



ROAD MAP FOR IMPROVEMENT OF ACCREDITATION AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

REPORT

FINAL

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DATA

Author(s): Sandro M. Shelia, American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Reviewed By: Nino Chokheli, BEE Regulatory Environment Supervisor

Chris Thompson, BEE Component Leader

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this assignment is to analyze the current status of accreditation and conformity assessment system in Georgia and present a concrete, integrated, and actionable Road Map for improvement of these systems. As a result of this improvement, Georgian products would be able to be tested and certified locally and cost effectively in accordance with international standards by duly accredited conformity assessment bodies (CABs), such as laboratories and product certification bodies that are, in turn, accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body. Such an outcome would directly boost export competitiveness of Georgian products on U.S., European, and other markets by reducing the accreditation-related nontariff barriers (NTBs) for Georgian products as well as significantly foster improvement in general quality.

Since Georgian Accreditation Center (GAC) is not currently a signatory of International Accreditation Forum's (IAF) multilateral agreement (MLA), ANSI will be invited to conduct assessments and accredit several of the most promising certification bodies and laboratories. Furthermore, based on the value chain analysis conducted earlier by the Economic Prosperity Initiative (EPI) project as well as the analysis of one of the best potential impact, it was decided to focus on the food sector.

This Road Map was developed based on research of available materials, time spent on the ground meeting with key stakeholders, as well as the experience and knowledge of the author. It calls for timed and interrelated activities along the major three tracks:

1. Education, Consulting and Assistance. This track would entail critically needed capacity building for GAC and the Georgian CABs and other related interested parties. This includes a GAC study tour visit to the United States, including meetings with ANSI staff and U.S. officials, observation of ANSI assessments of product certifiers and laboratories, ANSI assessor training for GAC staff, workshops on U.S.-focused implementation of the related international standards, direct consulting for product certifiers and laboratories, as well as assistance with achieving and maintaining ANSI accreditation.

2. ANSI Accreditation. ANSI would conduct a preassessment of several third-party laboratories and third-party product certification bodies that are already accredited by the GAC and have food products in their scopes. Based on the results of these preassessments, EPI will choose one of each and subsidize a full accreditation assessment mission by ANSI. GAC staff will be able to attend these assessments as observers and build their professional capacity. Some of the GAC staff can be potentially qualified as ANSI assessors themselves, which will support the third track described below.

3. International Participation and Recognition. GAC would significantly benefit from international recognition by IAF and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), the same way ANSI is. This track would entail attendance of IAF/ILAC and Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) plenary sessions with guidance from ANSI staff, membership in these entities, application for PAC MLA and APLAC mutual recognition agreement (MRA), subsequent joint peer evaluation of GAC by PAC and APLAC, ANSI direct assistance to GAC with corrective actions, and eventual achievement by GAC of PAC MLA and APLAC MRA status.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANS	American National Standard
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
APLAC	Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CB	Certification Body
EA	European Accreditation
EPI	Economic Prosperity Initiative
GAC	Georgian Accreditation Center
GEOSTM	Georgian National Agency for Standards, Technical Regulations and Metrology
GFSI	Global Food Safety Initiative
IAAC	Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MLA	Multilateral Agreement
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement

NTB	Nontariff barrier (to trade)
PAC	Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this assignment is to analyze the current status of accreditation and conformity assessment system in Georgia and present a concrete, integrated, and actionable Road Map for improvement of these systems. As a result, Georgian products would be able to be tested and certified *locally and cost effectively* in accordance with international standards, by duly accredited CABs, such as laboratories and product certification bodies that are, in turn, accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body. Such outcome will directly boost export competitiveness of Georgian products in U.S., European, and other markets by reducing the accreditation-related NTBs for Georgian products as well as significantly foster improvement in their general quality.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

In the international arena, the standardization process is facilitated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). There are well-known and internationally accepted standards for various types of CABs as well as the accreditation bodies themselves. Furthermore, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) offer mechanism for multilateral recognition among the accreditation bodies. In general, developed countries and companies purchasing products within those countries require that the products are certified by CABs that are accredited by the accreditation bodies that possess the recognition of IAF and ILAC.

GAC

Accreditation services for CAB are offered in Georgia by the GAC, a semi-independent agency founded in 2005 under the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development.

GAC strives to operate in accordance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 and currently offers accreditation programs for product certification bodies, laboratories, vehicle inspection centers, personnel certification bodies, quality management systems certification bodies, and inspection bodies. However, GAC is currently not a signatory to IAF or ILAC mutual recognition agreement.

METHODOLOGY

This Road Map was prepared on the basis of study of the relevant materials, information collected on site in Tbilisi, Georgia during two separate visits, interviews with relevant staff, as well as the author's prior knowledge and experience in the area of accreditation, conformity assessment, and international development within this field.

As major components of the Road Map were conceived, these ideas were actively shared with the stakeholders, including the EPI project manager, BEE component leader, deputy component leader, communications manager, and other EPI staff; USAID staff; relevant Georgian government officials, GAC general director, and other staff; ANSI staff; and technical specialists. Progress updates were offered during EPI's weekly meetings with USAID as well as biweekly meetings with the Advisor to Georgia's Prime Minister. As a

result, the development process was transparent and upon completion of the site visits conducted by the consultant all the proposed components and individual projects within the Road Map were well understood by the stakeholders.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

In preparing this Road Map, the consultant reviewed a range of materials and publications recommended by the original statement of work. These materials include EPI's own publications as well as previously conducted studies, GAC documentation, and IAF/ILAC documents.

ON-SITE VISITS, INTERVIEWS, AND WORKSHOPS

The consultant conducted two separate on-site visits to Tbilisi for a total of 10 working days on the ground in mid-July and at the end of August 2011. During the visits, the consultant interviewed over 25 stakeholders and industry players, including EPI staff, GAC staff, local CAB representatives, and others. Five product certification bodies and laboratories were visited.

The consultant conducted two workshops during the visits to Tbilisi, which covered the U.S. standards system, the ISO/IEC 17011 standard for accreditation bodies, and its implementation for ANSI. These workshops were attended by GAC staff and other invited guests.

THE ROAD MAP

Georgia needs to have a competitive field of CABs that comply with appropriate international standards and are accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body that is a signatory of IAF and ILAC MLAs and MRAs.

