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of the United Nations

GENDER, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN **GEORGIA**

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT SERIES



COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

Gender, agriculture and rural development in Georgia

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Acronyms

AA	EU-Georgia Association Agreement between
ACDA	Agricultural cooperative development agency of Georgia
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALCP	Alliances Lesser Caucasus Programme
APMA	Agricultural Projects Management Agency
AYEG	Association of Young Economists of Georgia
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENN	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CRRC	The Caucasus Research Resource Center
CSS	Center for Social Sciences
DCFTA	Deep of Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EDGE	The United Nations Evidence and Data for Gender Equality
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
FAO	The UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEL	Georgian Lari
Geostat	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GII	Global Inequality Index
GoG	Government of Georgia
HDI	Human Development Index
ICCN	International Center on Conflict and Negotiation
ICCs	Information and Consultancy Centers of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons

ISSA	Institute of Social Studies and Analysis
JMP	Joint Monitoring Program
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Microfinance Institutions
MRA	The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees
NCDC	National Center for Disease Control
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
PDA	Primary Data Analysis
RCDA	Rural Communities Development Agency
RDS	The Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020
REU	FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
SAD	Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020
SDA	Secondary Data Analysis
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SU	Soviet Union
TI	Transparency International
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WECF	Women Engage for a Common Future
WFS	World Food Summit

Executive summary

As consistently demonstrated by FAO research across the world, gender equality is key to eliminating poverty and hunger. FAO is committed to reducing gender inequalities through its interventions, and this report has been produced as part of its broader efforts to generate evidence and knowledge in compliance with its Policy on Gender Equality (FAO, 2013). It is only by closing the gender gap that strategies on sustainable agriculture and rural development can reach their full potentials.

This assessment report attempts to highlight the challenges, gaps and practices in the area of gender and agriculture and rural development in Georgia that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers in their decision-making and their implementation of development interventions. The report reiterates the main gender inequalities in the country. These include: the gap between policies, legislation and their implementation; the gender gap in earnings; the vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in employment; the widespread of gender stereotypes; the rigid division of gender roles and decision-making at all levels, and other systemic issues.

This assessment draws attention to rural women's time poverty. Women in rural areas are extensively involved in work related to the production of goods and services for the family and household use. This work includes crop production and breeding of livestock in the households' plots and family farms; production of household goods; production of food for consumption by the family and household members and for sale; fetching water and firewood; housework; looking after children, the elderly and sick members of the families. Poor rural infrastructure, the low level of housing, limited access to transport and modern energy supplies increase women's workload and time use. However, even women themselves rarely consider this work because it is not paid and is considered part of their gender responsibilities. As such, their contribution to the agricultural production remains invisible and under-recognized.

At the same time, this assessment emphasizes women's limited access to productive resources such as land, finance and decision-making – and more limited when compared to men – access to information, new technologies and agricultural inputs. This may often happen due to the widespread stereotypes that areas such as, for example, agricultural machinery 'naturally' belongs to the men's domain. Trainings and services for these products also tend to be directed towards men. This approach not only sustains the existing status-quo. It also overlooks women's existing roles (in the management and storage of pesticides, for example), ignoring the fact that if women had better access to training and information, they would increase agricultural productivity (FAO, 2011).

This report identifies the need for further research in a wide range of areas within gender, food security and agriculture areas. Based on the review of the main challenges, the report suggests a set of recommendations for FAO, but also policymakers, programme and project implementers, as well as wider groups of practitioners and service providers in agriculture and rural development.

/// Main gender inequalities in agriculture and rural development

There is still a gap between legislation, policies and their implementation.

Despite the progress made by the Government of Georgia over the last two decades in improving the national legislative frameworks and developing policies in gender equality, the enforcement and monitoring of these laws and policies remains a challenge.

The social status of women in rural areas remains low, gender stereotypes persist and there is a low awareness of existing gender inequalities.

This implies a rigid division of gender roles and decision-making within the household and family farming that directly and negatively affects women's economic opportunities. FAO field research conducted for this report shows that gender inequalities and gender stereotypes are perceived as somehow natural or acceptable. Agricultural work (as helpers and not as managers) along with domestic and care work are both believed to be women's primary responsibilities, and there is a general underestimation of time workload of women for this work. The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes are reinforced at different levels. For example, given the social existing patrilocal form of marriage, rural households have less interest in investing in girls because the potential economic returns are perceived to be significantly lower than that of boys. This has long-term implications for the status of young women and their life opportunities, limiting their abilities to have access to well-paid jobs and other various resources. It also has an impact on overall agricultural productivity and rural development. (FAO, 2016b).

There is a significant gender pay gap, and women are overrepresented as unpaid workers.

Because of the perception of women as helpers or contributing family members, they are more likely to be involved in unpaid and informal work, and the gender pay gaps in agriculture, forestry and fisheries are significant. Women are also paid less in almost all the sectors of agriculture. In agriculture, hunting and forestry, women earn 75 percent of men's salary, what falls to 35 percent of men's salary in fisheries (Geostat, 2017). Nearly 60 percent of self-employed women are non-paid workers (Geostat, 2015).

There is a gender gap in technical and professional expertise on agriculture and rural development.

There is both a vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in employment, with men being more highly represented in higher managerial positions and in technical subjects as agriculture, engineering and construction, where very few women are represented (Geostat, 2015).

Women's access to information, innovation and knowledge is lower compared to men.

Due to deeply entrenched bias, 'farmers' are perceived only as men, while women are seen only as 'wives of farmers.' Rural advisory services, as it was revealed by FAO field research, inform farmers by contacting a small number of men from local communities, and who tend to inform other men farmers of the neighborhood. Women are usually excluded from these communications and mobilization channels because they are less likely to be regarded as farmers in their own right. Furthermore, women are only between 9 and 25 percent of employees of rural advisory services in the regions, which reinforces the consideration of extension service channels as "masculine" domains. This low access to information, knowledge and agricultural innovation hinders, in turn, women's economic opportunities.

Women's access to new technologies, machinery and agricultural inputs is lower compared to men.

According to official sources, women and men from rural areas have similar access to computers and the Internet (Geostat, 2017). However, in family farming practice, men are usually involved in agricultural activities that require technology and machinery, and women are mostly involved in manual and labor-intensive work. According to FAO field research, women have less access to labor-saving technologies partly because of the widespread stereotype that machinery is a "man's thing" and because women have limited access to finance and decision making.

The same happens in accessing irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. Because men are regarded as decision-makers and those responsible for dealing with providers, women experience de facto barriers in accessing these resources.

Women have limited access to ownership of land and other property.

This diminishes their empowerment possibilities. The lack of land registration limits women's access to governmental subsidies, credit and grant schemes that operate in the regions because of lack of collateral. More importantly, limited access to land (or any other property) ownership and registration also diminishes women's status in and outside the family. It has been demonstrated that women who own property are less likely to suffer from domestic abuse, as they have a way out (FAO, 2016c).

Women have limited access to large, more profitable and wholesale markets.

