



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

GEORGIA AND FAO

IMPROVING RURAL LIVELIHOODS, AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS AND SMALLHOLDER COMPETITIVENESS

The partnership between FAO and Georgia has been steadily growing since the country became a member of the Organization in 1995. FAO assistance supports Georgia's food and agriculture sector with the aim of improving rural livelihoods, and increasing the productivity and competitiveness of smallholder farmers. Addressing climate change is also a focus of cooperation.

New seed law and certification system

A new seed law and the establishment of a fully functional national seed certification system is one of the most important achievements of a recent FAO project in Georgia. Drafted by FAO legal experts and adopted by the Parliament of Georgia, the new law protects the Georgian market from the circulation of seeds that are of low or uncertain quality. At the same time, it grants seed authorities an opportunity to disseminate neutral information about the performance of different varieties suited to the country's different climatic zones.

The new law and certification system were developed within a comprehensive capacity building project under which FAO furnished the Ministry of Agriculture's Scientific Research Centre with laboratory equipment for seed quality control. The Centre's laboratory staff were also trained in international seed testing standards and field inspection methods.

Projects: Capacity building and support to the MoA of ENPARD Georgia, and National Programme for Rehabilitation of the Seed Production System in Georgia. Implemented by FAO and funded by EU and Austrian Development Cooperation.

Matching FAO's expertise to Georgia's development priorities

FAO assistance in Georgia is shaped by the **2016-2020 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF)**, which is centered on the following priority areas:

- ➔ Institutional development
- ➔ Regional and sectoral development – value chain development
- ➔ Food safety, veterinary and plant protection
- ➔ Climate change, environment and biodiversity

Jointly formulated with the Government and other development partners, the CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development policies, including the **Strategy for Agriculture Development**.

It is also fully aligned with the **United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development Framework** for Georgia (2016-2020).

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Good agricultural practices

To encourage agricultural production and responsible consumption, FAO assisted the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in bringing good agricultural practices (GAP) to farmers under the project "Capacity Development of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia: Improved Policy Making and Effective Implementation of the Strategy for Agricultural Development".

"FAO has strongly and consistently assisted the Government of Georgia [and] will continue supporting the country to help make the agricultural sector more competitive."

FAO Director-General

FAO experts conducted training sessions in dormant and green pruning at demonstration orchards and farms across Georgia. These live training events have been complemented by instructional online videos demonstrating good pruning practices.

FAO has also developed

comprehensive cultivation guidelines on the fruits that are commonly produced in Georgia: apples, peaches, nectarines, mandarins and persimmons. Covering all aspects of production, including plant protection and post-harvesting phases, the handbooks have been very much in demand and have been distributed to fruit producers through the Farmers' Information and Consulting Centres.

Implemented by FAO and funded by Austrian Development Cooperation.

Action to address climate change

A pilot agrometeorological system is benefiting some 8 000 people in Georgia's Kakheti region, where farmers receive free mobile text messages providing early warning on dominant crop diseases. They also receive recommendations on the correct timing and application of necessary treatments. The initiative aims to reduce the spread of crop diseases as well as the unnecessary use of chemicals.

The SMS recommendations are based on information obtained from 24 agrometeorological stations, installed in Kakheti. The aim of the initial pilot project was to create a network of stations using data on air temperature, humidity and other factors to forecast when there is a risk of a crop disease spreading. Armed with this information, farmers can tailor treatments according to forecast weather conditions and risk, thereby using fewer agrochemicals.

Implemented by FAO and funded by Austrian Development Cooperation.

Decent work and economic growth

Smallholders and family farms contribute significantly to Georgia's production of agricultural products. More than three quarters of the country's holdings are operating agricultural land of size less than 1 ha.

As part of its support to Georgia's Strategy for Agricultural Development, and to stimulate economic growth in the regions of Racha Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti, FAO has supported the Government in elaborating grant measures to stimulate small businesses, rural tourism and agricultural development. Measures are based on analyses of the social-economic conditions of each region and on information received from the local population during community meetings.

Socially excluded groups were encouraged to participate in the call for project proposals, in particular internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, people with disabilities, women and young farmers. More than 60 people were trained in environmentally friendly agricultural and agrotourism practices and provided with cost-shared investment support for the enlargement and development of their farms.

In addition to modern facilities for smoking ham and for pig production, farmers were also provided with agricultural tools and equipment. Wine producers, mushroom producers, beekeepers and woodworkers who make agricultural tools were among the beneficiaries who received financing.

Project: Capacity Development of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia: Improved Policy Making and Effective Implementation of the Strategy for Agricultural Development (contribution to the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development). Implemented by FAO and funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation.

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