkey, UK). The main CoG bodies of the ENP East countries vary greatly in size, as well as in organisational complexity. Ukraine and Armenia have the largest CoG bodies, with 761 and 692 staff²². The Ukrainian SCMU has 31 organisational units (separate offices, directorates and departments), while the Armenian OPM has 29 “staff departments” (including three under the direct supervision of two Deputy Prime Ministers). The main CoG bodies in Georgia and Moldova, in contrast, are much smaller in size and somewhat less complex in structure. The AoG in Georgia has 133 staff and comprises 14 main departments and the State Chancellery of Moldova has 202 personnel units²³ and is composed of 20 main directorates or similar organisational units. Finally, the ACoM in Azerbaijan is more similar to Georgia and Moldova, with a relatively small staff of 240 civil servants. Taking into account country size, the CoGs of Georgia and Moldova are similar to those of Lithuania (with 168 staff) and Slovenia (137 staff in 2017). They are also similar in terms of organisational complexity, with the Secretariat-General of the Government of Slovenia having 13 organisational units and 6 separate offices directly reporting to the Secretariat-General²⁴ and the State Chancellery of Lithuania having 14 main organisational units²⁵. The PMO of Armenia seems more like an outlier in terms of staff numbers, due in part at least to the need to recreate the centre of government institutions and the exceptional workload generated by the constitutional change.

CoGs in ENP countries are largely staffed with professional, permanent civil servants, with little or no rotation or secondment. The staff of the main CoG bodies of the ENP East countries are overwhelmingly

¹⁹ By transferring previously presidential functions, the Security Council Bureau, Department for Programmes Expertise, Division of Pardons, Citizenship, Awards and Titles Department were moved to the PMO. At the same time, also functional expansion was supplemented by the establishment or reorganisation of various functions affecting - amongst others - the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, Regulatory Impact Assessment Department, Bureau of the Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the European Court of Human Rights, Civil Service Office, Mobilisation Preparations and Mobilisation Programmes Division.

²⁰ The absorption of the Centre for Legal Harmonisation itself has increased the State Chancellery by 20 additional organisational units.

²¹ In Georgia, the following units have been established since 2018: Public Administration unit, Internal Audit unit, Anti-corruption Secretariat, Co-ordinating Council for Strategic Development of Mountainous Regions. In Ukraine the Government Commissioner for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Office of the Government Commissioner for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Government Commissioner for Investment, the Office of the Government Commissioner for Investment, the Sanctions Policy Department, the Mobilisation sector and the Internal Audit Sector have been created since 2018.

²² As of 2021, according to data provided by the country administration.

²³ According to the organigram of the State Chancellery

https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/organiograma_cs_iunie_2021.pdf. According to the personnel establishment, on 1 January 2021, the State Chancellery encountered 302 personnel units (202 units in the central body and 100 in the territorial offices of the State Chancellery), the staff presented by 255 employees, of which 170 in the central apparatus and 85 in the territorial offices.

²⁴ <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/government-offices/secretariat-general-of-the-government/o-generalnem-sekretariatu-vlade/>.

²⁵ <https://lrvk.lrv.lt/lt/vyriausybes-kanceliarijos-struktura>.

civil servants, and secondment of staff to the CoG from other bodies is not a common practice. This reflects the organisational and managerial nature of a portion of the work and the importance of a strong understanding of procedural and organisational issues relating to the machinery of government and the legislative process. At the same time, the need to bring in expertise to cover a wide spectrum of evolving priorities has led some countries to favour more flexible staffing systems for the CoG, with some countries staffing parts of the CoG mainly with officials on secondment from other ministries or external experts. For example, most of the professional staff in the Danish OPM are temporarily employed, typically on 2-3 year contracts. After their term in the OPM they normally continue their career in their original ministry. This recruitment strategy was introduced to ensure a continuously dynamic and changing team of staff which possesses relevant expertise and analytical skills in different policy areas. For ENP countries, the motivation to adopt some similar practices would depend principally on the evolution of the priorities of the CoG, specifically with regard to its role in strategic functions or co-ordination of cross-cutting policy agendas, for which expertise beyond that usually found in the principal CoG institution would be valuable.

Table 1. ENP CoG staff are permanent civil servants of the CoG, not secondees

	They are employees of CoG	A small number are seconded	Most or all of them are seconded
OECD	12 countries	16 countries	4 countries
Armenia	x		
Azerbaijan	x		
Georgia	x		
Ukraine	x		
Moldova	x		

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

ENP CoGs are mainly led by political appointees, which, in principle, helps ensure political weight for the key CoG institution. While OECD countries are equally divided between the Head of the CoG being a civil servant or political appointee, with the exception of Ukraine, this position is held by political appointees (in the rank of a Minister or equivalent) in all ENP East countries and the officeholder usually changes with a change of government. There are advantages to both approaches: a political appointee provides a clear link between the administrative centre and the specific political objectives of the party in power and the Head of Government. Ministerial status should also help to ensure that the perspective of the centre is well represented in the deliberations of the government. At the same time, understanding how the bureaucracy functions is likely to be more challenging, at least in the early days. A career civil servant heading the CoG is likely to be better able to navigate the administration and provides administrative continuity. Ukraine has both a senior civil servant leading the CoG institution and a Minister responsible for CoG affairs, which is a good way to ensure both administrative and political objectives are addressed by the CoG.

Table 2. ENP CoGs are mainly led by political appointees

	Highest civil service rank	Political appointee
OECD	19 countries	13 countries
EU	12 countries	8 countries
Armenia	Political appointee	
Azerbaijan	Political appointee	
Georgia	Political appointee	
Ukraine	Highest civil service rank (plus Minister for CoG)	
Moldova	Political appointee	

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

As with most EU and OECD countries, most senior ENP CoG staff remain in place after a change in government, which promotes continuity. In the ENP East, the staffing at the senior level of the CoG is relatively stable, with less than 25% of senior staff leaving with a change of government. Only the Armenian administration reported a larger dynamic of change at with a change of the government. In general, this helps to ensure some policy continuity and coherence, though of course a new administration, even if there is not a tradition of large-scale replacement of staff, will exert an influence in terms of reorganisation of structures and reorientation of priorities.²⁶

Table 3. Senior personnel remain in place when there is a change in government

	0-25%	26-50%	More than 50%
OECD	25 countries	4 countries	4 countries
Armenia		x	
Georgia	x		
Ukraine	x		
Moldova	x		

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

²⁶ OECD (2018) *Centre Stage 2: The organisation and functions of the centre of government in OECD Countries*, OECD, www.oecd.org/gov/centre-stage-2.pdf.

2 The role of the centre of government in policy co-ordination

Policy co-ordination at the political level

Policy co-ordination is perhaps the most challenging role that the CoG plays in a modern governance system. A variety of constitutional models structure how decisions are taken by government, from highly collegial Cabinet systems to Presidential systems, with a multitude of hybrids in between. What they all share is the need for a CoG that can co-ordinate the decision-making process with the different key stakeholders, including line ministries and agencies, the President (if applicable), Parliament and the wider stakeholder environment. Given that the key CoG functions are shared between different organisations or split among different units within a single CoG body, internal co-ordination is also critical for proper planning and decision-making. A key dimension of the role of the CoG is in ensuring that co-ordination and consultation procedures are observed and that the process is fair, transparent, inclusive, thus strengthening the legitimacy of the policy making process overall. Not surprisingly, the surveyed ENP CoG administrations considered the issue of policy co-ordination as one of their top four priorities.

Figure 4. ENP COGs manage a wide range of different formal and informal mechanisms to co-ordinate policy on behalf of the government

Principal channels through which the head of government (HG) discusses policy issues				
	Direct bilateral contacts with relevant ministers	Group of senior advisors	Regular Cabinet meetings	Ad hoc Cabinet meetings
Armenia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Azerbaijan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ukraine	✓	✗	✓	✓
Moldova	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Preparation of government meetings is a principal mechanism by which policy co-ordination takes place. In all ENP East countries, the CoG is responsible for preparing the agendas of the meetings of the government, and the procedures for doing so are set out in the rules of procedure of the government or in the statute of the principal CoG institution (see box: Example from Georgia²⁷). There are usually several key steps that need to be followed and that are linked to a calendar by which these steps need to be completed. Prior discussions take place in the form of briefings in Georgia and Moldova, while Ministerial Committees are organised for such purposes in Armenia and Moldova. In Ukraine, as well as in Moldova,

²⁷ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1869816?publication=0>

discussions on what comes to the agenda of the Cabinet are held weekly in the format of the meetings of State Secretaries. Regular pre-Cabinet meetings of senior ministry officials are also organised by the CoG in Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova and occasionally also in Georgia, but not in Azerbaijan. The OECD country experience with pre-Cabinet co-ordination meetings is similarly diverse, with 14 OECD members having regular pre-Cabinet meetings, 15 members having such sessions occasionally and 4 OECD members not having such forums before the sessions of their governments.

The CoG procedure for preparing Cabinet meetings: the example of Georgia

The regulation on the Government of Georgia defines the procedure for the preparation of agendas for discussion at the cabinet sessions. The government regulations document outlines which state institutions have the right to propose an item for cabinet discussion. The proposing ministry/other state institution uploads the project/proposal for cabinet discussion via the internal, e-government platform for review and approval by the members of the cabinet. This is normally done at least a week before the cabinet meets. The regulation outlines the format and all necessary documents that have to be attached to the project. The members of the government are obliged to review the uploaded project/proposal and either agree or send comments and remarks on the proposal to the proposing ministry/government institution before it is included in the cabinet session agenda. If no feedback is provided, it is assumed that approval is not granted. It is usual practice that if comments are received from various cabinet members on the proposed project, an *ad hoc* meeting is organised to align and discuss the comments by the members of the cabinet. The AoG decides which items are included in the cabinet session, especially if the number of projects for approval exceeds the limit. Sometimes, items of lesser significance can be approved online through the e-government platform. They are not discussed during the session when sufficient approval votes are received prior to the session through the electronic platform.