Since Georgia's accreditation body, GAC, is not currently such a signatory, accreditation to Georgian CABs must be offered by another accreditation body, such as ANSI. At the same time, GAC needs assistance to obtain signatory status so that in the future, internationally recognized accreditation for CABs in Georgia can be offered cheaper and locally. The ultimate objective is to achieve a level of development in Georgia where there exist multiple, local, competent, robust conformity assessment bodies whose accreditations, certifications, and reports are recognized internationally as equivalent to those produced by their western counterparts from the developed world.

For the purpose of this Road Map, it was jointly decided by EPI, the consultant, and the GAC to narrow the focus on a specific, manageable area where improvement would have the most tangible and immediate results. Based on EPI's Value Chain Assessment, as well as an analysis of best potential impact within the context of EPI support, this Road Map focuses on food sector, helping Georgia to achieve competitiveness as an exporter and boosting the overall economic development in the country where agriculture plays a key role. Therefore, the Road Map addresses product certification bodies and laboratories that certify and test food produce.

In Georgia, there are currently eight third-party product certification bodies and 12 laboratories that are already accredited by GAC and include food products in their scopes of accreditation. These CABs represent the overall pool for potential ANSI accreditation at the earlier stage of the process prescribed by the Road Map.

At a later and equally important stage, with primary focus on product certification and laboratories, the specific tangible objective of the Road Map is the achievement by GAC of obtaining IAF/ILAC MLA signatory status for Product Certification Accreditation under ISO/IEC Guide 65 (soon to be replaced by ISO/IEC 17065) and Laboratory Accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025. It is proposed that, in the scope of this project, Georgia explore the MLA route via PAC MLA for Product Certification and the APLAC MRA for Laboratories. The recent addition to the PAC MLA of the Kazakhstan accreditation body and the addition to APLAC MRA of Pakistan and Russia accreditation bodies show that PAC and APLAC can be an attractive compliment to European Accreditation (EA).

The proposed Road Map consists of specific events and activities, all of which logically build up to the achievement of the stated objective. These events and activities are proposed to be undertaken in a sequential manner and are organized in three interrelated and concurrent tracks:

1. EDUCATION, CONSULTING, AND ASSISTANCE

This track entails critically needed capacity building for GAC and the Georgian conformity assessment bodies and other related interested parties. This includes a GAC study tour visit to the United States, including meetings with staff and U.S. officials, observation of ANSI assessments of product certifiers and laboratories, ANSI assessor training for GAC staff, workshops on U.S.-focused implementation of the related international standards, direct consulting to product certifiers and laboratories, as well as assistance with achieving and maintaining ANSI accreditation.

2. ANSI ACCREDITATION

This track consists of preassessments and subsequent full assessments and accreditation of the Georgian product certification bodies and laboratories by ANSI with GAC participation. This track simultaneously achieves two goals that support the overall objective. Firstly, GAC staff will be able to attend these assessments as observers and build their professional capacity. As some of the GAC staff can be potentially qualified as ANSI assessors themselves, these observations will count toward their qualification process. This way, subsequent assessments of the accredited conformity assessment bodies (for instance surveillances and reassessments) may be conducted with direct participation of ANSI-qualified GAC staff, greatly fostering the objective of preparing GAC for the IAF/ILAC MLA/MRA. Secondly, obtaining ANSI accreditation will be of great benefit to the conformity assessment bodies by giving them international recognition and building up their professional competence and capacity and, therefore, directly serving one of the initially stated general objectives.

3. INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND RECOGNITION

This entails attendance of IAF/ILAC and PAC and APLAC plenary sessions with guidance from ANSI staff, membership in these entities, application for PAC MLA and APLAC MRA, subsequent joint peer evaluation of GAC by PAC and APLAC, ANSI direct assistance to GAC with corrective actions, and eventual achievement by GAC of PAC MLA and APLAC MRA status.

II. APPENDICES

- A. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**
- B. WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED**
- C. CABS VISITED ON SITE**
- D. DETAILED ROAD MAP**

A. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

GEORGIAN ACCREDITATION CENTER AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES

Georgia's standards and conformity assessment accreditation infrastructure underwent a significant transformation in 2005 when, based on the new national organic law, two distinct entities were formed to replace the old Soviet-style standards organization "Sakstandarti": Georgian Accreditation Center and the Georgian National Agency for Standards, Technical Regulations and Metrology.

GAC

Accreditation services for conformity assessment bodies are offered in Georgia by the GAC, a semi-independent agency under the Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia.

GAC strives to operate in accordance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 and currently offers accreditation programs for product certification bodies, laboratories, vehicle inspection centers, personnel certification bodies, quality management systems certification bodies, and inspection bodies.

The following table lists GAC's available accreditation programs and the number of conformity assessment bodies currently accredited under each program:

TYPE OF CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODY	ACCREDITED BODIES
Testing Laboratories	99
Verification Laboratories	9
Calibration Laboratories	5
Vehicle Testing Centers	22
Inspection Bodies	0
Product Certification Bodies	11
Quality Management Systems Certification Bodies	3
Personnel Certification Bodies	1

Organizational Structure

GAC is a governmental organization and, therefore, conforms to the ISO/IEC 17011 definition of a "legal entity."

GAC is headed by the general director who is directly appointed by the Prime Minister of Georgia. The current general director, Mr. Paata Gogolidze, is the original appointee since the establishment of GAC and is credited with developing the concept for and promoting the ISO-based standards, accreditation, and conformity assessment system in Georgia under his prior engagements. The second in command is the deputy general director who also serves as the center's quality manager.

Management System

GAC has implemented the key components of the management system that are prescribed by ISO/IEC 17011.

- Accreditation documentation is controlled in accordance with the established document control procedures. Key policies are approved by the Ministry while subordinate procedures are approved by the GAC general director.
- GAC conducts annual internal audit and management review. The quality manager is charged with organizing and leading these processes, while the GAC general director bears the ultimate responsibility for quality in the management system. Both the internal audit and management review are stretched out to one- or two-week periods and conducted in parallel with the normal activity of the center.

Human Resources

GAC has a staff of 14. Lead assessors, assessors, as well as technical specialists are almost entirely represented by the full-time staff, although on exceptional basis, contracted assessors are utilized. Staff undergoes regular training on an annual basis and the last training on ISO/IEC 17011 as well as technical subjects was a three-day workshop. On the spot and subject-specific training is also conducted.

Accreditation process

Accreditation in various programs is carried out in accordance with detailed program-specific procedures and manuals. Quality records of the assessment activity, including applications, agreements, reports, statements of non-conformity and implemented corrective actions, and other vital records, are maintained in hard copy while certain information is duplicated electronically in order to be available via the public website.