Wholesale marketing is mostly associated with men while retail and small marketing is associated with women. Women have less access to mobility and means of transportation, including trucks, and usually can only carry small amounts of products. As a result, they mostly only have access to local markets. Women usually sell milk, vegetables and fruits, including berries and other non-wood forest products. These are usually products that women produce or collect themselves. Men are mostly associated with selling meat. FAO focus groups also revealed that in some cases women were perceived as better sellers due to the stereotype that women have better communication skills than men.

Women are underrepresented in cooperatives, both as members and as chairpersons.

The Strategy of Regional Development of Georgia aims to promote women's social and economic advancement. However, gender equality considerations are not systematically mainstreamed in other laws and decisions, including the Law on Cooperatives. There are programs focusing especially on women's participation, but they are insufficient. Women only make up 25 percent of all farmers' cooperative members according to the latest data (ACDA interview, 2017). Out of 2 106 cooperatives, only 100 (4.7 percent) are headed by women.

There are reoccurring gender imbalances in food and nutrition security.

Access to diverse, high-quality food is problematic especially in mountainous regions due to difficult climatic conditions and poor infrastructure. Even though women generally buy and cook food for their family, they consume food with lower nutritional value than men do. This has direct effects on women's health conditions, preterm complication and mortality as well as newborn and infant health conditions (FAO, 2016).

Poor rural infrastructure, limited access to transport and modern energy supplies have a direct impact on time use.

Poor public transport and infrastructure are reflected in a lack of regularly scheduled public transport to villages and smaller towns, the lack of lighting, bus stops, commuter information, pedestrian crossings and road signs. This restricted mobility also poses other burdens on women, from limited access to social services including medical services to access to administration, information and decision-making.

Poor housing has a significant impact on rural women's workload.

Since domestic activities are socially linked with female gender roles, infrastructural development (e.g., women's lower access to transportation and mobility) and the low level of modernization of households, including access to domestic appliances, create and increased burdens for local women. Women are also severely affected by water restrictions as they are responsible for fetching water when there is no centralized water supply. This adds an extra burden to their workload.

Without access to basic energy recourses as well as modern energy services, rural women spend most of their day performing basic subsistence tasks including time-consuming and physically draining tasks of collecting biomass fuels (RCDA and WECF 2014; CENN, 2014).

Other health hazards arise from the fact that women do most of the cooking. They are exposed to large amounts of smoke and particulates from indoor fires and suffer from a number of respiratory diseases. Unequal gender relations limit women's ability to participate and voice their energy needs in decision-making at all levels of the energy system.

Given that care responsibilities are mostly placed over women's shoulders, the limited availability of childcare facilities in rural areas limits women's economic opportunities.

This also has a direct impact on women's access to learning and economic opportunities, and access to decision making.

There is a low level of access to rural finance.

Women's access to financial resources is dependent on women's access to the property in rural areas. Due to limited or no access to land and other property, women cannot participate in some of the agricultural funding schemes and are not always eligible for bank loans. Based on FAO research, women are less likely to be registered as property owners, whether of land, houses, or capital equipment, leaving them at a significant disadvantage.

For the same reason, funding schemes in rural areas are less accessible for women except for the cases when women are the target.

Rigid gender-based roles also affect men negatively.

Men in Georgia are stereotypically expected to be the main breadwinners, providers and protectors of women and the family. These masculine gender roles – often associated with alcohol, tobacco consumption and risk-taking behaviours – put pressure on men, leading to frustration when these social expectations are not fulfilled. It is documented that the loss of status and position as provider of male IDPs has led to increased mental health problems and higher rates of suicide (as well as higher rates of violence against women) (Martkvishvili, 2010). In fact, 81 percent of those who committed suicide in 2016 were men (Geostat, 2017).

There are still data gaps on gender issues in agriculture and rural development.

Availability of sex-disaggregated data at the national level has increased in recent years. Since 2011, Geostat has regularly collected sex-disaggregated data in health, education, social protection, labour, income and expenditure, entrepreneurship, crime and representation in the institutions of governance policy areas. These statistics are presented in the Geostat annual publication "Women and Men in Georgia." Despite the progress being made, there are still areas where accurate and reliable gender-sensitive data and gender-specific indicators are needed.

1. Introduction

Gender equality is central to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) mandate to achieve food security for all by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and improving the lives of rural populations. FAO can achieve its goals only if it simultaneously works towards gender equality and supports women's diverse roles in agriculture and rural development. Gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate, it is also a basic human right.

FAO Policy on Gender Equality (FAO, 2013)

1.1 Background to the gender assessment

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recognizes the importance of gender equality in achieving sustainable rural development and agriculture, and in achieving its goal of a world without hunger and malnutrition. In pursuit of this goal, gender mainstreaming and women-targeted actions have been adopted as the main strategies for the FAO Policy on Gender Equality.

One of the minimum requirements of this strategy is the preparation of a Country Gender Assessment (CGA). A CGA would inform FAO country-level planning and programming, particularly in the formulation or revision of the Country Programming Framework (CPF) and any other FAO interventions, including policy and technical advice in line with national development priorities and FAO's mandate. The preparation of a CGA can facilitate FAO's contribution to the UNCT, whether it is UN CEDAW reporting or UNDAF formulation with information about rural women in the country. More broadly, when shared with the national stakeholders, it can serve other needs such as awareness raising, advocacy and as a knowledge tool. The CGA should provide an overview and basic country-level information and data on rural women's needs and priorities as well as identify any remaining gaps and challenges for gender analysis of agriculture and the rural sector. The CGA also provides recommendations to FAO and for the national partners on how to strengthen gender equality and women's economic empowerment within the rural areas.

This country gender assessment has been produced under the project "Capacity Development of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia" (GCP/GEO/004/AUT) implemented with the financial support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD). The current assessment is based on the earlier version of the report commissioned by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and prepared in 2013. Compared to the previous version, this report includes the results of the field research and other recent studies conducted by FAO in the country. In the process, the report served as a resource in preparation of the Country Programming Framework (CPF), signed between FAO and the Government of Georgia in 2016¹.

¹ The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is the main programming tool of the FAO at country level. It is an agreement signed between the Government and FAO on the priorities that need to be addressed by their mutual collaboration. As such, the CPF is the umbrella under which FAO's interventions at country level are designed and implemented.

This assessment is the sixth report published in the region of Europe and Central Asia under the 'country gender assessment series',² and it intends to inform FAO technical staff, the government of Georgia, NGOs and other stakeholders on gender issues relevant to agriculture and rural development in Georgia. Additionally, the report can serve as an awareness-raising tool for the wider public.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology for this assessment included:

- a) **Secondary data collection.** Desk review and analysis of existing documents were conducted. Relevant reports from UN organizations and agencies as well as local organizations, Public Defender's Office and NGOs were analysed, and quantitative data was requested where possible. Statistical data was obtained and further analysed from National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat). In 2014, Geostat conducted a *General Population and Agricultural Census*, and the census results are used in the secondary data analysis. Also, some data from ongoing Geostat surveys (statistical survey of agricultural holdings, integrated household survey and business statistics survey) were also used during the preparation of the document.