Preparatory discussions managed by the CoG are an important tool by which to ensure that differences of opinion and controversies are addressed upstream, thereby facilitating rapid and consensual decision-making by government. They allow the various institutions proposing and implementing the policies, as well as others affected by the planned decisions, to discuss any outstanding issues, harmonise the proposals and resolve any conflicting views before the issue is placed for final decision. Organising pre-Cabinet meetings of senior officials or similar, consultative platforms also has the benefit that government decision-making is happening in a widely informed manner across the organisations of the executive. The five countries use a wide range of committees, thematic councils and working groups as platforms for pre-decision policy discussions and to prepare implementation of decisions. In most cases, it is the head of the CoG who chairs such meetings, but it can also be a senior politician. For example, in Armenia, the Deputy Prime Ministers are heavily involved in managing different thematic areas within the Government and their professional staff have key co-ordinating roles on those policy topics within the CoG. In Azerbaijan, co-ordination with the Presidential Administration has special importance, as the agendas of Cabinet meetings are developed jointly between the Cabinet of Ministers and the President, hence the need for formal co-ordination mechanisms between the staff of the Cabinet of Ministers and of the President.

Co-ordination through the policy planning process

Policy co-ordination by the centre is also ensured through the process of preparing key strategic documents, for which input is required from across the administration, with the CoG working to ensure coherence and consistency. The pre-requisite for a well-co-ordinated policy planning system is that there is clarity about the main strategic documents, including the government's work programme, sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, EI strategies, national development plans and more. The ENP East countries have regulations in place that cover the preparation of key strategic documents and that assign responsibility to the CoG for reviewing inputs from line ministries and for ensuring consistency both with the government's overall priorities and vision and consistency across the different strategic documents. This task involves a high degree of consultation both bilaterally, between the CoG and the individual line ministry, and thematically in groups of relevant ministries. This co-ordination is led by sectoral departments of the principal CoG institution, in close co-operation with the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for financial sustainability issues.

While the legal basis for the CoG role in the planning process is clearly defined in each of the five countries (with respect to procedures for preparation and submission, quality control and legal review, consultation with key stakeholders and so on), in practice there are numerous challenges. The main issues with respect to co-ordination of the planning process in the region relate to internal co-ordination of comments within CoG institutions and inconsistencies in the scope of the review process. Nonetheless, the task of aligning and harmonising inputs from line ministries into a coherent annual or multi-annual work plan represents an important aspect of the overall policy co-ordination function and has important consequences for policy development and the effectiveness of the decision-making system in general. Through its role in managing the planning system, the CoG has an important influence on setting targets and deadlines for the legislative programme and on forward planning by the government.

Policy co-ordination with other state bodies

As has already been touched upon, a key aspect of the CoG's co-ordination role is liaison between the executive and other parts of the state, notably the president and the parliament. For example, the AoG in Georgia has systematic consultation with the presidential administration through electronic means, while the SCMU and the ministries in Ukraine usually only have *ad hoc* consultations with the Presidential administration. At the same time, the Ukrainian President and his office have recently become more direct actors in policy development and planning and so co-ordination and consultation are much stronger now than before. Co-ordination between the Council of Ministers/Prime Minister and President is closest in Azerbaijan, where frequent, formal co-ordination between the presidential administration and the ACoM is the norm. The intensity of co-ordination closely correlates with the scope of presidential powers and the areas where the executive powers are shared between the government and the president.

As with many OECD countries, certain strategic functions are the purview of the president and are managed through a presidential secretariat. For example, apart from Moldova, the administration of the president is responsible for formulating international policy and co-ordinating international affairs. In Azerbaijan, the presidential administration is also more intensively involved in managing preparations for sessions of the cabinet (depending on the topics), as well as in whole-of-government strategic planning and government communications. The presidential administration also leads on key strategic initiatives and areas, including through chairing the Economic Council, which deals with the strategic direction of the socio-economic policies of Azerbaijan.

Figure 5. Extent to which the CoG shares functions with the office of the President

Q25. Executive power is shared between the Government and the Presidential administration					
	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
Co-ordinating the preparation of Cabinet meetings	×	✓	×	×	×
Communicating government messages to the public and to other parts of the public administration	×	✓	×	×	×
Human resources strategy for the public administration as a whole	×	×	×	×	×
Designing and implementing reform of the public administration	×	×	×	×	×
Strategic planning for the whole of government	×	×	×	×	×
Risk anticipation and management/strategic foresight for the whole of government	×	×	×	×	×
Preparation of the government programme	×	×	×	×	×
Policy formulation	×	×	×	×	×
Policy analysis	×	×	×	×	×
Policy co-ordination across government	×	×	×	×	×
Regulatory policy	×	×	×	×	×
Monitoring the implementation of government policy	×	×	×	×	×
Relations with sub-national levels of government	×	×	×	×	×
Relations with the Parliament / Legislature	✓	×	✓	×	×
International co-ordination / international policy issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Transition planning and management between an outgoing and incoming government	×	×	×	×	×

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Co-ordination of relations with the parliament has at least three distinct aspects: legislative planning, processing of the government's draft legislation and addressing bills sponsored by the legislature. For all these matters, in many OECD countries, the CoG organises regular meetings with the administration of the parliament at senior level. This practice is also present in the ENP East to some extent. Regular meetings take place, for example, between the ACoM and the *Milli Majlis* (National Assembly) of Azerbaijan to co-ordinate legislative affairs. Similar meetings are held between the CoG and parliament in Georgia and Moldova, but the practice is not formally established in Ukraine or Armenia. At the same time, Ukraine is unusual in having a very large number of laws that are generated by the parliament rather than by the government. The same pattern can be found regarding the practice of providing government opinions on proposals of members of parliament, with the practice less established in Ukraine and Armenia than in the other countries. Finally, providing the parliament with the annual legislative plan of the government is the practice in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, but not in Armenia.

Policy co-ordination with external stakeholders

The obligation to consult external stakeholders and the wider public on new policy proposals is established in all ENP East countries, as it is in OECD countries as well. Furthermore, all country administrations indicated the existence of documents (strategies, directives, manuals, etc.) promoting citizen participation in policy making. Both the scope of what to consult and the main channels of consultation vary in the ENP East region, but as a rule, ministry websites as well as centralised consultation platforms are established to publish draft policy proposals for consultation purposes.²⁸ As was indicated also by OECD countries,

²⁸ For more details on the key characteristics of the country consultation practices, see the World Bank Regulatory Governance data at <https://rulemaking.worldbank.org/en/rulemaking>.

the role of the CoG in promoting and managing public consultation tends to be heavily weighted to (mandatory) consultation on draft laws and regulations and less (below one-third of countries) on upstream policy development or on feedback on policy impact.

While consultations are required for all legal drafts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova, this is not as explicit for Georgia and Ukraine. In Georgia, consultations are prescribed for all policy documents (e.g., policy concepts, strategies, action plans) but only for 20 pre-defined laws in terms of regulation. In Ukraine, the scope is defined by the subject of regulation (including the rights and freedoms of citizens, environmental and administrative services, economic matters, etc.). Apart from centralised consultation websites, the ENP East countries also often have special consultative bodies established for policy dialogue between the government and key stakeholders on the most important policy issues. Such consultation councils exist in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine (where these councils are established thematically, under the different ministries). Furthermore, consultations are also assisted by the development and publication of ministerial annual consultation plans in Ukraine and similar, regular plans in Moldova. This is not a common practice in other ENP East countries.

Table 4. ENP CoGs provide guidance to promote citizen participation in policy making

Question: Do you have a document (e.g. a law, strategy, policy, directive, manual, etc.) that promotes citizen participation in policy making?		
	Yes	No
OECD	21 countries	13 countries
Armenia	x	
Azerbaijan		x
Georgia	x	
Ukraine	x	
Moldova	x	

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

The CoG has a role in consultation management in all ENP East countries. The nature of the involvement of the CoG, however, varies. For example, in Moldova, the CoG is in charge of maintaining the central consultation platform, while in Azerbaijan, the ACoM develops annual reports on consultations and in Ukraine, the SCMU is engaged in promoting citizen participation in policy development. In Armenia, consultation oversight is tasked to the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, the CoG is also the key co-ordinator of the country's wider open governance initiatives in the framework of their Open Government Partnership participation. This is the case in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine²⁹. According to the survey responses of the ENP East country administrations, except for Ukraine, the CoG itself also carries out consultations on various public policies, involving different types of stakeholders and providing feedback to the received comments. This feedback is provided in summary reports of consultations, attached to policy proposals when they are submitted to government decision making. These reports are also usually published on the consultation websites.

²⁹ For further details on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments and progress of the ENP East countries, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org>. As per the latest information available on the OGP website (as of 30 April 2022) the OGP membership of Azerbaijan is currently suspended, while the OGP process is currently on hold in Ukraine.

Figure 6. Consultation by CoG on policy development open to different stakeholder groups

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
Organised civil society or NGOs	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Academic institutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Media/journalists	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Organised professional groups (trade unions, employers/business associations etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Independent state institutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Representatives from the subnational level (e.g. mayors, governors etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Other	No	No	No	NA	Business operators, development partners

Note: Ukraine responded “no” to centre of government directly carrying out consultation on policies.
Source: SIGMA, 2022.

In comparison to OECD country practices, the openness of government decision making in the ENP East countries seem to reflect the better practices. According to the latest OECD CoG survey, well over half of countries surveyed (57%) have an official document promoting citizen participation in policy making, applicable across government. In more than three-quarters (78%) of countries surveyed, the centre carries out some consultation on policies. Where consultation occurs, it is targeted mainly towards the general public (70%) and organised professional groups such as trade unions and business associations (70%) and to a slightly lesser extent (65%) towards academic institutions and organised civil society organisations or NGOs. Of the CoGs that carry out consultation, around two-thirds (65%) provide feedback on the input provided by stakeholders.