Decision on accreditation is carried out by the committee of staff that includes the assessors and technical specialists. Conflict of interest is managed via abstention. The final decision on accreditation rests with the GAC's general director.

GAC has implemented a mechanism of engaging a dedicated technical council of the outside specialists in order to advise it on technical as well as procedural matters, as needed. There have also been precedents of engaging adhoc specialists in order to assist GAC with reaching conclusions in specific cases.

METHODOLOGY

This Road Map was prepared on the basis of study of the relevant materials, information collected on site in Tbilisi during two separate visits, interviews with relevant staff, as well as the author's prior knowledge and experience in the area of accreditation, conformity assessment, and international development within this field.

As major components of the Road Map were conceived, these ideas were actively shared with the stakeholders, including the EPI business enabling component leader, deputy leader and manager, communications manager, and other EPI staff; USAID staff; relevant Georgian government officials, GAC general director, and other staff; ANSI staff; and technical specialists. Progress updates were offered during EPI's weekly meetings with USAID as well as biweekly meetings with the Advisor to Georgia's Prime Minister. As a result, the development process was transparent, and upon completion of the site visits conducted by the consultant, all the proposed components and individual projects within the Road Map were well understood by the stakeholders.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

Materials and information reviewed and utilized in preparing the Road Map included:

- EPI Sector Assessment Report
- EPI Value Chain Assessment Report
- Feasibility Study on EU-Georgia DCFTA
- GEPLAC Report on facilitation of Georgian Accreditation Centre's integration into international accreditation structures
- GoG's Strategy in Standardization, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment, Technical Regulation and Metrology
- GAC policies and procedures
- Gap Assessment — Georgia National Quality Infrastructure by IBM Belgium in association with DMI, Ticon & TAC
- EPI presentations on Agricultural and non-Agricultural Sectors
- IAF PL, MD and DG series documents

ON-SITE VISITS CONDUCTED

Consultant conducted two separate on-site visits to Tbilisi for a total of 10 working days on the ground.

- Visit one: July 22, 2011
- Visit two: August 29, 2011 to September 2, 2011

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

The persons interviewed in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. as part of the Road Map preparation project included:

- Nino Chokheli, EPI manager, Business Enabling Environment
- Tina Mendelson, EPI chief of party
- Stephen Wade, EPI chief of party (former)

- Chris Thompson, EPI component leader, Business Enabling Environment
- Natalia Beruashvili, EPI deputy component leader, Business Enabling Environment
- Yasaman Samiian, EPI communications manager
- Tako Razmadze, EPI public awareness manager
- Giorgi Akhalaia, EPI ICT sector manager
- David Grigolia, EPI agriculture value chain manager
- Paata Gogolidze, GAC general director
- Malkhaz Kharebava, GAC deputy general director
- GAC staff, lead assessors, and technical specialists
- Lia Shubladze, chief executive, Georgian Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Oenology
- Levan Kalandadze, director, Multitest Quality Research Center
- Tengiz Pilishvili, director, "Etaloni" Ltd.
- Irma Chanturia, director, Wine Laboratory Ltd.
- Mzia Kharadze, director, "Ekspertiza" Ltd.
- Reinaldo Figueiredo, ANSI senior director, Product and Process Certification Accreditation
- Roy Swift, ANSI senior director, Personnel Certification Accreditation
- Sharon Goldsmith, ANSI chair of PCAC, Consultant
- Jan Schmidli, ANSI lead and technical assessor
- Blake Farley, Booz Allen Hamilton
- Maia Chiaberashvili, Booz Allen Hamilton

B. WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED

As part of the visit, the consultant conducted three workshops, two of which were formal in nature, while the third workshop encompassed free-flowing discussion and dialogue.

WORKSHOP: ANSI AND THE US STANDARDS SYSTEM

Conducted on: July 21, 2011

Duration: Two-and-a-half hours

Attendees: There were 16 attendees, including most of the GAC staff as well as the representatives of the Georgian Ministry of Economy.

Subject: This workshop provided an overview of the US standards and conformity assessment system and the role of government and the private sector; overview of ANSI, its role and history; the international standards system and organizations, such as ISO, IAF, ILAC, PAC, APLAC, EU, and ANSI's participation in these organizations.

WORKSHOP: ISO/IEC 17011 — GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES ACCREDITING CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES

Conducted on: July 22, 2011

Duration: three hours

Attendees: There were 12 attendees from GAC staff.

Subject: This workshop focused on the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 – General requirements for accreditation bodies; accrediting conformity assessment bodies; and, specifically, on the interpretation and implementation of this standard by ANSI.

WORKSHOP: COMPARISON OF ANSI AND GAC ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS

Conducted on: September 1, 2011

Duration: three hours

Attendees: There were eight attendees from GAC staff.

Subject: This was an interactive workshop/discussion during which the participants followed the clauses of ISO/IEC 17011 and exchanged specific details of implementation of this standard by each of the accreditation bodies – ANSI and GAC.

C. CABS VISITED ONSITE

As part of the project, a total of four product certification bodies and five laboratories were visited in order to collect general information, conduct the broad overview of the facilities, and interview their key staff. Each of the five product certification bodies were housed in the same facility as their respective laboratory. These five pairs were recommended by GAC as representative of the CABS in relatively better states of compliance with ISO/IEC Guide 65 and ISO/IEC 17025.

1. GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE, VITICULTURE, AND OENOLOGY

SUMMARY

This Institute, which serves as a GAC-accredited product certification body and has a GAC-accredited testing laboratory, was founded in 1996 and was one of the first to obtain GAC's accreditation. In 2006, the Institute moved to a new facility and was able to obtain hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of laboratory equipment with the help of the World Bank agriculture assistance project. The institute currently has a staff of 10 and its product certification body currently does not have any clients. The laboratory does limited amount of work. The facility, according to the chief executive, is currently not profitable, and is subsidized by its owners. Interviewed staff noted that the issue of most interest to them in terms of improvement is the topic of measurement uncertainty vis-à-vis ISO/IEC 17025.

GAC-ACCREDITED SCOPES

- Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, vinegar
- Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables
- Honey

STAFF INTERVIEWED

Ms. Lia Shubladze, chief executive

DATE VISITED

July 21, 2011

2. MULTITEST QUALITY RESEARCH CENTRE

SUMMARY

Center, which encompasses the product certification body and the laboratory, was founded in 2005 with the initial assistance from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) program. Center currently has the staff of 17 and boasts modern facility and equipment. The product certification body was accredited by GAC in 2007. Multitest currently has two clients under its product certification activity and about 20 clients that use its laboratory, 12 of them recurring. According to the director who was interviewed as part of the current project, Multitest hosted a European accreditation expert two years ago and believes that its

laboratory is close to complying with ISO/IEC 17025, but the costs of accreditation by a European accreditation body are currently prohibitive for them.