The assessment is also informed by the *Assessment of Attitudes of Farmers on the National Animal Identification and Traceability System* (FAO, 2017) conducted under a project funded by ADA and the Swiss Cooperation and implemented by FAO. This assessment included a nation-wide survey consisting of 3 327 interviews, along with 12 focus groups (6 with female farmers and 6 with male farmers) assessing gender roles in livestock farming in Georgia, channels of communication with women and men farmers, and livestock ownership and practices.

This report is also fed by the FAO assessment *Smallholders and family farms in Georgia country study report* (FAO, 2018). It is worth mentioning that at the moment of the finalization of this report Geostat – with financial aid from Asian Development Bank (ADB) – was in the process of conducting a survey on asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective. The survey includes different modules and is conducted by the methodological guidelines of the United Nations Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project. It should provide data on women's empowerment and decision-making, understanding livelihoods (including entrepreneurship as well as reducing poverty and vulnerability). An FAO team conducted several meetings with Geostat relevant staff, but at the time of the finalization of this document, the data was not available. Data from international agencies providing indices, rankings and other statistics related to gender situation in Georgia was also used. In cases when data clarification was needed, additional meetings were held or phone calls were made to representatives of ministries, international and local organizations.

² Other FAO country gender assessments published in the region are: National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Kyrgyzstan; National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Republic of Tajikistan; National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Turkey; Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania; and Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Armenia.

- b) Primary data collection.** For this report, a qualitative research design was developed to deepen the understanding of gender and agriculture issues in the context of Georgia. A detailed focus group guide (see Annex #1) was prepared and tested in five interviews with women's organizations and women-farmers in Tbilisi and the regions (see Annex #2). The focus group guide included semi-structured questions on gender roles, land ownership, women's access to finance, information, machinery, markets, income distribution and decision-making in a family, among others.

A purposeful sampling technique was used by the Information Consultancy Service Centers (ICCs) of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture to ensure the representation of various local community groups. The key informants included women and men from agricultural holdings and family farms, representatives of local administration, financial institutions, entrepreneurs, educational and pre-school institutions and students. Special efforts were made to identify and select eco-migrants, women minorities and women and men from the mountainous areas involved in farming. In total, five regions of Georgia were covered: Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. In each region, two or three focus groups were held (see table 1) for women and men, separately. Follow-up interviews (in total, ten face-to-face and telephone interviews – see Annex #2) were organized with representatives of municipalities, women NGOs, female heads and members of cooperatives and focus group participants. During focus group discussions, women talked about their farming experiences as cooperative founders and members. As a follow-up to the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information on women's experiences and the obstacles they face in developing their businesses or working on farms. Table 1 provides further details on the focus group sampling.

Table 1. Information on focus groups conducted in the summer of 2016

Region	Focus group location	# of focus groups	Number of women	Number of men
Kvemo Kartli	Tsalka	2	9 (villages: Kizilkilisa, Bornasheti, Nardevani, Kushi, Rekha)	8 (villages: Bernasheti, Kushi, Kizilkilisa, Bernasheti, Ashkala, Gedaklari)
Kakheti	Telavi	2	8 (Telavi, villages: Vardisubani, Artana)	5 (Telavi)
Shida Kartli	Gori	2	13 (Gori, villages: Khidistavi, Sveneti)	10 (Gori, villages: Akhalkhiza, Akhalubani, Marana, Akalsheni)
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	Abasha	2	9 (Abasha, Zugdidi)	10 (Abasha, Zugdidi)
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Mtskheta	3	12 (Mtskheta, villages: Magharoskari, Tsinamzgvriantkari, Jighaura, Saguramo)	7 (Saguramo, Nichbisi, Tsikhisdziri)
Total		11	51	40

- c) **Primary/Secondary data collection and analysis.** In this final stage, some of the important issues that were revealed in the previous two research phases were verified by requesting additional information from interviews (where necessary) with focus groups participants and local women organizations, cooperatives and ICCs (see Annex #2). Relevant documents such as reports of local NGOs on gender issues were also obtained. Data was gathered and critical analysis was conducted.

1.3 FAO in Georgia

Georgia has been a member of FAO since 1995. FAO's work in Georgia is framed by the FAO-Georgia Country Programming Framework (CPF). The CPF for 2016 to 2020 aims to contribute to the objectives set at the FAO Regional Conference for Europe held in Antalya, Turkey (4-6 May 2016)³. The CPF is aligned with the priorities of the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development 2016-2020 that summarizes the Government of Georgia and United Nations (UN) partnership for the priority policy and programme areas for a five-year period. As it is stated in the CPF, a strong focus is given to addressing existing gender inequalities in rural areas of Georgia to ensure sustainability and effectiveness of FAO interventions. The formulation of the CPF involved an interactive review of national policy priorities for food, agriculture, forestry, fishery and rural development in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁴ as well as an analysis of major ongoing and planned development programmes in Georgia.

The following priority areas are identified and agreed on by FAO with the Government of Georgia for the 2016–2020 CPF cycle (FAO and the Government of Georgia, 2016):

Priority area 1: Institutional Development;

Priority area 2: Regional and Sectorial development – value chain development;

Priority area 3: Food Safety, Veterinary and Plant Protection; and

Priority area 4: Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity.

The interventions under the priority areas are in line with the measures outlined in the Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020 and the Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020⁵. The Rural Development Strategy of Georgia resonates with wider Georgian Government priorities as well as with specific issues related to rural development. The strategy and its action plan aim to strengthen the participation and engagement of rural women and the youth in the processes of identification of local needs and community development. The Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia also aims to improve the collection of

³ More information on the priorities of the FAO work in the Europe and Central Asia Region presented at the FAO Regional Conference for Europe is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp179e.pdf>.

⁴ SDG 5. Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

⁵ The Concept Note on Rural Development, the Position Paper and the first draft of the Rural Development Strategy of Georgia was prepared with the support of FAO.