Interestingly, from the surveyed ENP East administrations, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova indicated consultations being carried out throughout almost the entire policy cycle, including during the implementation and monitoring of policies. For example, in Georgia, the Policy Planning Decree recommends consultations at each stage of policy cycle and it is mandatory to conduct at least one consultation for the final draft policy document.³⁰ Azerbaijan reported that consultations are focused on the drafting of policies only. In comparison, less than one-third of OECD countries indicated that they consult to the same extent, throughout the whole policy development and implementation cycle.

Table 5. Does the centre of government provide feedback on the input provided by stakeholders involved in this consultation?

	Yes	No
Armenia	x	
Georgia	x	
Ukraine		x
Moldova	x	
OECD	23 countries	6 countries

Source: SIGMA, 2022

³⁰ According to the “Rules of Procedure for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents” approved by the Decree of the Government of Georgia №629 on December 20, 2019, involvement of stakeholders is recommended at each stage of policy cycle, including in situation analysis, development, monitoring and evaluation of policy documents.

Previous SIGMA analysis did not find evidence of systematic policy implementation monitoring and follow-up, let alone the regular involvement of external stakeholders in such processes in Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine. However, recent regulatory changes to policy development (especially strategies and other public policy plans) in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine clearly open the way to more transparent and systematic policy monitoring. When it comes to policy evaluation, the legal frameworks in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine prescribe policy evaluation processes for strategies and other policy plans with the inclusion of external stakeholders³¹, but the regulatory framework in Armenia only requires regular monitoring, not comprehensive policy evaluation. *Ex post* review of regulation is required for selected regulations in Ukraine and also occasionally carried out in Moldova, but not in the other ENP East countries. As has been the case in OECD and EU countries, it seems likely that the role of the CoG in monitoring progress with policy implementation will increase.

³¹ Stakeholder involvement is not explicit in the Ukrainian case but is so in Georgia and Moldova.

3 Ensuring quality decision making

The role of the CoG in review and quality control

The CoG plays a crucial role in establishing an evidence-based environment for government decision making. Governments should make policies on the basis of high-quality, impartial, balanced, reviewed and verified information, presented in a format that helps (non-specialist) policy makers understand the different options and their implications. The key issue for the Centre of Government is the extent to which it takes an active, as opposed to reactive, role in supporting this decision-making process. To ensure that government decisions are made in a transparent manner and that the professional judgement of the administration - including the scrutiny of legal conformity - is taken into account, clear rules must be in place. The role of the CoG is to develop these rules and guarantee that all those involved in the process adhere to the set procedures. These rules need to ensure that all necessary stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their opinion, but also that all relevant units of the CoG itself will have sufficient time to review the submitted proposals.

An effective CoG system sets out rules and provides guidance, but also has the authority to reject submissions. To achieve a high quality of decision making, it is also necessary to set clear criteria for the documents submitted to the government sessions (such as the required documents and expected content of key complementary materials, e.g. the explanatory memorandum, impact assessment or information about the results of the consultation process). It is also necessary to empower the CoG body with the authority and capacity to review the content of the proposals against the set requirements and to take action if the requirements are not met. The CoG body also needs to have the authority to see that policy proposals are in accordance with the government's priorities and other policies.

The basic rules of procedure for the submission of policy proposals are in place in ENP CoGs. Clear rules defining the formal submission requirements as well as the necessary analysis and development processes for various types of documents governments shall take decisions on are generally well-defined in all ENP East countries. Formal, procedural rules for submission of proposals, their review before tabling for government sessions and decision-making processes are set in government rules of procedure.³² For example, the Rules of Procedure of the Government of Armenia define required content of policy proposals, including the supporting documentation attached to draft legal acts and concept documents, the process and deadlines for inter-ministerial consultation, the deadline for submission of materials for the Government agenda, the deliberation process before a draft is tabled for the government session and so on.³³ The only exception is Azerbaijan, where the Rules of Procedure of the ACoM do not prescribe in much detail either the formal submission requirements or their review process. Details related to legal drafting requirements, standards of financial estimations of new policy proposals, impact assessment

³² Armenia: Government Decision No. 667-L, 8 June 2018, on the Rules of Procedure of the Government.

Moldova: Government Decision No. 610, 3 July 2018, on the approval of the Government Regulation.

(https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=119333&lang=ro)

Georgia: Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 54 on Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the Government of Georgia of 7 March 2013.

Ukraine: Decision of the CMU No. 950 of 18 July 2007 on Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the CMU

³³ Rules of Procedure of the Government of Armenia, Articles 10-26.

procedures (where they exist) or the key aspects and processes of consultation of new policy proposals are set in different laws or secondary legislation in all ENP East countries.

The specific role of the CoG and the scope of its review of proposals varies across ENP countries. According to the different legal frameworks, the role of the main CoG body in reviewing submitted materials for government decision making and checking the quality of the proposals is defined rather differently in the various ENP East countries. This variety includes both what they are supposed to review and what actions they can take if errors or omissions are identified in the submitted drafts. However, the right of the CoG to review materials and the opportunity to send back proposals to the proponent institutions in case of identified mistakes or shortcomings are established in all ENP East economies at least with respect to adherence to the formal submission procedures, including the completeness of the proposed documentation for decision making. On the other hand, often, the opinion of the CoG even on such formal aspects of the submission is non-binding to the proponents.

The other aspect of review which is unanimously delegated to the main CoG body is assessing if the proposed policies are in line with the government programme and other government policies. However, in this case, it is more understandable that the opinion of the CoG does not bind the proposers to make amendments, given that interpretation of such alignment can be more debatable than is the case with adherence to formal document preparation and submission obligations. Not surprisingly, decisions prior to the sessions of the government on such policy alignment issues often involve further consultations both with the CoG representatives and often through different pre-Cabinet meeting consultation forums (e.g., thematic policy committees or regular co-ordination sessions of senior government officials).

Table 6. The role of the CoG in reviewing policy proposals in ENP East countries

	<i>Role of the CoG</i>			
	Centre of government reviews	of CoG has authority to return items to Ministry for additional work if criterion is not met	CoG presents a non-binding opinion	This is (also) reviewed by another body
<i>Nature of the CoG review</i>				
That procedures for preparation and presentation are respected	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, GEO, UKR	ARM, UKR
Quality of legal drafting and legal conformity (e.g. constitutionality, plain language drafting, coherence with body of law)	MDA, UKR	MDA, UKR	UKR	MDA (Min Justice)
That a regulation meets regulatory quality standards (public/economic benefits, that benefits outweigh costs, that an impact analysis has been carried out, etc.)	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, UKR	MDA (Min Fin and Env)
That the item is in line with the government programme	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, UKR	MDA (Nation anti-corruption centre)
That the proposed item has been subject to an adequate consultation process (with government and, where relevant, external stakeholders)	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, MDA, UKR	ARM, UKR	MDA (Min Fin)
That adequate costing has been carried out	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, GEO, MDA, UKR	ARM, MDA, UKR	ARM, UKR

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

The main difference in the role of the CoG is the level of authority of the CoG in reviewing. According to information provided to the survey by the country administrations, the key CoG bodies in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova have the widest scope of revision powers for submitted materials. In general, different internal units of the main CoG institution review drafts from different perspectives (sectoral units look at content; legal units look at conformity; protocol units review supporting materials, etc.). Senior management in the CoG will then decide whether or not an item can be tabled or if additional work is required and the head of the CoG communicates this decision to the line ministry. For example, the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Prime Minister in Armenia is authorised to return items to the proposing bodies if they are not aligned with the legislation, the Rules of Procedure of the Government, the Government Programme or existing policies of the Government.³⁴ In Azerbaijan and in Ukraine - even if the key CoG institution has review authorisations - the review powers seem more limited or more intensively shared with other organisations. For example, in Ukraine, the SCMU has the mandate to return proposals that do not comply with the established procedural requirements, but it is not authorised to return proposals on its own initiative if there are issues of substance or when it is evident that the differences between the opinions of relevant authorities have not been dealt with during the inter-ministerial consultation process. In such matters, only the Government Committee is authorised to make the decision on the need to return the draft to the proposing body for further improvement. The decision regarding the return of proposals due to substantial shortcomings cannot be taken at the administrative level.³⁵

As in OECD and EU countries, even where the COG has a strong role, other bodies also provide key specialised input. In terms of legal, regulatory and fiscal conformity, the CoGs of the OECD countries share this audit role with other bodies. Testing fiscal implications is typically the responsibility of ministries of finance; only about a third of the OECD respondents (35%) reported reviewing the costing of items submitted to cabinet. Overall responsibility for regulatory quality and consistency is a shared function in more than half (57%) of countries surveyed, usually with ministries of justice, economy or finance. Furthermore, the review of the quality of impact analysis is also often shared or delegated to other bodies rather than the main CoG institution, as can be seen in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova or Ukraine. In the case of Moldova, additionally, the review of different aspects of impact analyses are not even the focus of one body but are separated by the subject of the impacts under review.

Figure 7. The role of the CoG in reviewing policy proposals in OECD countries

Nature of the review	CoG reviews	CoG has authority to return items to the ministry for additional work if criteria are not met	This is reviewed by another body
That procedures for preparation and presentation are respected	65	68	11
That the item is in line with the Government Programme	57	38	8
That the item has been subject to an adequate consultation process	43	51	8
That quality of legal drafting and conformity are respected	38	57	32
That regulatory quality standards are met	51	49	32
That adequate costing has been carried out	35	38	57

Note: Figures refer to the percentages of OECD countries' CoGs that perform the function

Source: OECD Survey of the Role and Functions of the CoG 2017, published in OECD 2018, *Centre Stage*.

³⁴ Rules of Procedure of the Government of Armenia, Article 13.