GAC-ACCREDITED SCOPES

- Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, vinegar
- Mineral water and soft drinks
- Milk and dairy, canned foods, eggs
- Fruits, nuts, and vegetables
- Sugar, confectionary, and honey
- Vegetable oils, margarine, and mayonnaise
- Tea, coffee, cocoa, spices, and salt

STAFF INTERVIEWED

Mr. Levan Kalandadze, director

DATE VISITED

July 21, 2011

3. “ETALONI” LTD

SUMMARY

Etaloni product-certification body and laboratory were formed in 2005. Their predecessor laboratory has been in existence for over 40 years, and was recognized by Sakstandarti, the Soviet-era Georgian standards organization. Etaloni has one of the broadest ranges of accredited scopes in Georgia. The product certification body has over 150 clients while the laboratory conducts 600-700 tests annually. The interviewed staff demonstrated eagerness to be assessed to international standards and noted the importance of introducing internationally recognized accreditation in order to help the marketplace distinguish between the credible certifiers and laboratories and their sub-par competitors.

GAC-ACCREDITED SCOPES

- Milk and dairy, eggs, and canned foods
- Tea, coffee, cocoa, spices, sweeteners, salt, and mustard
- Sugar and confectionary
- Bread and bakery, pasta
- Tobacco products
- Fresh and canned fruits and vegetables, nuts
- Grains and processed grain products, flour, dough

- Fresh and canned meat and poultry
- Fresh and canned fish
- Vegetable oils, margarine, and mayonnaise
- Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, vinegar
- Soft and mineral drinks
- Food additives
- Seafood produce
- Household chemical products
- Plastics
- Perfumeries
- Face and body care products
- Hair care products
- Decorative cosmetics
- Industrial products
- Shoes, paints, lacquers
- Mineral fertilizers

STAFF INTERVIEWED

Mr. Tengiz Pilishvili, director

DATE VISITED

July 21, 2011

4. WINE LABORATORY LTD

SUMMARY

Wine Laboratory is a leading laboratory for testing of alcoholic products in Georgia. According to the interviewed staff, they boast approximately 90% of the market share. Wine Laboratory was founded in 2003, with German assistance, based on the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between Georgia and Germany that envisioned improvement of the wine industry in Georgia. The Laboratory was launched with support of the fund financed by 23 leading wine producers, as well as the Georgian Ministry of Agriculture. The laboratory is housed in a modern, newly built facility and has a staff of 10. Interviewed director noted that internationally recognized accreditation was their current priority.

GAC-ACCREDITED SCOPES

- Alcoholic beverages

STAFF INTERVIEWED

Ms. Irma Chanturia, director

DATE VISITED

July 22, 2011

5. “EKSPERTIZA+” LTD

SUMMARY

Ekspertiza+ is a small product-certification body and laboratory housed in a residential area. They obtained GAC accreditation in 2009 and currently have the staff of 10. The company is headed by an experienced director who spent her previous career doing forensic work for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

GAC-ACCREDITED SCOPES

- Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages
- Drinking water
- Fresh, processed, and canned meat and poultry
- Fresh, processed, and canned fish products
- Milk and dairy, eggs
- Vegetable oils, margarine
- Tea, coffee, spices, cacao, salt, sweeteners
- Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables
- Bread, bakery, pasta

STAFF INTERVIEWED

Ms. Mzia Kharadze, director

DATE VISITED

July 22, 2011

D. DETAILED ROAD MAP

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to analyze the current status of the accreditation and conformity assessment system in Georgia and develop a concrete, integrated, and actionable Road Map for improvement of these systems. As a result, Georgian products would be tested and certified *locally and cost effectively* in accordance with international standards, by duly accredited laboratories and product certification bodies that are, in turn, accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body. Such outcome will directly boost export competitiveness of Georgian products in U.S., European, and other markets by reducing accreditation-related NTBs for Georgian products, as well as significantly foster improvement in general quality.

ISO AND IEC

In the modern international paradigm of standards, the ISO and the IEC are the two bodies that produce broadly used international standards for a wide range of activity, including conformity assessment. The reasons for the existence of two separate organizations are historic in nature. ISO and IEC, however, work closely and produce many standards jointly. For instance, ISO/IEC 17011 is the standard for accreditation bodies, while ISO/IEC Guide 65 is the standard for product certification bodies to follow. Each country is represented in ISO and IEC by a single national standards body. The United States is represented in them by the ANSI, which has been the U.S. coordinator of voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems since its founding in 1918.

CAB

“Conformity assessment” is defined by ISO/IEC 17000 (vocabulary) as “demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person, or body are fulfilled.” Therefore, certification of products, persons, systems, or processes, as well as testing and other activities that laboratories are engaged in, are considered conformity assessment and those certifiers (and laboratories) are referred to as CABs.

CABs utilize various standards (requirements) in their activity and use *schemes* that define how this activity is performed. A conformity assessment scheme (also referred to as “programme”) is a “conformity assessment system related to specified objects of conformity assessment, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules, and procedures apply.” Many CABs develop their own schemes. Some, however, certify in accordance with schemes developed and owned by third parties. Those parties could be governments or influential industry associations or organizations that have a specific agenda or mission. They develop the rules, and CABs perform the conformity assessment services in accordance with those rules. For instance, there is a GLOBALG.A.P.¹ scheme for certification of agricultural products that originated in Europe but is now a global scheme. GLOBALG.A.P is a very influential player, since GLOBALG.A.P certification is required by

¹ GLOBALG.A.P is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of production processes of agricultural (including aquaculture) products around the globe. GLOBALG.A.P serves as a practical manual for Good Agricultural Practice.

European countries for a wide range of products if they are to be imported into and sold in Europe. There are many other examples. Naturally, CABs strive to be able to certify in accordance with schemes that are in high demand in the marketplace. Scheme owners naturally do not accept conformity assessment services from just any CABs, but instead, set out specific rules for recognizing CABs, and for allowing them to certify to their schemes. All reputable scheme owners of any consequence around the world require that the CABs they recognize are duly accredited.