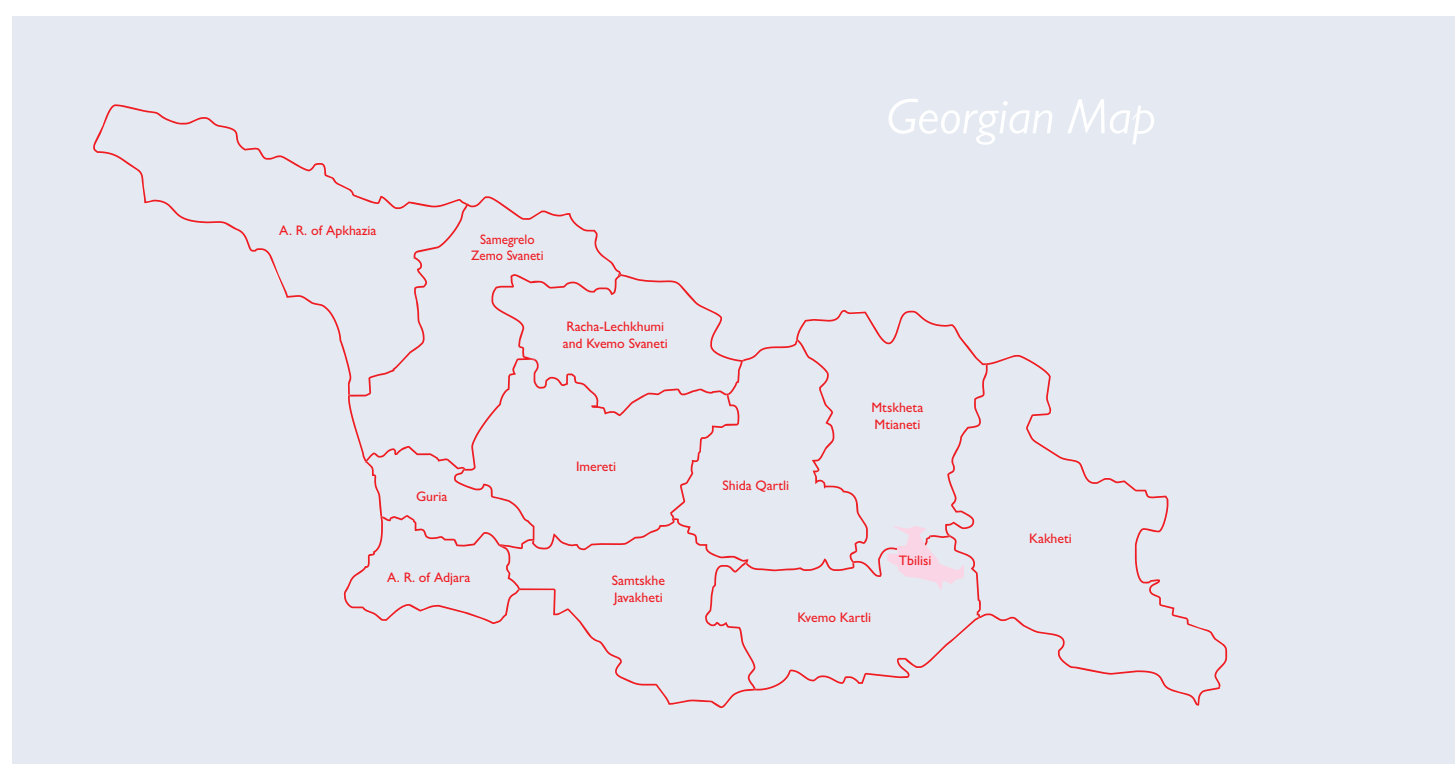
gender statistics for its substantive analysis and subsequent inclusion in the policy measures targeted at the promotion of female participation in agriculture and agribusiness. Through the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms, FAO supports the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in improving its capacities to efficiently implement, monitor and evaluate the Strategy for Agricultural Development and the associated Action Plan to empower women and men farmers and rural households with proper support measures allowing them to have better access to good agricultural practices, contemporary knowledge and modern technologies throughout their respective value chains. FAO, in 2015-2016, supported mainstreaming gender in the Strategy of Agricultural Development in Georgia, along with its National Action Plan on the agricultural policy, which focused on improving women's engagement in agricultural cooperatives.

Also, in 2016-2017 FAO focused on gender mainstreaming and vulnerability mainstreaming in the state agricultural programmes implemented by agencies in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and also in the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA). FAO, in partnership with UN Women, supported the MRA in the elaboration of the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for 2016-2017. The goal of this strategy is to implement the state policy on gender equality and support its integration into the activities of the Ministry. The strategy addresses the different needs and priorities for internally displaced women, men, girls and boys. This strategy and its respective two-year Action Plan is used by the Ministry as a framework while defining its directions and priorities. Also, under the framework of the EU funded project "Gender-sensitive socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable IDPs implementation," FAO in partnership with UN Women successfully mainstreamed gender in the MRAs IDP Strategy and Action Plan, MRA Communication Strategy and the IDP Livelihoods Action Plan. The majority of the recommendations for gender mainstreaming of the Communications Strategy and the Livelihoods Action Plan were addressed. Out of 18 recommendations for gender mainstreaming in the communications strategy, 16 (89 percent) were positively considered. Special emphasis was placed on outreach to internally displaced women and girls so that they benefit from different programmes of the MRA and its Livelihoods LEPL, such as vocational training programmes, livelihood grants/co-investments and housing support.

Furthermore, through provision of co-funding opportunities to vulnerable IDPs and promotion of their social mobilization, FAO contributed to the empowerment and sustainable livelihoods of 700 households. Single parent households; households with persons with disabilities; youth headed households; and elderly headed households of IDPs were the targeted groups. Female-headed households were prioritized. With the FAO intervention in previous years, more than 50 percent of the total displaced households (around 3 500 IDP households) benefited from livelihood assistance improving their incomes and food security with cash co-financing of the proposed co-investments for starting or improving their agricultural production. Approximately 20 percent of those applicants awarded were women.

2. Country overview

2.1. Socio-economic profile



The total area of Georgia is 69 700 square kilometres. Georgia lies to the east of the Black Sea, on the cusp of Europe and Central Asia, bordered by the Black Sea to the west, the Russian Federation for much of the northern border, and Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the south.

Real GDP growth was 2.8 percent, while GDP per capita was 9 146.4 GEL (3 864.6 USD) in 2016 (Geostat, 2018a). Agriculture contributed 9.3 percent to Georgia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 (Geostat, 2018b).

Holding (Agricultural holding) – An economic unit engaged in agricultural production under single management without regard to its size, legal status, tenure form of assets (owned or rented) and purpose of production (sale or self-consumption). Two types of holding are considered in the publication: family holding and agricultural enterprise.

Family holding – A holding operated by a household. Here also are included the holdings operated by several households without any formal agreement between them.

Agricultural enterprise – A holding operated by a subject created on the basis of the Law of Georgia "On entrepreneurs (individual entrepreneur, partnership, semi-partnership, limited responsibility society, joint stock company, cooperative)"