³⁵ OECD (2018), SIGMA Baseline Monitoring Report, Ukraine, p. 34; Statute of the SCMU

Assessing the smooth functioning of the system that the ENP CoGs manage would be important in order to ensure that quality is optimised. A key indicator of the CoG as gatekeeper used by SIGMA is the frequency with which texts are returned to sponsoring ministries because of issues with procedure or content. The utilisation of the mandate to send back proposals by the CoG in case shortcomings are identified requiring revision can be analysed only in the case of Moldova and Ukraine. According to the available figures, Moldova sent back around 10% of the submitted proposals after the review of the State Chancellery, while the Ukrainian SCMU has returned at least every fifth proposal it has received for review. It is important to understand the extent to which high numbers reflect an effective gatekeeping function or, on the contrary, suggest a weak system in which guidance and capacity or other issues mean that ministries submit poor quality proposals. Similarly, fewer items returned could indicate that policy proposals are generally well prepared or that the quality control system is not rigorous enough. In practice, minor issues can be dealt with bilaterally without the need to send back proposals. For example, the 10% of rejected proposals mentioned above for Moldova represent those with serious deficiencies that could not be resolved informally.

Figure 8. Effectiveness of the review process in ENP East countries

	Ukraine		Moldova	
	In the 4th quarter of 2019	In the 4th quarter of 2020	In the 4th quarter of 2019	In the 4th quarter of 2020
The number of items submitted by ministries to the Government Office for tabling on government sessions	710	813	269	257
Number of items returned by the Government Office to the ministries (due to lack of professional excellence or legal, budgetary or strategic conformity, etc)	186	147	15	29

Note: For indicator methodology, OECD (2019) *Methodological Framework of the Principles of Public Administration*, OECD, Paris, www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Methodological-Framework-for-the-Principles-of-Public-Administration-May-2019.pdf

Source: SIGMA calculations

Most ENP countries also provide support to ministries to help ensure that proposals are of high quality and respect procedures. Of course, the CoG is usually not only the rule-setter and the gatekeeper of the government to ensure sound, good quality and duly developed policy decision making, but also the chief player in disseminating knowledge and supporting the state institutions in their efforts to elaborate new policy proposals through pro-active guidance and advice on various aspects of policy making. According to the answers provided by the representatives of the ENP East administrations, the AoG in Georgia, the State Chancellery in Moldova and the SCMU in Ukraine all provide guidance to policy proponents either through *ad hoc* consultations (as is the case in Ukraine) or via both pro-actively disseminated methodological guidance and case-by-case advice when different proposals are discussed (as indicated by Georgia and Moldova).

The coverage and level of detail of this guidance for ministries varies. Previous SIGMA analysis in different ENP East countries underlined that guidance documents are more widely available for certain tasks than for others; specifically, the topics of government work planning, legislative drafting and impact analysis (where applicable) are often covered by methodological support, but not so much for the development of sectoral and other strategies or conducting good quality public consultations. For example, in Ukraine guidance is provided on how to submit input to the government priority action plan and for preparing the medium-term fiscal plan, but not on developing sector strategies or reporting on implementation of the

government programme. Furthermore, guidance for developing the content and structure of strategic plans was missing in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.³⁶ However, with recent regulatory changes affecting strategy development, guidance documents supporting such processes are also being developed, as is the case for example in Georgia or Moldova.³⁷

Complementary measures such as training and online document management tools could help to strengthen quality. In addition to written guidance and hands-on advice during policy development, systematic training of civil servants on different aspects of policy making, as well as the application of standardised tools, templates or electronic platforms can also greatly contribute to the overall quality of policy proposals and decision making. Regular, systematic training on legal drafting and other aspects of policy development was not identified in most of the ENP East countries. One exception is Moldova, where professional development programmes are carried out annually, the subject of the courses, which also include a policy development component, are approved by Government, and costs are covered from the national budget³⁸. However, good examples of innovative tools supporting effective decision making do exist in the region: for example, the electronic document management systems in place in Azerbaijan and Georgia. The vast majority of OECD countries (89%) provide pro-active guidance through the CoG. For example, Iceland, Latvia and Norway provide training courses on various aspects of policy making. Other forms of support, including detailed guidelines, exist in almost half of the OECD countries, while more case-by-case advice is provided in others. Templates or electronic forms, supporting more unified policy development are also used in some OECD countries, such as Canada or the Netherlands. ENP CoGs could explore options to broaden and strengthen the support that they provide to line ministries.

The performance of the CoG in ensuring that proposals are sound and well prepared should be regularly assessed. SIGMA Monitoring Reports use a number of indicators to try to identify where the system is working and where it is failing. A rather illustrative proxy to assess the quality of government decision making is the share of new laws requiring amendments soon after their adoption. According to data collected by SIGMA about new laws adopted by the end of 2019 and amended within one year, the quality of new laws and therefore the stability of regulation still requires further improvement. This new data confirms what SIGMA had observed in previous years (in 2018 and 2019) in Armenia, Georgia or Ukraine. Given that the total number of laws behind these figures is rather small, all conclusions should be taken with precaution, but it still worth highlighting that an already high share of new laws needing swift amendments became even higher in Georgia, while in Ukraine, a rather high proportion was successfully reduced to a manageable size.

³⁶ OECD (2018), *SIGMA Baseline Measurement Report, Armenia*; OECD (2018), *SIGMA Baseline Measurement Report, Georgia*; OECD (2015), *SIGMA Baseline Measurement Report, Moldova*; OECD (2019), *SIGMA Baseline Measurement Report, Ukraine*.

³⁷ For example, the government of Georgia adopted Government Ordinance N629 (<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4747283?publication=0>) on Policy Development, Monitoring & Evaluation, annex 11 of this document describes procedures and gives detailed guidance on public consultation requirements in policy development process. The handbook on policy development, monitoring and evaluation which is also part of the abovementioned documents gives definition and guidance for the strategy development process

³⁸ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130052&lang=ru

Table 7. Percentage of laws requiring amendment after one year (based on the Methodological Framework of the Principles of Public Administration)

	Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine
Most recent SIGMA Assessment	0%	44%	43%
SIGMA calculation for 2019/20	18%	67%	6%

Note: For indicator methodology, OECD (2019), *Methodological Framework of the Principles of Public Administration*, OECD, Paris, www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Methodological-Framework-for-the-Principles-of-Public-Administration-May-2019.pdf

Source: SIGMA calculations

The CoG is also responsible for ensuring communication about the activities of government. When it comes to the transparency of government decision-making, in accordance with international good practice, the agendas of the regular sessions of the governments are publicly available in all ENP countries, even before the sessions take place. Following cabinet meetings, decisions of ENP governments are publicly available. These findings indicate a somewhat wider transparency for the work of the executive branch than in several Western Balkan economies, where the agendas of the cabinet meetings are not available publicly in the case of Serbia, for example, and published only after the sessions in North Macedonia. Furthermore, access to the decisions taken by the government is also more limited in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Finally, the effectiveness of the CoG in managing the policy making process should be reflected in better policy outcomes and ultimately higher levels of trust in government. No direct comparison is possible between the results of the quality review processes carried out by the main CoG bodies or other institutions in different countries, including between the ENP East countries and OECD members. However, it is important to highlight that as an important indication of overall satisfaction with the performance of the government machinery, there is regular attention to citizen trust measurements in about half of the OECD countries. While still only a handful of OECD member CoGs are engaged actively in commissioning and processing their own opinion polls, it can be expected that with the increased demands of citizens towards their governments for effective, reliable and predictable decision-making, the attention of the centres supporting the government might gradually pay more attention to analyse such data. It is consequently in the best interest of the ENP East countries to gradually equip their main CoG institutions to be able to successfully manage the different procedural and qualitative requirements for sound policy making as well as to increasingly pay attention to the reflections of the population to how the government functions (i.e., through the proxy measurement of trust in government).

4 The role of the centre of government in policy planning

The CoG plays a key role in ensuring that strategic planning is realistic and coherent across all planning documents, from long-term developmental plans to annual work programmes and sectoral strategies. The development and tracking of central planning documents, including operational plans guiding the work of the government, as well as medium-term financial, sectoral or strategic and cross-sectoral plans (including planning of tasks related to EI or European affairs) is key to ensure that the government can remain focused on the priorities set in its programme and through its other commitments. As a main cross-ministerial co-ordinator and being close to the head of government with the necessary horizontal outreach and convening power, the CoG plays a crucial role in such policy planning. Moreover, the scope of the involvement of the CoG can run from developing or validating a proposal to co-ordinating implementation and monitoring progress with execution. As such, it can be a more or less full policy cycle activity.

Given that sectoral expertise is usually vested in the ministries, the CoG is not always involved in the elaboration of thematic policy plans directly, but usually has an important role in setting the quality standards for planning and ensuring that proposed plans meet these requirements, ensuring that sectoral plans meet unified standards and guaranteeing that interrelated policy plans do not contradict one another. This is key, as poor co-ordination can increase the risk of duplication, inefficient spending, a lower quality of service, or contradictory objectives and targets. The CoG also plays an important role in aligning these plans with the government's shorter-term work programme, which is influenced by various political commitments and international engagements, but that is also based on an amalgam of sectoral programmes and policies. All of these need to be harmonised and integrated as far as is possible.

Analysis of the practices of work planning of the government in the ENP East countries shows different approaches. The main difference is probably the use of annual work plans, as opposed to multi-annual plans. The CoGs of Azerbaijan and Ukraine develop annual work plans, while in Armenia, Georgia or Moldova, if operational planning exists apart from the multi-annual government programme, it consists of multi-annual plans without annual revision.³⁹ Each government can have a preference for a particular approach to planning its work, and as such, regulatory frameworks and procedures are not static. For example, in Moldova, the Government Decision on the planning, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy documents, adopted in June 2020⁴⁰, prescribes the introduction of annual government work planning, but its application has not started yet. The new Rules of Procedure of the Government of Armenia from June 2018⁴¹ regulate the development of five-year Activity Programmes with annual revisions, but regular review of the multi-annual Activity Plan was not systematically practiced in the past years. This work plan is the main connecting element around which the CoG plans its own activities to ensure that the necessary policy documents, draft laws and regulations

³⁹ In Georgia, for example, the Annual Government Work Plan is developed by the AoG but it is not officially adopted by the government and therefore not published.