ACCREDITATION BODIES

CABs may be accredited by accreditation bodies and “accreditation activity” is defined in ISO/IEC 17000 as “third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.” As it was mentioned earlier, ISO/IEC 17011 is the standard for accreditation bodies and within the ISO paradigm, they are expected to comply with it. However, since the accreditation bodies are at the top of the quality “food chain,” how does one ensure that they themselves reliably demonstrate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011? The international body whose mission is to answer this question is the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

IAF, ILAC, AND THE MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION MECHANISM

IAF and ILAC are the forum and membership organizations for accreditation bodies where stakeholders, such as CABs, also have a voice and are offered associate membership (IAF members are accreditors of certification bodies while ILAC members are accreditors of laboratories and inspection bodies). One of the core preoccupations of IAF and ILAC is sponsorship and maintenance of the multilateral recognition arrangements (referred to as MLA in IAF and MRA in ILAC) which allow multiple accreditation bodies from various countries to recognize each other’s accreditations as “equivalent” for a specific area of accreditation activity. For instance, the very first MLA that was developed was that for accreditation bodies of management systems certifiers since the concept of a management system is easily transferrable across borders. Another significant MLA is a “Product” MLA where participants are accreditation bodies which accredit product certification bodies.

The IAF/ILAC MLA mechanism envisions recognition through regional cooperation bodies such as EA, PAC, Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), etc. Making matters a bit confusing, some regional cooperation organizations are for accreditors of certification bodies (such as PAC) while others are for accreditors of laboratories (such as APLAC). EA, on the other hand, is for both types.

In order to join an MLA or an MRA, an accreditation body has to make a formal application to the regional body of its choice and undergo a peer-evaluation process where it is essentially assessed against ISO/IEC 17011 by a team of peer evaluators from various accreditation bodies that are already signatories. Once all the findings are satisfactorily resolved, the applicant is allowed to join the MLA or MRA by becoming a signatory body. IAF or ILAC then recognize these accreditors. For instance, ANSI is a signatory of the Product MLA via PAC.

Participation in MLAs and MRAs is critical for accreditation bodies because it provides the international recognition to their activity. To return to the example of GLOBALG.A.P, this scheme, as well as most others recognizes the CABs that are not just accredited by an accreditation body that claims compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, but by an accreditation body that is a signatory of IAF MLA for the specific type of accreditation activity that is applicable for that given scheme.

THE STRATEGY

Given the international accreditation and conformity system described above, Georgia needs to have a competitive field of CABs that comply with appropriate international standards and are accredited by an internationally recognized accreditation body that is a signatory of IAF and ILAC MLAs and MRAs.

Since Georgia's accreditation body, GAC, is not currently a signatory, accreditation to Georgian CABs must be offered by another accreditation body, such as ANSI. At the same time, work must be undertaken to assist GAC in obtaining the signatory status so that in the future, an internationally recognized accreditation for CABs in Georgia can be offered cheaper and locally. The ultimate objective is to achieve the level of development in Georgia where there exist multiple, local, competent, robust conformity assessment bodies whose accreditations, certifications, and reports are recognized internationally as equivalent to those produced by their western counterparts from the developed world.

For the purpose of this Road Map, it was jointly decided by EPI, the consultant, and the GAC to narrow the focus on a specific, manageable area where improvement would have the most tangible and immediate results. Based on EPI's value chain analysis, as well as the analysis of the best potential impact within the context of EPI support, it was decided to focus on the food sector, helping Georgia to achieve competitiveness as an exporter and boosting the overall economic development in the country where agriculture plays a key role.

According to the *Economic Feasibility, General Economic Impact and Implications of a Free Trade Agreement Between the European Union and Georgia*, prepared by Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) in 2008, "conformity certificates issued by Georgia are not recognized internationally. Domestic consumers are poorly protected against risks associated with substandard products" (page 78). The report goes on to state that:

"There are just two agricultural products exported to the EU — wine and hazelnuts, which have special (and rather easy to comply with) arrangements for SPS conformity certification. In addition, manufactured products are often produced under special arrangements similar to the outward processing scheme. Under such arrangements, the Georgian firms provide production services rather than the finished product. The European partners take care of the most of the logistical issues and requirement certifications. Hence, Georgian counterparts are not even familiar with full costs involved in exporting to the EU. The average Georgian company does not export to the EU, mainly because it cannot offer an attractive product meeting quality and safety standards of the European market" (page 17)

The recent issues with quality of hazelnuts bound for export in Europe demonstrate that quality control and internationally recognized certification is needed for this product as well.

Therefore, the focus of this Road Map is product certification bodies and laboratories that certify and test food products.

In Georgia, there are currently eight third-party product certification bodies and 12 laboratories that are already accredited by GAC which include food products in their scopes of accreditation. These CABs represent the overall pool for potential ANSI accreditation at the earlier stage of the process prescribed by the Road Map.

At a later, and equally important stage, with primary focus on product certification and laboratories, the specific tangible objective of the Road Map is the achievement by GAC of obtaining IAF/ILAC MLA signatory status for Product Certification Accreditation under ISO/IEC Guide 65 (soon to be replaced by ISO/IEC 17065) and Laboratory Accreditation

under ISO/IEC 17025. It is proposed that in the scope of this project Georgia explore the MLA route via PAC MLA for product certification and the APLAC MRA for laboratories. The recent addition to the PAC MLA of the Kazakhstan accreditation body and the addition to APLAC MRA of Pakistani and Russian accreditation bodies show that PAC and APLAC can be an attractive alternative (or complement) to EA.

It must be noted that, due to the timing of the various activities envisioned by the Road Map, the two objectives described above will be fulfilled concurrently because GAC will be trained and prepared during the ANSI accreditation process, a visit to ANSI and observation of ANSI assessments on its clients, and via workshops on the interpretation of the key accreditation and conformity assessment standards. Furthermore, GAC's general director will be trained and qualified as ANSI assessor and will participate in ANSI activity in Georgia.

Finally, it is recommended that upon successful implementation of this Road Map, subsequent focus includes the development of personnel certification and credentialing systems which have a profound effect on employment and professional development, also aiding the economic development in a less immediate, but nevertheless, fundamental and sustainable way. Georgia's ambition as a major tourist destination makes the latter point even stronger, since tourism as a service industry relies heavily on quality, professionalism, and competence of persons. Future areas to be explored for GAC viability could include ISO Guide 34 for Reference Material Producers and ISO/IEC 17043 for Proficiency Test Providers.