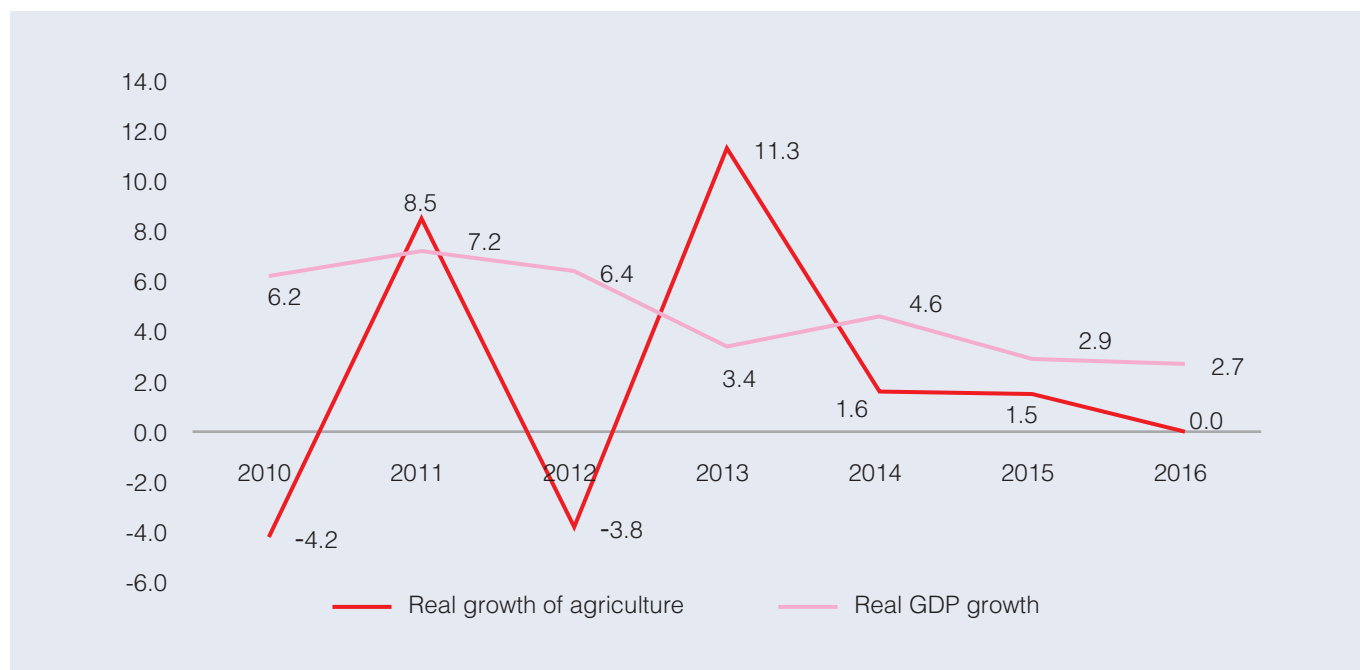
Source: Geostat, 2016c, p. 11-12

Agricultural area is more than 3 million hectares, or 43.4 percent of the whole territory of Georgia (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, 2015). The total area of agricultural land owned by agricultural holdings (by both households and private companies) is 787.7 thousand hectares and arable land is 377.4 thousand hectares (Geostat, 2014b). Smallholder farming dominates the agricultural sector. In particular, 77.1 percent of holdings have a land size of less than 1 hectare (FAO, 2018).

Georgia does not have a formal definition of a farmer or a smallholder (FAO, 2018)⁶. Geostat does have a definition of agricultural holding, which is divided into family holding and agricultural enterprise (see figure 1).

According to 2014 Agricultural Census results, the total number of agricultural holdings is 642.2 thousand. The vast majority of these holdings – 640 000 – are households. 57.7 percent of total households in Georgia are agricultural holdings, and women head 30.9 percent of all agricultural holdings. According to 2014 census, three out of four agricultural holdings are small-sized. A little more than three-quarters of the holdings (77.1 percent) operate on less than 1 hectare of land, and 21.5 percent of total agricultural land comes from these holdings. The average landholding is 1.4 hectare.

Chart 1. Real GDP growth and growth rate of agriculture in Georgia, 2010-2016, %



Source: Source: Geostat, 2016 data is preliminary

⁶ In 2015, the government of Georgia created a working group to develop a definition of a farmer for Georgia under the National Agricultural Strategy 2015-2020. However, no agreement was reached on the definition of farmer, especially because less than 30 percent of agricultural land is registered (FAO, 2018).

In 2014, Georgia signed an Association Agreement with the European Union. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement is the part of it. In addition to this, Georgia has free trade agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and Turkey and Ukraine. These give Georgian exports (including agricultural products) to have access to 900 million consumers. Georgia completed negotiations on a free trade agreement with China. This agreement came into force in the summer of 2017, opening a market of 1.3 billion consumers to Georgian exports.

Based on the 2014 census, the country's population was 3 720 400, 52.3 percent of which are women (Geostat, 2014a). The population is 57.2 percent urban and 42.8 percent rural. The largest ethnic minority groups in Georgia are Azeri (being 6.3 percent of total population) followed by Armenians (4.5 percent). The other ethnic minorities (more than 100 different ethnic groups) make up the remaining 1.7 percent. Seven percent of the population of Georgia are Internally Displaced Persons from the Ossetia and Abkhazia conflicts, mostly located in Tbilisi (39 percent), and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (32 percent) (Ibid.).

According to Geostat, in 2016 the share of the Georgian population under national relative poverty line was 20.6 percent (Geostat, 2018c). Rural absolute poverty in 2016 was 25.5 percent, while urban poverty was 16.9 percent (Geostat, 2017b, p. 57). In the same year, poverty among women was 20 percent and among men 21.3 percent (relative poverty shows the share of population under 60 percent of the median consumption) (Geostat, 2017a, p.57). Regarding absolute poverty, the 2016 national poverty rate was 21.3 percent while rural absolute poverty was 25.5 percent and urban 16.9 percent (Geostat, 2017b, p. 57).

Georgia's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2015 is 0.769. It ranks 70 out of 188 countries (UNDP, 2016). Georgia ranked 70 in UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) in 2015, with GII value 0.361. According to the Global Gender Gap Index and the Women's Economic Opportunity Index, women's economic opportunities in Georgia are limited. On the Global Gender Gap Report 2016, Georgia ranked 90 among 144 economies according to how well they use their female talent pool based on economic, educational, health-based and political indicators.

2.2. Political and institutional profile

Georgia gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Poor governance and rapid impoverishment of population accompanied the transition process into democracy and free market economy. This caused widespread protests leading to the 'Rose Revolution' in November 2003, which marked the end of the Soviet era of leadership in the country. The reforms implemented by the newly elected government following the Rose Revolution resulted in a diminished level of corruption, strengthened public institutions, improved infrastructure and economic growth. The parliamentary elections in October 2012 were the first peaceful transfer of power through voting in the history of independent Georgia. Georgia has declared Euro-Atlantic integration as its main priority.

There are 76 municipalities in Georgia, including 64 self-governed communities and 12 self-governed cities. The country is divided into nine territorial regions. Georgian citizens directly elect the heads of municipalities. The reforms led to structural changes that aim to improve service delivery and increase their efficiency in reaching both rural women and men.

After the national elections in October 2016, women represent 59 percent of the electorate while occupying 34.5 percent of the parliamentary seats. However, in the executive branch of government, only two ministers out of nineteen are female and there are no women among the local governors. According to Election Administration of Georgia, female members elected in the regions through a proportional election system make up 19.67 percent of the total members, and those women who were elected through majoritarian system make up 7.62 percent. Only 1.85 percent of the elected mayors of the 54 self-governing communities are women.

In the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, there are 76 men and 98 women working in the central office, and 157 men and 71 women – in the regional offices. There is one woman among six deputy ministers, and only 5 out of 15 heads of departments are women.

Legislative framework

Equal rights of women and men in education, labour market, remuneration, and the principle of non-discrimination are guaranteed by the Georgian Constitution, and a number of laws, policies, strategies and action plans aiming to achieve gender equality both in private and public lives are adopted.