⁴⁰ Government Decision No 386 of 17 June 2020 on planning, elaboration, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation public policy documents.

⁴¹ Government Decision N 667-L, 8 June 2018, on the Rules of Procedure of the Government.

etc. are being prepared and pass through the government session in a timely manner. While not always responsible for over-ambitious plans, which necessarily include political aspirations as well, the CoG is nonetheless expected to ensure a fairly close alignment between what is planned and what is delivered.

The performance of the CoG in planning the work of the government is not easy to assess, but it is important at least to develop some indicators of good practice. SIGMA's PAR monitoring methodology has developed several indicators that aim to gauge how well the system is functioning. There are proxies that can be used to verify the quality of the operational planning of governments, such as the so-called legislative backlog (the legislative items a government planned for a given year but had to carry forward to the following year), or the consistency between the legislative plan of the government with the government-sponsored laws adopted by the parliament. The high rate of laws proposed by the government for adoption and passed through extraordinary procedures in the parliament may also indicate flaws with timely and considered legislative planning. Given that annual plans, or annual revisions of multi-annual plans, are not available in all ENP East economies and the availability of the operative plans of the governments is not fully ensured, only limited information is available about the quality of operational planning in the ENP East region against such proxies.

Overall, data for the most recent years suggest that performance in this area of operational planning could be improved. Based on the available information, a comparison of 2020 and 2021 operational plans and comparison of laws planned and adopted by the parliaments in 2020 shows that the share of laws carried forward between 2020 and 2021, as well as the rate of laws adopted through extraordinary procedures, are rather high and the consistency of legal plans and actually proposed laws in 2020 is not sufficient. In Armenia, given that the multi-annual plan was not revised between 2020 and 2021, information is only available about the consistency of the originally planned laws and what has been proposed to Parliament by the government, showing that out of 142 proposed laws only 36 (25%) were originally planned. In addition, the Armenian Parliament adopted 141 government-sponsored laws in 2020 out of which 30 (21%) were passed by using expedited procedures. The situation is not much better in Georgia, where comparison of the semi-annual legislative plans of 2020 and 2021 demonstrates a 24% backlog (52 laws appear again in the 2021 plan out of 214 planned laws for 2020). The Parliament adopted 366 laws proposed by the government in 2020 (which is a rather big number in itself) out of which 36 (almost 10%) were adopted in expedited or simplified procedures.⁴² In Ukraine, no direct comparison is possible between the plans of the government and the actual situation in the Assembly, as the annual plan of the government does not indicate the exact titles of laws to be developed and submitted for consideration.

Comparison with previous SIGMA reports suggests that issues relating to planning are persistent and need to be monitored and addressed. Comparison of the 2020 and 2021 annual government work plans however indicate a 30% legislative backlog, as out of 102 legislative initiatives in the 2020 plan, 31 re-appear in 2021. Unfortunately, these problems seem to be persistent as previous SIGMA analysis of Armenia⁴³, Georgia⁴⁴ and Ukraine⁴⁵ indicates similarly large-scale problems with legislative backlog, coherence between plans and actual submission to parliaments or the ratio of the use of extraordinary procedures. Where positive developments can be observed (e.g., reduced rate of the use of extraordinary procedures in Armenia or Georgia or smaller legislative backlog in Georgia) the problems, as observed with the use of more recent data still indicate major problems.

⁴² In line with the current legislation, specifically, Articles 117 and 118 of the Regulations of the Parliament of Georgia.

⁴³ OECD (2019), *Baseline Measurement Report: Armenia*, OECD Paris, <https://sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Armenia-2019.pdf>

⁴⁴ OECD (2018), *Baseline Measurement Report: Georgia*, OECD Paris <https://sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Report-2018-Georgia.pdf>

⁴⁵ OECD (2018), *Baseline Measurement Report: Ukraine*, OECD Paris <https://sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Report-2018-Ukraine.pdf>

Table 8. Quality of legislative planning

		Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine
Legislative backlog	2020/2021	N/A	24%	30%
	Older SIGMA findings	3%	50%	33%
Consistency of legislative plan with submissions	2020	25%	N/A	N/A
	Older SIGMA findings	20%	64%	24%
Use of extraordinary procedures	2020	21%	10%	N/A
	Older SIGMA findings	56%	16%	56%

Source: SIGMA calculations, previous SIGMA monitoring reports

In addition to planning the government's annual work programme and medium-term plans, CoGs are also involved in developing and/or ensuring consistency with longer-term strategies. In terms of long-term planning for the country, all ENP East economies possess such documents, usually for a timeframe of six to ten years, although it also can be for a longer period, as is the case in Armenia, having the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050 as its long-term vision document. The main CoG bodies are all responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategic vision documents, though often, other institutions are also involved, such as the Ministries of Economy or the Administration of the President, in the case of Azerbaijan. The main CoG bodies are also tasked to define whole-of-government strategic priorities and to co-ordinate the design of the long-term whole-of-government strategic plans with line ministries in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova. Furthermore, the main CoG body can mandate line departments with the development of different cross-cutting strategic initiatives in Ukraine and Moldova. In Armenia, the CoG is also in charge of initiating and co-ordinating public consultations on these main strategic plans.

ENP countries report that the CoG plays a lead role in monitoring progress in implementation of priority policies. In the management of the implementation of the whole-of-government strategic priorities, the main CoG bodies are mandated to monitor their implementation and check that the policy proposals of the ministries are aligned to these priorities in all ENP East countries. In addition, in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the CoG bodies can collect implementation reports and evaluate the implementation of the strategic priorities. According to the survey answers, in Armenia and Moldova the CoG can also re-allocate resources to implement the key priorities.

The CoGs in ENP countries play a role in at least some strategic cross-sectoral or priority initiatives. When it comes to the role of the CoG in cross-cutting strategy development and implementation, with the exception of Ukraine, all ENP East country CoG representatives indicated their involvement in managing such cross-cutting issues. The list of such topics is the longest in Armenia, including digitalisation, climate change, anti-corruption, public administration, demography, female empowerment, public investments, international development partner co-ordination. Digitisation is also co-ordinated by the CoG in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, while PAR is mentioned as the cross-cutting topic under the co-ordination of the CoG in Georgia and Moldova (not in Armenia). Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine all have specific units within their CoG institutions dealing with such cross-cutting issues and policy priority management⁴⁶. Similar organisational settings with dedicated units dealing with such tasks is also typical in the majority of the OECD countries, with 19 OECD survey respondents indicating the existence of such departments.

⁴⁶ Such units either have horizontal policy planning functions, like the Programme Expertise Department of the Armenian PMO or the Department of Monitoring and Controlling in the Ukrainian SCoM and the Department for Policy and Priorities Co-ordination in the Moldovan State Chancellery or are tasked with some, specific reforms, like PAR, as is the case in Georgia, with the Public Administration Division under the Policy Planning and Governmental Co-ordination Department of the AoG or as the situation with the Office of a Deputy PM in Armenia.

Table 9. The role of the CoG in strategic policy development in ENP East countries

Question: Regarding the definition and design of whole-of-government national strategies, which of the following are the responsibility of the centre of government?				
	Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
The CoG identifies and defines whole-of-government strategic priorities	X	X		X
The CoG co-ordinates the design of long-term strategic planning with line departments	X	X		X
The CoG mandates line departments to develop long-term strategic plans in different cross-cutting areas	X		X	X
The CoG does not have responsibility in this area				

Note: In Armenia, the centre of government is also responsible for initiating and co-ordinating public discussions

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

In the processes of sectoral strategy development, the ENP East CoGs are also heavily involved. Not only as rule-setters and quality reviewers, but also as key co-ordinators, including being responsible for strategic monitoring. Except for Ukraine, the CoGs are also part of strategy implementation and co-ordination teams. In international comparison, strategic planning is a statutory function of the government in just over half of the OECD countries (in 19 OECD survey responding states). As in 19 OECD economies, the ENP East CoGs are also responsible for ensuring that national strategies are properly financed and respect the financial frameworks (in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova). In this respect, the CoG usually co-ordinates closely with the MoF, as indicated by respondents from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova and/or the line ministries are tasked to ensure that their proposed plans are properly financed (in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine). Furthermore, according to responses from the ACoM in Azerbaijan, there is also a fiscal unit supporting proponents with ensuring the financial viability of their plans.

Table 10. The role of the CoG in strategic priority setting in ENP East countries

	Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
The CoG monitors the implementation of strategic priorities	X	X	X	X
The CoG ensures that line ministries' proposals are linked to the government's overarching priorities	X	X	X	X
The CoG can reallocate resources to meet strategic goals	X			X
The CoG co-ordinates the implementation of strategic priorities		X		X
The CoG collects reports on the implementation of strategic priorities and carries out evaluations		X	X	X

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Analysis of the different regulatory frameworks⁴⁷ for planning revealed various shortcomings with ensuring a comprehensive legal framework for sound medium-term planning. While the main qualitative requirements against different planning documents are mostly established, the typology of various

⁴⁷ The main regulations prescribing key elements of planning in the ENP East countries are: the Armenian Government Decision N 667-L, 8 June 2018, on the Rules of Procedure of the Government and the Protocol Decision of the Government No. N42, 5 October 2017, on Methodical Directive on Preparation, Submission and Monitoring of Strategic Documents Affecting State Revenues and Direct Expenditure; the Azeri Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1294 of 6 March 2021; the Moldovan Government Decision No. 386/2020 of 17 June 2020; the Georgian Government Decree No. 629 of 20 December 2019; the Ukrainian CoM decree No. 377 of 21 April 2021.

documents is mostly partial in the ENP East countries, as not all key medium-term central planning documents are listed and relations between them are not entirely established. This is partly due to the fact that sectoral strategic planning is often handled separately from other, key planning processes, including annual and medium-term budget planning, operative government work planning and planning of European affairs/integration. Except for the regulatory framework in Azerbaijan, the roles of the main CoG bodies are also explicitly defined in relation to ensuring that the prescribed provisions are met as well as monitoring the execution of such plans.