THE THREE PARALLEL TRACKS OF THE ROAD MAP

The proposed Road Map consists of specific events and activities all of which logically build up to the achievement of the stated objective. These events and activities are proposed to be undertaken in a sequential manner, and are organized in three interrelated and concurrent tracks:

1. EDUCATION, CONSULTING, AND ASSISTANCE

This track entails critically needed capacity building for GAC and the Georgian conformity assessment bodies and other related interested parties. This includes a GAC study tour visit to the U.S., including meetings with staff and U.S. officials, observation of ANSI assessments of product certifiers and laboratories, ANSI assessor training for GAC staff, workshops on U.S.-focused implementation of the related international standards, direct consulting to product certifiers and laboratories, as well as assistance with achieving and maintaining ANSI accreditation.

2. ANSI ACCREDITATION

This track consists of preassessments and subsequent full assessments and accreditation of the Georgian product certification bodies and laboratories by ANSI with GAC participation. This track simultaneously achieves two goals that support the overall objective. Firstly, GAC staff will be able to attend these assessments as observers and build their professional capacity; as some of the GAC staff can be potentially qualified as ANSI assessors themselves, these observations will count toward their qualification process. This way, subsequent assessments of the accredited conformity assessment bodies (for instance, surveillances and reassessments) may be conducted with direct participation of ANSI-qualified GAC staff, greatly fostering the objective of preparing GAC for the IAF/ILAC MLA/MRA. Secondly, obtaining ANSI accreditation will be of great benefit to the conformity assessment bodies by giving them international recognition and building up their

professional competence and capacity, and therefore, directly serving one of the initially stated general objectives.

3. INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND RECOGNITION

This entails attendance of IAF/ILAC and PAC and APLAC plenary sessions with guidance from ANSI staff, membership in these entities, application for PAC MLA and APLAC MRA, subsequent joint peer evaluation of GAC by PAC and APLAC, ANSI direct assistance to GAC with corrective actions, and eventual achievement by GAC of PAC MLA and APLAC MRA status.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The specific activities within the three tracks listed in the previous sections are as follows:

1. EDUCATION, CONSULTING, AND ASSISTANCE

1-A. Initial Qualification Process for GAC General Director as ANSI Lead Assessor	
Details	It appears that the current GAC General Director, Mr. Paata Gogolidze, possesses sufficient education and background to directly qualify as ANSI lead assessor for product certification accreditation program. In accordance with ANSI assessor procedure ANSI-PR-033, the first step in the qualification process for prospective assessors is for Mr. Gogolidze to complete the form PRO-FR-134.
Why	In order to allow GAC to directly participate in ANSI assessments and build capacity via the unique opportunity for its general director to serve as ANSI lead assessor.
When	September 2011
1-B. GAC Visit to ANSI and Attendance of the Full ANSI Assessor Training Course	
Details	This visit will entail meetings with ANSI staff from the Accreditation Services Department and International Relations Department, as well as the vice president for Government Relations, and possibly other staff; meetings with U.S. government officials from related government entities, such as NIST, Department of Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative etc.; observation of ANSI assessments and possibly witness assessments of product certification bodies, laboratories, and inspection bodies; and attendance of ANSI Assessor Training. It is recommended that the visit be conducted by at least three GAC staff, including the general director, as well the EPI responsible staff for the overall project, in order to become familiarized with the process and make direct connections with ANSI.
Why	In order to educate GAC staff via direct observation of ANSI practices; to foster direct relations between ANSI and GAC; to train GAC staff as ANSI assessors; educate GAC on the operations of U.S. accreditation body operations
When	October 2011
1-C. EPI and ANSI Participation in the 14th Annual Conference of America Georgia Business	

Council	
Details	The America-Georgia Business Council is holding its 14 th Annual Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, at the end of October. This conference, keynoted by the Georgian prime minister and the U.S. ambassador, is a great venue for EPI to raise awareness of the project envisioned by this Road Map by presenting on the subject.
Why	To raised the public awareness and visibility of the project and attract support of the influential stakeholders.
When	October 23–25, 2011
1-D. Signing of MoU Between ANSI and GAC	
Details	At an opportune time based on the availability of the parties, the ANSI senior director of Accreditation Services and GAC general director will sign an MoU on cooperation in Tbilisi.
Why	In order to formalize the cooperation between ANSI and GAC in the presence of the appropriate Georgian and U.S. officials and inform the Georgian public of the importance of the ongoing project.
When	October 25, 2011
1-E. Workshops on U.S. Interpretation and Implementation of Key International Standards for Conformity Assessment	
Details	There will be a series of workshops conducted in the span of several months, based on instructor availability, and appropriately scheduled in order to minimize disruption for GAC and the conformity assessment bodies. The individual workshops are listed below.
Why	In order to help the selected Georgian conformity assessment bodies to achieve ANSI accreditation; to build the capacity of GAC and all attending Georgian conformity assessment bodies, as well as their understanding of the U.S. implementation of the specific relevant international standards via interactive and custom-tailored workshops.
When	November 2011–January 2012
WORKSHOP: “The American Way” – U.S. Standards and Conformity Assessment System	
Details	Participants will gain understanding of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment system and roles of various bodies and guidance on the practical application of the American National Standard (ANS) development process and procedures as well as the value of ANSI accreditation. Participants will learn why U.S. voluntary consensus standards are important, the types of accreditation, all the stages in the standards development process, and how to make the most of participation in standards development. After attending this program, participants will understand the: U.S. voluntary consensus standardization process; accreditation process for developers of American National Standards (ANS);