Table 2. Georgia's laws and commitments to reduce gender inequalities

YEAR	INSTRUMENT
1994	Government of Georgia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
1995	Georgia participated in the fourth UN World Conference in Beijing, which agreed and adopted the Beijing Platform of Action
1997	Joint UNDP/Government of Georgia project "Women in the Development" (1997-2000) launched
1997	National Action Plan aimed at the implementation of Beijing Action Platform was prepared.
1998	"State Commission on Elaboration of the State Policy for Women's Advancement" established by Presidential Decree
1998	"National Action Plan for Improving Women's Conditions in Georgia for 1998-2000" drafted by the State Commission adopted at "Women and Society" conference, approved by presidential decree in June 1998
1999	Presidential Decree No 511 "On Measures for Strengthening the Protection of the Human Rights of Women" of 28 August
1999	First periodic report on the implementation of "The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of All Forms against Women" (CEDAW)
1999	"Shadow report" prepared by NGOs on the implementation of CEDAW submitted
1999	Action Plan for 2000-2002 to combat violence against women was adopted. (Presidential Decree No. 64)
2004	Gender Equality Advisory Council established
2004	Gender Equality Governmental Commission established
2005	Signed up to European Social Charter
2006	State Concept on Gender Equality issued
2006	Laws passed on human trafficking and domestic violence
2008	State Fund for Protection and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking established
2009	Above expanded to include victims of domestic violence
2010	Law of Georgia on Gender Equality passed
2011	2012-2015 Georgian National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security"
2011	2011-2013 Action Plan for the Implementation of Gender Equality established
2012	The government established interagency working group aimed at harmonizing national legislation with the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women
2013	Law on Political Party Financing (incl. increased incentives to promote women in political party lists) passed
2014	Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination passed
2014	National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2014-2016 approved
2016	National Action Plan on the Measures to Be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors for the years 2016-2017 approved
2016	National Action Plan for implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on "Women, Peace and Security" for the years 2016-2017 approved
2017	Government of Georgia ratified the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention)

In 1994, Georgia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In doing this, Georgia undertook a commitment to submit reports on the status of women in the country to the CEDAW Committee every four years. Based on the CEDAW report analysis (2015), while Georgia is adhering to the recommendations put forward by the CEDAW Committee, there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve gender equality in Georgia.

The concluding observations to the combined fourth and fifth national periodic reports of the CEDAW Committee recommended that the persisting gender stereotypes in Georgia and child marriage be addressed. Concerning rural women, the Committee recommended that:

“... the State party ensure that rural women have adequate access to social, health-care and other basic services and economic opportunities, in addition to equal opportunities to participate in political and public life, in particular in decisions relating to the agricultural sector. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure the availability of nurseries, in addition to shelters and other services for victims of domestic violence, in rural areas. It further recommends that the State party provide sex-disaggregated data on land ownership in its next periodic report.” (CEDAW, 2014, p. 10)

In 2006, the Georgian parliament adopted the Law on Fighting against Human Trafficking and the Law on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance of Domestic Violence Victims. In 2009, a State Fund for Protection and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking was established.

In 2010, the Law on Gender Equality entered into force. In 2016, amendments to the Gender Equality Law were adopted by the parliament of Georgia and gender advisory positions, along with the Gender Equality Councils at the municipal level, were introduced. Later on, its mandate was expanded to assist domestic violence victims as well.

In 2017, Georgia ratified the Council of Europe’s Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention). Following this, in June 2017 the Government of Georgia, with the support of UN Women and other UN agencies, established the Inter-Agency Task Force on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to serve as a gender equality and human rights mechanism in the country. It is noteworthy that the Commission is a coordinating body envisaged in Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention; thus, it will observe the implementation of issues covered by the Convention. The development of action plans to monitor the implementation of the gender equality agenda will be one of the primary functions of the Commission.

Political and institutional framework

In 2004, the Parliament of Georgia established the Gender Equality Council. The primary duty of the council is to develop and submit an action plan on gender equality, ensuring coordination and monitoring of its implementation. However, violence against women has become a severe concern in Georgia (Public Defender's Office, 2015).

Existing legal mechanisms include general provisions for IDPs, minorities and disabled people. In 2014, the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2014-2016 was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia. The later was initiated and supervised by Gender Equality Council. The Ministries were also involved in providing their agendas on gender mainstreaming and gender equality. The action plan was focused on gender equality issues in economic, health, social protection, women's engagement in environmental protection and law-enforcement. One of the objectives (3.1) of the action plan is *"Consideration of gender equality principles in the economic policy and employment"* (Parliament of Georgia, 2014, p.13) and in the activities, the promotion of equal participation of men and women in the programs of professional training/retraining in rural areas is prioritized. In addition, objective 3.2 (*"Empowerment of women's economic potential"* (Ibid., p. 14)) had an activity about the business education of rural women. Objective 5.1 is on the gender equality principles in the reform of local self-governance and it has an activity on tailoring special programs at local self-governance level for rural women. The agencies responsible for these activities were Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Education and Science, National Administration of Tourism and the municipalities. However, the role of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture on women's economic empowerment through its work on rural development was not effectively reflected in this strategy, nor was the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture held accountable for gender mainstreaming throughout its work.

The Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia and the UN Joint programme on gender equality assessed the implementation of the Action Plan in 2016. It concluded that advancements have come at a slow pace with some of the activities not being fulfilled. It identified factors hindering the implementation of the gender equality policy as the following (2016, p. 34-35):

- Insufficient human and financial resources required for the implementation of activities considered under the plan;
- inadequate perception of the importance of the issue by agencies involved in the development and implementation of the plan;
- the absence of staff for the person responsible for the gender issues at the agencies;
- non-coordinated activities within the agencies, and between the agencies a lack of information sharing.

The lack of human resources, the need to have higher awareness of gender issues, and the need to develop capacities for gender mainstreaming were issues highlighted by the Council as factors hindering the implementation of the national gender equality policy (Gender equality council of the parliament of Georgia and UN Joint Programme for gender equality, 2016). Under a project co-implemented by UN Women, FAO and the Ministry of internally displaced persons from the occupied territories, accommodation and refugees (MRA), the MRA approved the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for 2016 – 2017 (Evoluxer, 2018). Capacity development activities on gender mainstreaming were conducted for 30 employees of the MRA and 17 of the IDP Livelihood agency. The project also assisted the MRA to mainstream gender issues into the MRA's policy documents, manuals, guidelines and procedures. This was done under a memorandum of understanding signed by UN Women, MRA and the IDP livelihood agency, which included the commitments of the MRA and the agency to continue gender mainstreaming activities after the finalization of the project. The position of a gender advisor at the MRA was created at that time (Ibid.).

Similarly, gender advisory groups were created in municipalities. However, the lack of power and expertise of these groups was highlighted by UN Women to be challenges for the achievement of more substantial results (UN Women, 2017).