Table 11. Quality of the planning system: what are the main requirements?

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Hierarchy of plans	Yes/Partly	No	Yes	Yes	Partly
Typology of plans	Yes/Partly	Yes/Partly	Yes/Partly	Yes	Yes
Detailed requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partly
Costing requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Given that many of the regulatory frameworks for planning in the ENP East countries are rather new or have recently changed, application of the regulatory provisions cannot be fully assessed yet. However, analysis of sample sector planning documents from 2020 and late 2019⁴⁸ shows substantive shortcomings with the quality of strategic planning. While in most analysed strategic documents proper situation analysis, formation of objectives, substantiation with outcome-level indicators, baseline and target values are in place, the articulation of detailed activities and especially detailed costing of the reforms are often lacking. It can be concluded that the most appropriate and comprehensive strategic planning practice is established in Moldova, where all analysed strategic documents were formulated by clearly and comprehensively, with detailed impact analysis (including cost-benefit assessments for the reforms) and the activities are mostly supplemented with detailed cost estimates for the implementation resource needs. At the other end of the spectrum, the analysed Ukrainian strategic plans are rather vague and general, often without detailed implementation plans and in all cases without proper costing. In Armenia and Georgia, the analysis found mixed results having some rather decent quality strategic documents and others with substantial flaws especially in the formulation of proper outcome-level indicators or defined indicator target values and without sufficiently elaborated implementation costing details. In general, despite the mandate to ensure quality control and the existence of guidelines, there are too many strategic documents that do not respect the required standards. It is also worth mentioning that in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, the focus of any cost indications is limited to stating that the implementation is expected within the established budget limits

⁴⁸ The following strategic documents have been analysed: Armenia: Police Reform Strategy and 2020-22 Action Plan; Strategy on Medium and Small Size Enterprises for 2020-24 and Action Plan for 2020-22; National Strategy on Human Rights Protection and 2020-22 Action Plan; Agriculture Development Strategy 2020-30 and Action Plan for 2020-22; State Revenue Committee 2020-24 Development and Administrative Improvement Strategy. Georgia: Migration Strategy of Georgia (2021-2030); Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia (2020-2023); Air Quality Improvement Action Plan of the City of Rustavi 2020-2022; Decentralisation Strategy 2020-2025. Moldova: Horticulture development program for the years 2021-2025 and the Action Plan on its implementation; Land improvement program in order to ensure the sustainable management of soil resources for the years 2021-2025 and the Action Plan for the years 2021-2023 on its implementation; Radio Spectrum Management Program for the years 2021-2025 and the minimum exposure values of generic frequency blocks for allocation through the competitive selection procedure; The national program for beekeeping development in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2021-2025 and the Action Plan on its implementation for the years 2021-2022; National action plan for 2020 for the implementation of the National Strategy on employment for the years 2017-2021. Ukraine: Strategy for the development of physical culture and sports for the period up to 2028; Strategy of digital transformation of the social sphere; Security strategy of road traffic in Ukraine for the period up to 2024; Anti-organised crime strategy; Regional development strategy for 2021-2027.

or would use only so-called "permitted" financial resources". According to a new methodology in Georgia, a detailed budget annex accompanies each policy document. This annex should provide detailed costing and identify sources of funding. If the specific source of funding is not known, then it is marked as a "gap", but no more than 50% of costs can be labelled as gaps.

The strategic documents may also reveal something about the success of the key CoG institutions in ensuring the quality of strategic planning. While the Moldovan strategies were all elaborated to equal depth, using the exact same structures and analytical methods and the Ukrainian strategies also followed the exact same structure (often also the same, rather vague formulations), in Georgia and Armenia the structure, length, depth of analysis and use of indicators were different for every analysed document, indicating the lack of standards for planning or the lack of application of any standards in practice by the drafters.

5 The role of the centre of government in European integration-related policy making

Given the relations between the ENP East region and the EU, European integration-related activities represent an important component of government policy making in the region and a significant task for the CoG. Ranging from diplomatic activities and political negotiation to legal harmonisation and transposition and alignment of domestic and EI policy planning, EU-related affairs involve key central institutions such as the CoG, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as numerous line ministries, particularly those responsible for competition, agriculture, trade, internal affairs, environment and many others. For the CoG, it combines several functions: policy co-ordination, decision-making support, strategic planning, monitoring and implementation.

With respect to the CoG's role in EI, the approach taken by each country differs, at least in part because of the nature of the relationship with the EU up to the present. Three ENP East countries have had Association Agreements in place for several years. Moldova has been an active member of the European Eastern Partnership since its launch in 2009. An Association Agreement with the EU was signed on 27 June 2014 and ratified by Moldova on 2 July 2014. Ukraine signed an Association Agreement with the EU in June 2014, which came into force fully on 1 September 2017. Georgia signed an EU Association Agreement on 18 July 2014, and it came fully into force on 1 July 2016. The Association Agreements, which include provisions for a free trade area and other requirements for legal harmonisation, have brought significant responsibilities for the central public administration. As such, the three countries have already had five years' experience of putting in place mechanisms for co-ordination and management of EI.

The other two ENP countries have "lower level" agreements with the EU. Armenia has a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the European Union. The Agreement provides a framework for strengthening and deepening co-operation between the EU and Armenia and identifies a number of areas for reform including public administration, though with fewer binding requirements. Azerbaijan has a Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with the EU, which came into effect on 1 July 1999 and remains in place. These Partnership agreements are less detailed and imply less work on the part of the public administration as they require less adjustment of domestic regulations and laws.

The situation of the region in relation to the EU changed significantly in 2022. On 28 February 2022, five days after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine presented its application for membership of the EU. During the EU Summit on 23 June 2022, the Council granted Ukraine EU candidate status. On 3 March 2022, Moldova officially applied for EU membership and on 16 June 2022 the European Council recommended that Moldova should be granted candidate status. Also on 3 March 2022, Georgia applied for EU membership and in June 2022 the European Council indicated that it is ready to grant candidate country status to Georgia once the priorities specified in the European Commission's opinion on Georgia's application have been addressed. This means that the process of strengthening the legal and regulatory alignment between the countries and the EU that had already started through the Association Agreements will now accelerate and intensify.

A SIGMA review of the role and functions of the CoG in the Western Balkans⁴⁹ highlighted the impact of EI on the activities of the CoG as the nature of the integration changes over time. In general, existing structures come under increasing pressure in terms of workload and technical requirements and systems need to be overhauled and strengthened accordingly. In terms of allocation of responsibility, as the relation with the EU goes beyond a mainly political relationship, responsibilities are transferred away from foreign affairs and/or economy towards either a specific EU department or to the CoG. This allows resources and expertise to be developed that are more in line with a function that is legal/administrative rather than diplomatic. Moreover, within the institutions that now deal with EI-related issues, rules of procedure and regulations need to be developed that are adequate for the complexity of the new tasks. ENP East countries are in the early stages of this process.

The ENP East countries have taken somewhat different approaches to managing EU-related issues so far, largely because of the nature of the relationship with the EU. As shown in the table, the CoG is the lead institution for EU-related issues in Ukraine and Armenia, while in the other countries EI functions are shared across several institutions.

Figure 9. The role of the CoG in European integration/European Affairs in ENP East countries

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova
Overall daily co-ordination of European Integration (EI)/European Affairs	●	◐	◐	●	◐
Planning of EI, including costing of reforms	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Monitoring country preparations for the EI process, including preparation of reports on EI policies	◐	◐	◐	●	◐
Co-ordinating alignment of national legislation with the EU <i>acquis</i> (including quality assurance/legal scrutiny of draft proposals from harmonisation perspective)	○	◐	◐	●	◐
Co-ordinating planning and overall monitoring of EU assistance	●	◐	◐	●	◐
Co-ordinating accession/integration-related negotiations	◐	◐	◐	●	◐

○	Not relevant/applicable
◐	This comes under the responsibility of another body
◑	CoG shares this responsibility with another body
●	CoG has primary responsibility in this area

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

In Ukraine, the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration (GOEEAI) is the key institution assigned the CoG functions related to EI. Its statute foresees responsibility for overall daily co-ordination of EI, planning of EI-related actions, monitoring country preparations for the EI process and co-ordinating alignment of national legislation with the EU *acquis*, as well as co-ordinating the planning and overall monitoring of EU assistance.⁵⁰ In Armenia, the CoG also plays the central role in co-ordinating EU affairs, including co-ordinating and monitoring EU assistance and co-ordinating negotiations. In the other countries, the CoG generally plays a more limited role, with the lead actor being the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moldova and Georgia and the Ministry of Economy in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, when it comes to the harmonisation of regulations with the European requirements (the EU *acquis*) or the management of EU funds, other bodies are also involved, including bodies in charge of legal harmonisation and ministries of finance. In all three countries, the CoG oversees alignment of EU-related legislation with domestic legislation and alignment of policy planning more generally.

⁴⁹ Vági, P. and K. Kasemets (2017), "Functioning of the Centres of Government in the Western Balkans", SIGMA Papers, No. 53, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2bad1e9c-en>.

⁵⁰ Decision of the CMU No. 346 of 13 August 2014 on Adoption of the Statutes of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration; Statute of the GOEEAI, chapters 3 & 4.

Currently, with the exception of Ukraine, the systems appear somewhat fragmented and continue to treat EI issues as a foreign policy issue rather than one with significant cross-government policy co-ordination and strategic planning dimensions, as well as sector-specific technical aspects.

