Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems: Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership

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Rural advisory services in Georgia and outlook into the future

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Georgia

- Georgia is located in the mountainous South Caucasus, between the Black sea and Caspian sea.
- Population 4,490,000 (2014 Year)
- Country has very varied topographies and soils and lies between major and minor Caucasus mountains.
- Georgia is considered included into IV group of Plants origin (Vavilov) – Southwest Asia
Agriculture of Georgia

- 49 types of soil and 22 microclimate zones;
- Climatic zones from subtropical to semi arid and arid
- The Black Sea coastline 315km
- Rich renewable water resources: 860 lakes, 45 reservoirs, 26,000 rivers;
- 33 % of territory is covered by forests
- A long Tradition of Winery, Citrus, Grape, Tea, Nuts, Fruits and Vegetables production
- Extended growing seasons (both early and late).

**Diversified high value cash crops:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grapes with up to 500 autochtonous varieties;</th>
<th>Greenhouses;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide variety of Fruits and vegetable (both early and late);</td>
<td>Nuts;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special tea for high margin markets;</td>
<td>Greens;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citruses;</td>
<td>Dairy Products.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Agriculture in Figures - GDP

GDP by sectors, 2013

- Agriculture: 9.3%
- Industry: 17.2%
- Construction: 6.7%
- Trade: 17.3%
- Transport and Communication: 10.7%
- Public Administration: 10.1%
- Other: 28.7%

Agricultural Share in total GDP, %

- 2010: 8.4%
- 2011: 8.8%
- 2012: 8.6%
- 2013*: 9.3%

Agricultural GDP at Current Prices (mln USD)

- 2010: 847.0
- 2011: 1100.2
- 2012: 1170.8
- 2013*: 1303.5

Source: GeoStat
Agriculture in Figures - Trade

**Agro Export-Import (mln USD)**

- 2010: -619
- 2011: -757
- 2012: -762
- 2013: 774

**Export of Main Agro Products in 2014 (mln USD)**

- Nuts – 183.6 (mln USD)
- Wine – 180.8 (mln USD)
- Mineral Waters – 137.1 (mln USD)
- Distilled beverages – 95.2 (mln USD)
- Citrus – 14.7 (mln USD)

*Source: GeoStat*
Trends in Agriculture production in Georgia 2007 - 2013
Annual and perennial Crop production in Georgia 2007 - 2013

- **Annual Crops Production (ths. tons)**
  - Wheat
  - Maize
  - Potato
  - Vegetables

- **Production of Fruits, Grapes and Citruses (ths. tons)**
  - Fruits
  - Grapes
  - Citruses
## Farming patterns In Georgia

- Around 800,000 Farms
- 2,079,000 rural population
- Predominant small-scale farmers
- Structure of land ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land, Ha</th>
<th>Percentage of farmers who are rented lands</th>
<th>from total amount of rented lands, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>86.4 %</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10</td>
<td>3.7 %</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 30</td>
<td>6.1 %</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 50</td>
<td>1.4 %</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 100</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 100 ha</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance of Agriculture within the last 60 Year

Growth performance Indicators in agriculture

1960 to 1975: (Area growth + yield growth)
1975 to 1989: (Yield growth + intensification of Ag production)
1989 - to 1991: (Ag production stabilization)
1992 to 1995: (Land reforms + decline of Agriculture)
1996 to 2004: (Period of reforms, decline of Agriculture)
2004 – 2012 (Period of reforms, Technology improvement + Russian Ban)
2012 - till today: (Revival of growth)

• The institutional and investment focus helped Georgia achieve its food self sufficiency goals.
• However, now different policies are needed to focus on small farmers, mountain rural areas, Cooperatives for sustainable agricultural transformation.
1. **Improve** Link farmers to market & strengthen value chains by access special loans

2. **Reduce** risk and vulnerability – supporting to commodity price collapses

3. **Improve** food safety and Food security issues

4. **Facilitate** agricultural research, extension & technology transfer

5. **Support of development** environmental services and protection of agro Biodiversity
Some key points of history of Farmers advisory services in Georgia since 1992

- First private farmers advisory service “Farmers union” was established 1992
- Public Research Institutes was creating farmers service centers since 1996
- EU TACIS – establishment agribusiness centers - 1997 – 2001
- MoA LEPL “Agricultural research center” was established 2001 – 2004
- The private Farmer service-consultation centers established since 2008 by support donors (USAID, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, EU and other)
- MoA Established ICC centers - 2013
The Current System of Public Information-Consultation centers (ICC)

- ICCs has been established 2013, Feb under umbrella MoA
- Consists – 45 Municipality level ICC offices united in 9 Regional offices (after 2014, Dec)
- Precise recruiting of specialists was done
- More than 250 Ag, VET, Tec Specialists
- Annual budget - 4 700 000 Gel (2015)
The main functions
Information-Consultation centers (ICC)