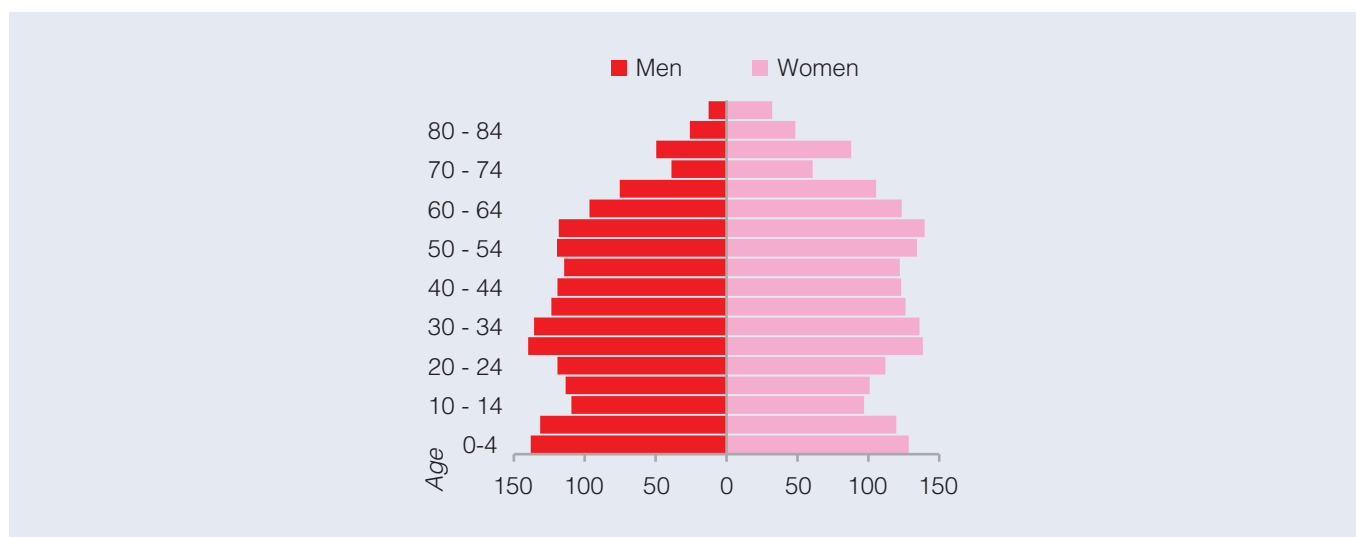
2.3. Demographic profile, migration and internally displaced persons (IDPs)



By 1 January 2017 population of Georgia was 3.718 million (Geostat, 2018d)⁷, of which 52 percent of were women. The sex ratio is 91 .9 men for every 100 women.

⁷ The population decreased in comparison to the 2014 census.

Chart 2. Population composition by age and sex in Georgia (age pyramid), thousands



Source: Geostat, 2016d

According to Geostat, the birth sex ratio was 104 men for every 100 women in 2016. The sex birth rate data for recent years is lower than in the past (in 2008 it was 127/100). The relatively high birth sex ratio for men was mostly the result of sex-selective abortions because of the preference for having a son (UNFPA, 2015a). That could be explained by gender stereotypes on breadwinning and decision making in and outside a family where men are usually associated with higher potential economic returns.

It was documented during the field research that given the social existing patrilocal form of marriage there is less interest in investing in girls because the potential economic returns are perceived to be significantly lower than that of boys. In patrilocal marriages – in which brides are expected to go to live with their spouses' family – sons are expected to be the heirs of the land, agricultural holding and other properties and to be the providers for their parents in their old age. It is also expected that the son's spouse will live in the household and engage in domestic work and caring for the parents in their old age. This is especially the case in rural areas, including in those regions densely populated by Azeri and Armenians. Abortion is less frequent in urban areas of Georgia. However, it has increased in rural areas including ethnic Azeri populations and low-income families (UNFPA 2015). The most recent data from 2017 shows that from 2012 to 2016 registered abortions decreased by 23 percent (Geostat, 2017). Infant mortality was 7.8 percent in case of girls and 10.1 percent in case of boys in 2016 (Geostat, 2017).

Average age at first marriage for women was 27.2 years and 30.1 years for men, respectively, in 2016 (Geostat, 2017b, p. 23).

Massive labour international migration in Georgia began in the 1990s because of the difficult economic situation and weak security or political stability in the country. Based on 2014 data on international migration from the State commission on migration issues of Georgia, more women migrate than men (2015). In 2014, a total of 88 541 persons emigrated from Georgia, 55 percent of whom were women (Geostat and UNFPA, 2017). As it was reported during the focus groups conducted for this report, labour migration prevails in regions with dense populations of ethnic minorities. In the case of migrant women, they usually work in the care industry (Zurabishvili, Zurabishvili, 2010).

Internal migration is also in high in Georgia, especially in recent years (State Commission on Migration Issues, 2015). One of the major causes of internal migration is patrilocal marriage, particularly in rural areas, where after marriage women move in with their husbands' families. Therefore, women constitute 66.4 percent of internal migrants, while men account for 33.6 percent (FAO, 2018). Other reasons behind internal migration are or have been armed conflicts, natural disasters, and socio-economic factors. People were displaced from the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Another cause of internal migration is environmental hazards (eco-migrants) and rural-urban, and urban-rural migrants who migrate to improve their socio-economic conditions. According to the latest registered data of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, in 2016 the number of all registered IDPs was around 273 411, or about 7 percent of the total population (2018). They live in all regions of the country but are mostly concentrated in the big cities. Large shares of the IDPs live in collective settlements characterized by insufficient housing conditions (Public defender of Georgia, 2013). As for the sex distribution among IDP population, there are slightly more women than men (53 percent and 47 percent respectively) among IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia, while in case of IDPs from South Ossetia there is almost an equal number of women and men. Studies conducted among IDPs in Georgia suggest that men have found it harder to adjust to their new circumstances than women (Martkvishvili, 2010). The loss of status and position as protector and provider for the household results in passivity and hopelessness. As reported by the same research, this leads to increased mental health problems and higher rates of suicide. This situation has also been associated with an increased propensity for violence, including violence against women at home.

2.4. Health



The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs has various programs to increase accessibility and health care for the population. In 2013, the ministry launched a Universal Health Care program which improved accessibility to different medical interventions for both women and men and children throughout Georgia. Around 50 percent of the population is covered by universal health

care. About a fourth of the population benefits from age-specific universal health-care coverage. Corporate private health insurance is more common in urban than in rural areas (UNICEF, 2015).

In general, conditions and equipment are poor in local medical centers, forcing patients to travel to the capital to receive treatment (UN Women, 2014). According to this source, the extra cost of the need to travel to the capital is a deterrent reducing access to health care for women and men from rural areas. Although there is no sex-disaggregated data on the access or use of the healthcare system, this may have a worse impact on women and vulnerable groups, considering that they have less mobility and access to transportation as discussed in other sections on this report. In fact, improving access to healthcare services by rural women is one of the recommendations provided by the CEDAW Committee (see section 2.2 of this report). The field research conducted by FAO showed that this issue is common in all regions of Georgia.

In 2013, alcohol and tobacco consumption was shown to be more common in men than in women (Geostat, 2017). From 2000 until 2016, diseases such as tuberculosis and AIDs were more common in men than in women. Almost twice as many men (70 percent) than women (30 percent) were diagnosed with tuberculosis than women. As for AIDs, in 2016 78 percent of the new diagnosis were in men and 22 percent in women. The fact that alcohol and tobacco consumption along with higher risk-taking behaviours are linked with masculine gender roles might be behind the lower life expectancy of men. Life expectancy is 77.2 years for women and 68.6 for men in Georgia (Ibid.). Men also appear to be at a higher risk of committing suicide, with 81 percent of those who committed suicide in 2016 being men (Ibid.). In 2016, six girls under the age of 15 years committed suicide (possibly linked with child marriages, although this would need further research) (Ibid.).