In Ukraine, the GOEEAI, within the SCMU, has in place a system for preparation of EI-related materials and cross-ministerial consultation and legal review. The Rules of Procedure of the SCMU contain instructions on how to ensure alignment between the proposed Ukrainian legislation and the EU *acquis* and these instructions are supported by methodological guidelines developed by the GOEEAI. The SCMU has also adopted detailed regulations that stipulate the processes for EI planning, for monitoring the implementation of plans and for translating the *acquis*. The latest SIGMA review concluded that all functions were clearly assigned and that co-ordination was good. At the same time, the GOEEAI has not been a strong unit within the SCMU and plays a relatively technical role. It has struggled recently with staffing and leadership. As such, despite playing a strong role on paper, its actual impact in ensuring a joined-up approach to EI-related policy making is more limited. Given this historical situation, the GOEEAI will remain an important actor in the overall system of EI policy development, but is not the only or even the lead actor in terms of policy development and direction, and is perhaps unlikely to be the driver of an expanded EI agenda.

In Moldova, in contrast, primary co-ordination of EU-related issue rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including not only diplomatic issues and negotiation but also EI policy planning, including preparation of key planning documents. The Ministry of Justice checks compliance of draft laws with the Constitution and legal precedent. Finally, the State Chancellery is responsible for checking compliance of draft laws with EU *acquis* and co-ordinating preparation of all policy documents EXCEPT those relating to EI. As the volume of work increases, it is more and more difficult to ensure that opinions are consistent across different institutions and that decisions taken by one body do not contradict those of another. Another important issue is human resource capacity. Ministries of foreign affairs are not always able to mobilise the technical expertise that is required to manage EI-related policy planning that is often focused on highly technical matters such as commercial law, technical specifications or product labelling. In Georgia, the regulatory framework clearly defines the main roles and responsibilities of key government institutions in the EI process, and it establishes most of the critical functions required for effective co-ordination and management of the EI process. The regulations also establish the various roles and tasks of the Ministry of Justice, the AoG and the Office of the State Minister for EEAI for the alignment of national legislation with the EU *acquis*. Political dialogue between the EU and Georgia is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latest SIGMA assessment found that while all functions were clearly assigned, co-ordination was problematic.

The debate over the way that EI policy should be managed has been given significant momentum by the announcement of candidate status for Ukraine and Moldova and the request from Georgia. The systems in the three countries are not ideal and there are decisions to be made on how to improve them in the face of heightened political interest, not to mention a rapidly increasing workload. The objectives from a management perspective are relatively clear – better co-ordination, more effective use of resources – but it may take some time for political forces to arrive at clear decisions on how structures and processes will evolve.

Irrespective of the approach taken, there are some key processes that the EI-policy system will need to manage effectively.

As mentioned above, one element of EI policy that is managed by the CoG in all five countries is alignment of EI policy with domestic plans.⁵¹ Overall, plans relating to EI in the ENP East countries follow a rather

⁵¹ For example, in Georgia, in co-ordination with the AoG, ensuring the harmonisation of legislation with international agreements and regulations is one of the key functions of the Ministry of Justice.

similar logic: they list commitments arising from the agreements with the EU, identify implementation deadlines and responsible institutions. The implementation of these activities, however, is not presented in detail and is not costed. Usually, plans related to EI are designed for the medium-term, covering three to five years and they are not revised annually. (Georgia is an exception, with annual European Integration National Action Plans.) The main challenge is how to align the actions included in the plans with domestic planning documents, which are usually developed by a different unit or even a different institution. SIGMA Monitoring Assessments for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have each highlighted the lack of alignment between EI-related plans and government work programmes and sectoral strategies. This is partly because the timelines are not aligned and partly because of a lack of ownership. Up to now, the EI planning process has struggled to get political attention, and the political level and technical level planning committees that are supposed to guide the preparation of EI-related plans and ensure coherence across policy planning documents meet infrequently or not at all. Given that the plans are multi-annual, they often generate significant carry over from one year to the next without revision and there are examples of periods when no plan is in force. This is the case in Moldova, where the 2017-2019 plan (known as the NAPIAA) has not been followed yet by a new multi-annual plan, although it is under preparation.

Another important issue for the CoG in this area is to provide support and guidance for line ministries on how to prepare EI-related documents, how to approach transposition and other tasks that require a strong knowledge of EU legal and administrative issues. For example, in Ukraine, regulations and methodological guidelines developed by the SCMU/GOEEAI support the line ministries and central executive bodies in the EI process. The Rules of Procedure of the CMU include instructions on aligning the proposed Ukrainian legislation and the EU *acquis* and these instructions are supported by technical methodological guidelines developed by the GOEEAI. In addition, training and capacity development efforts are in place to try to ensure that staff have the skills required to navigate EI-related processes. Similar efforts will be required in each of the ENP countries to ensure that the line ministries provide high-quality inputs to the EI planning process and that sector strategies and other planning documents are well aligned with the EI plans.

In light of the dynamic changes in the EU partnership and EI processes and especially the recent turmoil in the region, it is not surprising that the planning of EU matters still suffers from shortcomings. Given the importance of these processes, it can be assumed that the main CoG bodies will become gradually more involved in EI-planning or the quality assurance of such plans and the co-operation between different bodies in charge of the key CoG functions (including the management of EU affairs) will be strengthened in the near future.

Annex A. Case study: the role of the CoG in the COVID-19 crisis management and recovery

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, CoGs across the world were directly involved in co-ordinating government responses.⁵² The global pandemic shed light on the importance of cross-governmental response co-ordination, risk mapping and swift risk mitigation as well as the need for a co-ordinated strategy for recovery. The capacity of the CoG to play this role, whether it was already the main risk and crisis management body or not, is a good gauge of how agile and resourceful the CoG structure is.

With the exception of Georgia, the ENP East country CoGs are not defined as the primary institutions dealing with whole-of-government risk anticipation, management and strategic foresight. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic required the key CoG institutions of all ENP East economies to be at the forefront of co-ordinating the government response to the crisis.

Before exploring the role of the CoG in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery efforts undertaken to mitigate its consequences, it is also important to note that the ENP East countries were not only affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the same, two-year period, they were also affected by territorial instability, regional conflicts and various political crises. In this context, the impact of the global pandemic cannot be fully separated from the influence of these other factors.

According to WHO COVID-19 data⁵³, all ENP East countries were severely hit by the pandemic both in terms of infections and deaths, while vaccination rates remained below - often way below – the levels in other countries.

⁵² OECD (2021) "Role of centres of government in the response to COVID-19" in *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.

⁵³ As accessed on 7 May 2022 at <https://covid19.who.int>.

Figure 10. Overview of COVID-19 data for ENP East countries, as of May 2022

Situation by Region, Country, Territory & Area					
Name	Cases - cumulative total	Cases - cumulative total per 100,000 population	Deaths - cumulative total	Deaths - cumulative total per 100,000 population	Persons fully vaccinated with last dose of primary series per 100 population
Global	513,955,910	6,593.79	6,249,700	80.18	59.46
 Ukraine	5,002,870	11,439.38	108,411	247.89	34.65
 Georgia	1,655,221	41,492.82	16,811	421.42	29.11
 Azerbaijan	792,599	7,817.19	9,709	95.76	47.77
 Republic of Moldova	517,753	12,834.85	11,503	285.15	26.27
 Armenia	422,874	14,270.69	8,622	290.97	33.33

Source: WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, <https://covid19.who.int>

From an economic angle, all of the ENP East countries suffered serious disruption due to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-21 and, as such, governments were under strong pressure to develop coherent recovery plans.

Table 12. Annual GDP growth rates (%) in the ENP East countries, the OECD and the EU

	2020
Armenia	-7.4
Azerbaijan	-4.3
Georgia	-6.8
Moldova	-7.0
Ukraine	-4.0
OECD	-4.5
EU	-6.0

Source: Data from the World Bank and the EIU.⁵⁴

The institutional response of the CoGs in ENP East countries reflects the need to adapt structures and working practices to meet an unprecedented and untypical demand for CoG co-ordination. Except for Ukraine, responding to the COVID-19 crisis required the CoG bodies to establish a special unit or co-ordinator within their structures and take on new responsibilities (or expand their existing responsibilities) related to risk management or policy analysis. Furthermore, new communication protocols or guidelines had to be arranged in relation to the pandemic in order to reassure the population and to mitigate the threat of disinformation. Apart from Azerbaijan, the ENP East CoG officials also indicated the need to establish new protocols related to data management to manage the use and storage of personal data. The State Chancellery of Moldova and the AoG of Georgia also reported an increase in cross-ministerial co-ordination forums that required their management or input, often with the involvement of a

⁵⁴ The World Bank GDP growth data as accessed on 9 May 2022 at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>; latest Economic Intelligence Unit analyses as accessed on 9 May 2022 at: <http://country.eiu.com/allcountries.aspx>.

wider stakeholder audience (e.g., scientists, business partners, etc.) than usual. Interestingly, the CoGs (with the exception of Armenia) reported that these new or expanded functions were addressed without an accompanying increase in staff numbers. A similar pattern can be seen in surveyed OECD member countries and partners⁵⁵, with a majority of countries indicating increases in demand for CoG involvement in cross-ministerial co-ordination and co-ordination with non-government actors. In some countries, however, for example in Austria, Poland and Finland, increased demand for the work of the CoG to mitigate the crisis was paired with an increase in the staffing and resources of the main CoG bodies.

Just as in most OECD countries, the ministries of health economy appear as regular co-operation partners of the CoG in COVID-19 crisis management and/or recovery processes. In addition to these bodies, ministries of social affairs, the ministry in charge of emergencies as well as ministries of education are also indicated as partners of the CoG in different stages of the crisis management. Co-ordination of the financial aspects of the COVID-19 crisis management and the recovery efforts were co-ordinated with ministries of finance in the ENP East countries either by utilising existing, formal co-ordination mechanisms (in Georgia and Azerbaijan) or in a more *ad hoc* manner (as was the case in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine).