- Support of MoA in implementation public projects
- Provide farmers advices, recommendations
- Technology transfer to farmers
- Organizing Trainings and demonstration for Farmers
- Agriculture commodity Price monitoring
- Provide Ag Statistics in real time
- Assist to MoA in understanding current needs of Ag sectors
The Effectiveness of Information-Consultation centers (ICC)

- Increasing of delivery Ag technologies for farmers
- Increased productivity in particular direction (Nuts, Grapes, potato) cases
- Increased numbers of participating households in MoA extension packages
- Increased effectiveness use of fertilizer and improved seed and planting materials
- Increasing of Diversification of farms
Agriculture Scientific- Research Center

- Was established 2014, Feb
- Consists 14 Research departments
- Covering all main sectors of Agriculture
- 125 researcher and Specialists
- 1 head office, 3 regional offices
- Focused on strategic and Applied research in Agriculture
- Back research for ICC centers
- Training of trainers and Farmers
Private Consultation-Service Centers

- Fee based Advisory for large farmers
- No fee based for small farmers
- Oriented on Ag Input sales and increased cash turnover
- More than 45 in all regions Georgia
- The lack of cooperation between private centers
Donor organization current activities

UNDP – project “Skills for Agriculture”

- promoting training and professional development of vocational teachers, extension officers and agricultural specialists;
- upgrading educational standards and curricula for vocational education and training;
- elaborating and implementing modular programmes at VET colleges
- delivering high quality training and extension services to farmers;
- improving access to resources, infrastructure and best practices for the regional and local agriculture entities;
- boosting coordination and enhancing policy planning at national level
- establishing a cooperation mechanism for bringing together stakeholders from the public and private sectors
- developing institutional partnership between VET colleges from Georgia and Europe and coordinating the exchange of VET teachers and VET students
USAID – SEAS project

• The objective of the Strengthening Extension and Advisory Services Activity (SEAS) is to support the efforts of the Georgian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) to develop a public agricultural extension and advisory service system.

• In cooperation with the MOA project carry out combined subject matter and extension methodology training targeted to the specialists in the Extension Centers and the ICC stuff

• Trainings on following topics will be accomplished - Horticulture-open field production, fruit production, greenhouse production, irrigation technology – agricultural business/marketing skills, Post harvest handling of fruit and vegetable production, Collecting and summarizing agricultural statistics information, Use of Information and Computer Technology (ICT) in reaching farmers

• Technical support to ICC centers
Donor organization current activities

USAID – NEO, REAP projects

- **New Economic Opportunities (NEO)**
  The NEO project is designed to improve rural incomes; reduce poverty levels; improve food security; address critical, small-scale infrastructure priorities in targeted communities; enable targeted Internally Displaced Persons communities (old and new) to sustainably maintain their households; Organizing 2 private farmers consultation centers

- **Restoring Efficiency to Agriculture Production (REAP) Activity in Georgia – CNFA**
  The REAP project increases employment and income in rural areas by providing in-kind grants and technical assistance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to support improved agricultural productivity, marketing, and processing. The project facilitates the entry of new agribusinesses and expands the operation of existing SMEs to create new jobs, improve the availability of high-quality inputs, advisory and machinery services for farmers.
Lessons and key findings from Georgian Experience

• More effective is demo based trainings
• Sustainability of advisory services highly depend on permanent financial support
• The role of pioneer farmers is very important in case of technology transfer
• Cooperation between of farmers will play significant role in future
• Specific Ag Technical equipments will be play more roles for identification and proper overcome constrains
• Becomes popular IT based applications
• Learning from others: Georgia can learn experience from countries similar Georgia Background - Latvia, Litva, Moldova, Ukraine, Turkey
The main lesson: The principles of Advisory services in agriculture appear to have extremely wide application in future and have crucial importance.

The actual formulae and technologies for applying these principles are very sector, regional and site-specific. Georgian adapted version for advisory services should be prepared.
The Framework and Working Components of Advisory services in Georgia

- Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension Systems
- Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Farmers ICC Training Centers
- Institutional and donor coordination
Future plans

• Improve technical support of advisory services (Agronomist equipments and others)
• Increase effectiveness of trainings and advices
• Increase spectrum of providing advises – financial, account and other
• Enhancing of effectiveness SRCI
• Increased numbers of farmers in extension activities
Acknowledgment

• To conference Rural and Agricultural advisory systems (RAAS)” organizers
• To UNDP-Georgia office, project “Skills for Agriculture”.
• Special thanks to UNDP Project Manager Mr. Ruediger Heining for kind support for organizing our participation in this conference
Questions ?
Thank you for attention!

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