	importance of an appeals policy and the mechanisms for processing appeals; maintenance of accreditation requirements including the ANSI audit program, and how an audit can help accredited standards developers; The role and motivation of subject matter experts in the development process; importance of due process provisions within the ANS process and implementation options and requirements.
<i>WORKSHOP: ANSI Accreditation Requirements for ISO/IEC Guide 65/ISO/IEC 17065</i>	
Details	Detailed workshop on ANSI requirements for accreditation under the Product Certification Accreditation Program based on ISO/IEC Guide 65 and references to the new upcoming replacement ISO/IEC 17065 standard; ANSI application and assessment process for this program; examples of common issues and nonconformities; interactive Q&A with participants. Intended for GAC staff, product certification bodies, and existing or aspiring local accreditation consultants and experts
<i>WORKSHOP: ANSI Accreditation Requirements for ISO/IEC 17025 and Understanding Measurement Uncertainty</i>	
Details	This course provides a United States perspective on the ISO/IEC 17025 requirements, with special emphasis of measurement uncertainty. Measurement uncertainty is the No. 1 issue facing laboratories when achieving accreditation. This course addresses auditing the technical systems and issues in an accredited laboratory. This includes key accreditation items, such as uncertainties, metrological traceability, proficiency testing, and technical method validation. This course helps prepare an organization to clearly understand the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025. This course will also focus on how to calculate uncertainty to ISO GUM and U.S. NIST requirements, including understanding the different types of measurement uncertainty required in test laboratories. Learning objectives include: understand the ISO/IEC 17025 requirements; learn how to coordinate a quality management system audit against ISO/IEC 17025; develop an understanding of the technical systems and issues of the accredited laboratory; know how to collect audit evidence and document observations, including techniques for effective questioning and listening; learn how to report the findings and conclusions; review uncertainty and budgets; review best measurement capability and measurement uncertainty; examine international practices and practical statistics.
<i>WORKSHOP: ISO/IEC 17025 for Food Testing Laboratories and Meeting U.S. FDA Requirements</i>	
Details	This course reviews not only the standard requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 for any testing lab, it adds the requirements from the U.S. Association of Analytical Communities (AOAC) and its Analytical Laboratory Accreditation Criteria Committee (ALACC) subgroup for pharmaceutical and/or food testing labs. This course provides a detailed overview for experts interested in gaining knowledge of the specific requirements needed for performing microbiological and chemical analyses of samples within a food testing laboratory. The course utilizes the AOAC guidelines, which were created as an interpretation of ISO/IEC 17025, and provide detailed criteria to aid in assessing the essential requirements for food testing laboratories. Participants will learn how to effectively collect audit evidence and report the findings specific to the food-testing sector. Learning objectives include: understand the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 requirements; understand the AOAC additional requirements; develop an understanding of the technical systems and

	issues of an accredited laboratory; develop the know-how to collect audit evidence and document observations, including techniques for effective questioning and listening; and learn how to report the findings and conclusions.
<i>WORKSHOP: Proficiency Testing and How it Relates to Laboratories, Reference Materials, and Accreditation Requirements</i>	
Details	One of the least-understood areas in the ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation world is that of proficiency testing. On the other hand, it is the component of accreditation that is the most-valuable contributor to building international confidence in testing measurements that allow calibrations and tests to be accepted worldwide. This course reviews the typical proficiency testing schemes and options available to laboratories plus many alternative approaches. All ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratories must participate in proficiency testing activity each year. The framework for all proficiency testing programs is the ISO/IEC 17043 international standard and must be understood by laboratories and proficiency test providers. This course will also include topics on the ISO standard (ISO Guide 34) for accreditation of organizations that produce reference materials and its relevance to accredited laboratories and proficiency testing.
<i>WORKSHOP: Forensic Laboratory Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 and its Additional Requirements</i>	
Details	Forensic laboratories represent a special niche of testing facilities in the ISO/IEC 17025 community. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and others have published requirements that add to those met by the basic ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratory. These laboratories often are asked to perform DNA analysis for identification, relationship verification, paternity, etc., in addition to their ballistics, fingerprint, and other criminal investigation testing. The three-day course covers ISO/IEC 17025 requirements, ILAC G-19, and the unique requirements defined for this specialty area of forensics (i.e., FBI-specific requirements).
<i>WORKSHOP: ISO/IEC 17025 Lead Assessor Training</i>	
Details	This is a detailed workshop on United States effective practices for the training of lead assessors to ISO/IEC 17025. This course will prepare GAC staff, or other interested parties, in how to assess laboratories, and how to meet technical demands of the standard while providing practical exercises to aid comprehension. This course is designed to enable attendees to develop a solid understanding of the ISO/IEC 17025 standard and help them be able to plan and lead an ISO 17025 assessment. The course is designed to develop expertise as an assessor to ISO/IEC 17025. Learning objectives include: understand all of the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 elements; cover the full range of assessment techniques and good practices; benefit from practical assessment exercises; gain an understanding and assessing uncertainty, traceability, and PT/ILC; review, write, and understand ISO/IEC 17025 nonconformances; get practical experience of planning, running, and reporting on assessments. This course is for GAC staff, laboratory managers, laboratory technicians and laboratory technical staff, prospective assessors and consultants, and auditors of all types who want or need to learn better audit practices and want an appreciation for the technical demands of ISO/IEC 17025.

WORKSHOP: Approaches to Building Code in the United States	
Details	This workshop will be conducted by the representative of the two major building code standards developing organizations in the United States —International Code Council (ICC) and International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO). It will help the participants understand how building code is developed and applied in the U.S. and draw the comparison to the current Georgian model.
WORKSHOP: ANSI Accreditation in Personnel Credentialing: Combined Workshop on ISO/IEC 17024 and ASTM 2659	
Details	Overview workshop on principles of ISO/IEC 17024 for personnel certification bodies and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) 2659 for certificate issuers and the application of these standards in the United States, ANSI requirements for accreditation under these standards and the common nonconformities, issues related to psychometrics and management system.
WORKSHOP: ANSI Accreditation Requirements for ISO 14065	
Details	Overview workshop on principles of greenhouse gas verification and validation in the United States; ANSI requirements for accreditation under Greenhouse Gas V/VB Accreditation Program based on ISO 14065.
1-F. Set-up and Run Proficiency Tests for Laboratories	
Details	ANSI will develop and run appropriate proficiency testing for each laboratory seeking accreditation. The laboratory will be required to test the sample and record their results and submit those results electronically back to ANSI. ANSI will analyze the data and produce a proficiency test report to the laboratory.
Why	According to GAC staff, proficiency testing is one of the weak spots for Georgian laboratories. This activity is required by ISO/IEC 17025 and has only been conducted in Georgia on a limited basis and only among very few laboratories.
When	January–February 2012
1-G. Participation in ANSI 2012 Annual Assessor Training and Optional GFSI Meeting	
Details	ANSI provides annual training for its assessors. The next annual training is planned for February 2012 in Florida. Provided that the general director of GAC will be by then qualified as ANSI assessor, he will be able to participate in the annual training. In 2012, we plan to hold the training adjacent to the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) meeting and encourage our assessors to attend it. GFSI is the leading effort to globally standardize and benchmark food safety standards and understanding this process is critical to any country aspiring to export agricultural produce.
Why	In order to directly familiarize the GAC staff with ANSI assessor training process as well as to introduce them to GFSI and the most-current international

	requirements in food safety.
When	February 2012
1-H. Consulting and Direct Assistance to the Selected Conformity Assessment Bodies	
Details	Based on the results of the ANSI preassessments per 2-A, and after identification of the select product certification bodies and laboratories per 2-B against specifically set criteria, outside consultants shall be engaged with each of the selected conformity assessment bodies to help them overcome any issues identified in the preassessment reports and prepare them for ANSI accreditation.
Why	In order to facilitate successful ANSI accreditation of the selected conformity assessment bodies that have the best chance of attaining ANSI accreditation.
When	January–March 2012