The extension of co-ordination and consultation to non-government actors (experts, scientists, NGOs, etc.) was a new feature of the responses to the pandemic, and one that will continue to influence the work of the CoG. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova all expect that extended stakeholder co-ordination arranged by the CoG, including with scientists, NGOs, or business associations, will remain the practice. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine also anticipate that changed data management protocols will remain in place. Azerbaijan indicated that the special unit in charge of managing the COVID-19 response would also remain operational for the foreseeable future, while other countries indicated that the special units or staff would be reassigned. This is in line with the results of the same survey of OECD countries, which confirmed the expectation that special CoG units managing COVID-19, changed data management protocols for COVID-19 related data or wider groups of stakeholders participating in co-ordination meetings organised by the CoG would remain in place.

⁵⁵ Data used for this analysis come from the OECD survey “Building a resilient response: the role of Centre of Government in the management of the COVID-19 crisis and future recovery efforts” which was conducted between January and March of 2021.

Figure 11. What changes has the CoG experienced in its structure, functioning and/or responsibilities since the COVID-19 outbreak?

	Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova	OECD	EU
Increased number of cross-ministerial co-ordination instances to which the CoG has to provide support (e.g. by preparing agendas)	No	Yes	No	Yes	19	15
A special unit or co-ordinator within the CoG has been created to respond to COVID-19	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	12	11
More stakeholders (e.g. scientific experts, business associations, CSOs) participate in the coordination meetings called by the CoG	No	Yes	No	Yes	20	16
New or increased responsibilities (for example over risk management, policy analysis, etc.)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	13	8
New protocols/guidelines on communication and to combat disinformation/misinformation about the COVID-19 disease	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	18	16
New protocols to support better data management regarding the COVID-19 disease	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	12	10
Change in the number of staff working for CoG (indicate if increase or decrease)	No	No	No	No	7	7
Change in the staff skill set	Yes	No	No	Yes	4	4
Change in the resources available for the CoG (indicate if increase or decrease)	Yes	No	No	No	8	8
Change in the number of topics in the CoG's portfolio (indicate if increase or decrease)	No	No	No	No	9	9

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

On the other hand, both Georgia and Moldova stated that the capacities of their CoGs for future crisis monitoring and evaluation have already increased as a result of the pandemic, while Ukraine indicated that such capacities were already in place at the CoG before the pandemic and these remained unchanged. Armenia is currently considering increasing the capabilities of its main CoG body in this respect. Most of the OECD responses to a similar question suggest a clear strengthening of government risk-preparedness capacity, with, in most cases, the strong involvement or leadership of their main CoG institution.

When asked about the main difficulties faced by the CoG when the COVID-19 crisis hit, ENP East countries highlighted the lack of regulations allowing flexibility to governments to respond to the crisis rapidly. Another challenge was the absence of appropriate structures to respond to the situation in a sufficiently co-ordinated manner across the government and between different levels of government. In addition, both Armenia and Georgia indicated issues with allocating the appropriate staff to the CoG to support its role in co-ordinating the government response to the COVID-19 crisis and the difficulty of defining clear roles between existing and new bodies. Finally, both Armenia and Ukraine mentioned difficulties with the lack of a unified government narrative and poor communication with the population, which was a problem also frequently raised by OECD country CoGs, and particularly challenging with respect to efforts to increase vaccination rates.

Figure 12. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, what issues did the CoG identify as the most challenging in view of co-ordinating the responses across government?

	Armenia	Georgia	Ukraine	OECD	EU
Lack of appropriate laws and regulations (e.g. decrees) to allow the executive government enough flexibility to respond to the crisis	Yes	Yes	No	15	13
Lack of appropriate structures (e.g. task forces, co-ordination bodies) and/or roles (e.g. national coordinator) to coordinate the response across the government	Yes	Yes	No	14	10
Lack of appropriate structures to co-ordinate the response across levels of government	Yes	Yes	No	10	6
Overlaps in responsibilities between pre-existing and/or new structures and/or roles	Yes	Yes	No	5	5
Lack of appropriate structures and/or arrangements to exchange data and information between public institutions	Yes	Yes	No	11	10
Lack of protocols and structures to obtain and review expert/scientific evidence	Yes	No	No	11	9
Lack of unified narrative across the government and/or lack of coherence in communications with the population	Yes	No	Yes	12	8
Competing priorities between institutions (e.g. among central/federal ministries, between local governments and central/federal government)	Yes	No	No	9	5
Gaps in/overlaps of tasks between institutions for rolling-out emergency responses (e.g. among central/federal ministries, between local governments and central/federal government)	Yes	No	No	9	8
Difficulty in re-allocating CoG staff to coordination of the COVID-19 response	Yes	Yes	No	1	1

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Like the majority of OECD countries, the strategic plans and the financial framework defining the working environment of the government had been aligned to respond to the COVID-19 crisis through meetings involving the whole cabinet in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, while these alignments were made through discussions and technical co-ordination within the CoG in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Other methods, such as *ex ante* review and approval of the ministry of finance or direct discussions between the head of the CoG and the minister of finance, were not used in any of the surveyed ENP East countries.

The ENP East countries also used different ways to inform or consult the different stakeholders about the strategies designed to mitigate both the pandemic and then the recovery efforts. As a minimum, all ENP East governments had campaigns explaining the crisis response strategies to the population, but Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine also indicated more active engagement of stakeholders and participatory approaches. Communication of the crisis response strategies and consultation about their design, along with consulting the recovery plans, were also practices widely used by the CoGs in OECD economies.

Figure 13. What type of stakeholder participation processes have been used during the COVID-19 crisis?

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Ukraine	Moldova	OECD	EU
Campaigns to inform stakeholders about the design of the strategies for the response to the COVID-19 crisis	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	18	14
Use of consultation mechanisms to involve stakeholders in the design of the strategies for the response to the COVID-19 crisis	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	20	15
Use of engagement mechanisms to actively involve stakeholders in the design of the strategies for the response to the COVID-19 crisis	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	9	7
Campaigns to inform stakeholders about the design of the strategies for the recovery period.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	16	14
Use of consultation mechanisms to involve stakeholders in the design of the strategies for the recovery period	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	19	16
Use of engagement mechanisms to actively involve stakeholders in the design of the s strategies for the recovery period	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	9	8

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Based on answers from Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, the role of the CoG in designing and managing the recovery efforts includes the design of the overall recovery plan and definition of the recovery priorities, as well as co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of these plans, but also the management of communication efforts related to the recovery plans of the government. Evaluation of the recovery policies or defining the guidelines for recovery planning is tasked to the CoG in Georgia and Moldova, but not in Armenia. Conducting *ex ante* reviews of recovery plans is not a task for the main CoG body in any of these countries. The wide and rather comprehensive mandate indicated by these three ENP East countries seems to be even more ambitious than what is seen in most of the OECD survey respondents to similar questions. For example, recovery plan evaluation is tasked to only 6 OECD respondent CoGs, as opposed to defining the key recovery priorities, which is within the purview of the CoG in 17 OECD countries.

Figure 14. Is the centre of government responsible for cross-government strategic planning to support recovery efforts?

If so, is it responsible for:

	Armenia	Georgia	Moldova	OECD	EU
Identifying the priority areas for the recovery efforts	Yes	Yes	Yes	17	12
Selecting / shortlisting the priority policies/programmes to be implemented	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	12
Designing the overall recovery plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	12	10
Providing ex-ante reviews of the overall recovery plan	No	No	No	6	5
Establishing the main directives/guidelines for the design of the recovering plans	No	Yes	Yes	13	11
Coordinating the implementation of the recovery plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	12
Monitoring the implementation of the recovery plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	13	9
Evaluating the recovery plans	No	Yes	Yes	6	5
Communicating (or coordinating the communication) of the implementation of the plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	12

Source: SIGMA, 2022.

Annex B. Key documents and regulations

Key documents establishing the CoG

Armenia

Law on the Government Structure and Activity HO-253-N, 23 March 2018; Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No. 564 L, 25 May 2018 on the Charter of the Office of the Prime Minister (Statute of the OPM).

Government Decision No. 667-L, 8 June 2018, on the Rules of Procedure of the Government.

Georgia

Law on the Government -- Law on the Structure, Powers and Rule of Activity of the Government of Georgia (Law on Government) No. 3277 of 11 February 2004.

Moldova

Constitution of 29 July 1994, Official Gazette No. 1, 12 August 1994.

Law on the Government -- Law No. 64 on the Government, 31 May 1990, Articles 58, 20,25,26,30 and 31, replaced by Law No. 136/2017 on the Government

Law on Central Specialised Public Administration -- Law No. 98 on Central Specialised Public Administration, 4 May 2012, Articles 5,16,

Law on the Acts of Government and Other Central and Local Public Administration Authorities -- Law No. 317, 18 July 2003, Article 28, 68,75, Replaced by Law No. 100/2017 on normative acts.

Ukraine

Constitution of Ukraine, approved by the Parliament on 28 June 1996.

Law on the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (LCMU) -- Law No. 794-VII, approved by the Parliament on 27 February 2014.

Key regulations that cover the actions of the CoG***Armenia***

Government Decision No. 667-L, 8 June 2018, on the Rules of Procedure of the Government.

Georgia

Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 54 on Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the Government of Georgia of 7 March 2013.

Ukraine

Decision of the CMU No. 950 of 18 July 2007 on Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the CMU

Statutes of the principal CoG institutions in ENP East countries:***Georgia***

Ordinance of the Government of Georgia No. 626 on Confirmation of the Statute of the Administration of the Government of Georgia of 19 November 2014

Moldova

Government Decision No. 657 on Regulations of Organisation and Functioning of the State Chancellery, its Structure and Numerical Limitations, 6 November 2009, Article 724, Official Gazette No. 162/2009, 10 November 2009.

Ukraine

Decision of the CMU No. 850 of 12 August 2009 on Adoption of the Statute of the SCMU.

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SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union (EU), principally financed by the EU. SIGMA has been working with partner countries on strengthening public governance systems and public administration capacities since 1992.

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¹ Footnote by the European External Action Service and the European Commission: this designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the European Union Member States on this issue