2. ANSI ACCREDITATION

2-A. Information Meeting with Product Certification Bodies and Laboratories	
Details	Prior to preassessments, ANSI representatives, with the presence of GAC general director, as well as EPI representatives, will conduct an information meeting with the product certification bodies and laboratories.
Why	In order to explain the process and answer questions that the CABs may have so that the preassessment process goes smoothly and everyone has correct expectations
When	October, 2011
2-B. ANSI Preassessments	
Details	A preassessment is a process defined in ISO/IEC 17011, the standard for accreditation bodies such as ANSI. It is a process during which an accreditation body conducts a limited assessment upon the request from a conformity assessment body, in order to determine the conformity assessment body's overall compliance with the accreditation requirements. It is proposed that ANSI conduct a maximum of one-day pre-assessments of each of the laboratories (12) and product certification bodies (eight) that include food products in their scope, as well as the two personnel certification bodies, one of which is accredited by GAC and the other which is a current applicant with GAC.
Why	Preassessment will determine the level of preparedness of the conformity assessment bodies to comply with ANSI requirements and enable EPI to later select a few of them, per 2-C, in order to help them prepare, per 2-D, and subsidize their full accreditation assessment, per 2-E.
When	November 2011
2-C. Selection of Advanced Conformity Assessment Bodies for Subsidized ANSI Initial	

Assessments	
Details	EPI and ANSI shall work on the development of criteria for the selection of 3 laboratories and three product certification bodies to help them achieve compliance with the appropriate ISO standards and ANSI requirements and subsidize their initial assessments. Actual selection and a meeting with the selected bodies is included in this activity
Why	The best performing or most promising conformity bodies must be selected in order to maximize the use of the EPI resources
When	December 2011– January 2012
2-D. Preparation of ANSI Applications for Accreditation	
Details	Once three product certification bodies and three laboratories are selected per criteria developed in 2-C, and assisted per 1-H, a consultant or a group of consultants must be selected by EPI in order to for them to help the selected six CABs prepare their ANSI applications.
Why	In order to assist the selected conformity assessment bodies in effective preparation of the ANSI application and the checklists against the standards
When	March– May 2012
2-E. Subsidized Submittal of Georgian Conformity Assessment Body Applications to ANSI and Initial Assessments	
Details	Following 2-D, the three product certification bodies and three laboratories will submit their application to ANSI, and ANSI will follow its accreditation processes to conduct document review and initial assessments.
Why	In order to assess the applicant conformity assessment bodies, and eventually accredit those which demonstrate compliance with the standards and ANSI requirements
When	May - July, 2012
2-F. Aided Corrective Action Process Following the ANSI Initial Assessments	
Details	Most of the conformity assessment bodies end up having nonconformities found against them as a result of the initial assessment process. In this activity, outside consultants will be selected to help them provide effective corrective actions in order for them to close those nonconformities and become accredited.
Why	To facilitate the accreditation process for the assessed conformity assessment bodies.
When	August–September, 2012

2-G. ANSI Accreditations Granted to Eligible Conformity Assessment Bodies

Details	ANSI will follow its process and award accreditation to those applicant conformity assessment bodies which have met the standards and ANSI requirements.
Why	Follows the process from 2-F
When	September 2012

2-H. First Year Surveillance of ANSI-accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies

Details	The scope of this project should include assistance with covering at least one year of surveillance cycle for the ANSI-accredited conformity assessment bodies. This will be aided by the fact that, as expected, GAC will be able to supply a qualified ANSI assessor to serve on the team and reduce the cost
Why	The newly accredited conformity assessment bodies may not be able to independently bear the burden of the costs of continued ANSI accreditation the very first year. It is expected that their revenues will grow significantly in subsequent years, due to their international recognition and additional business in the country and in the region, and they will hopefully be able to incur the future costs themselves until they can switch to GAC accreditation (if they choose so) once GAC becomes a signatory of PAC MLA.
When	August 2013

3. INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND RECOGNITION**3-A. GAC Attendance of the 2011 IAF/ILAC Plenary with ANSI Guidance**

Details	The general director of GAC to attend the 2011 joint IAF/ILAC meeting guided and assisted by ANSI staff
Why	In order to continue familiarizing the GAC with IAF/ILAC members and processes which are critical for the ultimate objective of joining the MLA
When	November 2011

3-B. GAC Application for PAC and APLAC Membership

Details	GAC is already an associated member of IAF and ILAC. This step involves filing application for PAC and APLAC membership
Why	In order to initiate participation in PAC and APLAC activities to ultimately meet the objective of joining the PAC MLA and APLAC MRA
When	December 2011

3-C. GAC Attendance of the 2012 PAC Plenary and APLAC General Assembly with ANSI

Guidance	
Details	The general director of GAC to attend the 2012 PAC plenary meeting and the 2012 APLAC General Assembly meeting, guided and assisted by ANSI staff
Why	In order to continue familiarizing GAC with PAC and APLAC members and processes. This is critical for the ultimate objective of joining the MLA/MRA
When	June 2012
3-D. GAC Attendance of the 2012 IAF/ILAC Plenary with ANSI Guidance	
Details	The general director of GAC to attend the 2012 joint IAF/ILAC meeting, guided and assisted by ANSI staff
Why	In order to continue familiarizing the GAC with IAF/ILAC members and processes which is critical for the ultimate objective of joining the MLA
When	November 2012
3-E. Application for PAC MLA and APLAC MRA	
Details	Having the training and the experience of participating in the initial round of ANSI assessments, GAC will now be ready to apply a joint evaluation to sign the PAC MLA and APLAC MRA
Why	Joining the PCA MLA and the APLAC MRA is the primary specific objective
When	Spring 2013
3-F. GAC Joins the PAC MLA and the APLAC MRA	
When	Fall 2013 (tentative)

**USAID Economic Prosperity Initiative
6 Samgebro St.
Tbilisi, Georgia**

Phone: +995 32 43 89 24/25/26

Fax: +995 32 43 89 27