Maternal mortality was around 30 per 100 000 live births in 2014 (Geostat, 2015). Among the factors affecting high rates of maternal mortality is maternal health during pregnancy (TI, 2016). The prevalence of child marriage can also affect the high mortality rate (UNFPA, 2014). It is also closely related to maternal malnutrition pre-pregnancy and the quality of local medical institutions and birth centers.

2.5. Education

According to the Constitution of Georgia “Everyone shall have the right to receive education and the right to free choice of a form of education.”The state guarantees pre-school education as well as elementary and secondary education which are compulsory for everyone, notwithstanding their sex, age, ethnic origin and religious background.

Enrolment in secondary and higher education for women and men is almost equal, with 47 percent of all graduates from basic education and 49 percent from upper secondary education being girls (Geostat, 2017, p. 30).

Child marriage in Georgia

Georgia has Europe's highest rate of underage marriage, with one percent of girls married before the age of 15 and 14 percent before the age of 18 (UNICEF 2016, p. 151). According to Georgian Law the minimum age for marriage is 18. However, with parental consent young men or women can marry at age 16. Many of those marriages are not officially recorded as they are held only in churches or mosques. Early marriages are more common in mountainous areas of Adjara and ethnic minorities in Kvemo Kartli (UNFPA, 2014). The reasons for early marriages of rural girls could vary according to religious, ethnic and regional factors. More specifically, poverty, a lack of education, patriarchal values and religious practices are the most frequently listed causes for child marriages (Ibid.).

On average, the dropout rate is 12 per 1 000 for women and 19 per 1 000 for men (UNICEF, 2014). The explanations behind why the dropout rates for women and men may be different and linked to the social expectations of their roles in their adulthood. One of the explanations for the higher dropout rate for men might be the need to engage in employment, while for women it can be early marriages, especially in rural areas (UNFPA, 2014).

Focus groups and interviews conducted by FAO revealed that one of the explanations for the almost equal representation of women and men in different levels of education could be

the perceived important role of women regarding the new generation. Women are thought to be the primary caregivers of their children and, according to the respondents, they need to be educated to educate their children. Hence, women's education is not necessarily perceived as a foundation for their professional development. There is also a strict gender-based division in the choice of subjects. Men are more highly represented in technical subjects than women, which reinforces the stereotype that men are better in such fields as agriculture, engineering and construction, among others. In particular, during the 2016-2017 school year, women made up more than 90 percent of students of education, while represented less than 15 percent of students of agriculture in higher education programmes (Ibid., p. 32). Fifty-nine percent of all Ph.D. students in agriculture in 2016 were women (Ibid., p. 35).

The focus groups also revealed that the disciplines taught in local universities are perceived to not be applicable in those locations because vacancies in such places as medical centers, law firms and banks are scarce. Those graduating from the universities have two options: move to urban areas or be involved in agricultural activities and/or work for local hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies, and related businesses. The need for training adapted to the local needs, especially training in agriculture was emphasized by participants of the focus groups. Vocational education adapted to region-specific issues in agriculture and rural development for both women and men is seen as more relevant than tertiary education to have employment in the area of residence. This was especially pronounced in data from Telavi, Gurjaani and Gori. In addition to this, women participants of the focus groups mentioned their poor skills in business plan development and business management. Developing knowledge and skills in these two areas, along with the elimination of gender stereotypes, were seen as important milestones in empowering rural women in agriculture and rural development.

In general, the number of pre-school facilities in rural areas of Georgia is small. Since the 1990s, the number of state-funded kindergartens decreased significantly. At the same time, private kindergartens became more common. However, they do not provide the same level of coverage and, most importantly, they are expensive. In addition, most pre-school facilities are concentrated in urban areas. Few kindergartens operate in rural areas. (USAID, 2014).



In a survey conducted by Geostat and UNICEF in 2013, it was documented that the total number of children enrolled was 105 303 in 1 244 kindergartens. As the report states: “It should be noted that the number of ‘available places’ was not clearly defined by every kindergarten. . . . The directors of some kindergartens said that they are obliged to enroll any child seeking a place, regardless of the number of places available” (UNICEF; 2013, p. 28). Rural kindergartens were significantly less well equipped compared to urban ones. Rural kindergartens had a significantly smaller number of nurses, doctors and psychologists. In 2013, 69 percent of kindergartens that had not have any renovation work done were in rural areas (Ibid.). Insufficient conditions are one of the major reasons for the low attendance in winter when the heating and the infrastructure conditions worsen. Based on anecdotal evidence from the field research, the reasons and causes of low enrollment of children in the existing kindergartens include distance and poor infrastructure, financial shortage, and a preference for home-based care. This is especially a heavy burden for single mothers who also need to work full time. According to UNICEF (2013) in the 2011-2102 academic year, there were 1 244 pre-school facilities in operation.

Although there is no updated statistical data on existing kindergartens and their conditions in rural areas, there have been significant interventions on the part of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI, 2014) after the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee to increase the number of available nurseries in rural areas. Many pre-school facilities in almost all the regions are being renovated and new ones are planned to be built in the villages. MRDI also is in the process of improving infrastructure in the regions, especially in villages, which will also make those facilities more accessible (Information provided by the MRDI, personal communication). More up-to-date data is needed on the number of pre-school facilities, their locations and number of pre-school children according to regions and villages.

3. Gender issues in rural households and family farming

3.1. Rural labour

In 2016, 67 percent of men and 53 percent of women were employed (Geostat, 2017, p.47). Although only 5 percent of women and 11 percent of men accounted as “unemployed” (Ibid.), the Georgian labour market is characterised by a low percentage of hired employees. For instance, in 2016 hired employees made up only 37 percent of total employment, while self-employed persons comprised 50 percent of the total employed (Ibid.). In fact, 97 percent of all persons employed in agriculture are self-employed (FAO, 2018).

In 2015, the total number of non-paid workers was 411.7 thousand (40 percent of the total number of self-employed people). Non-paid female workers were 69 percent of total non-paid workers, and 59 percent of the total number self-employed women were non-paid workers. This figure, however, can be substantially higher in reality considering that many women who work in family farming do not regard themselves (or are not regarded) as farmers or workers, but rather see themselves as homemakers.

The official rural unemployment rate is lower (4.8 percent in 2015) than the urban unemployment rate (21.5 percent) because the vast majority of local people are classified as self-employed.



Table 3. Distribution of population aged 15 and older by economic status in rural areas, 2010-2015, Thousand persons

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Active population (labor force), total	1097.1	1119.8	1183.8	1155.4	1163.5	1156.4
Employed	1010.9	1046.8	1100.5	1080.8	1100.8	1100.7
Hired	194.2	189.4	212.1	222.1	230.4	257.4
Self-employed	815.7	854.0	885.1	853.9	867.5	838.2
Not-identified worker	1.0	3.4	3.3	4.8	2.9	5.0
Unemployed	86.3	73.0	83.3	74.6	62.7	55.7
Population outside labor force	445.8	428.3	418.2	407.2	392.2	379.9
Unemployment rate (percentage)	7.9	6.5	7.0	6.5	5.4	4.8

Source: Geostat, 2016

As for employment in agriculture, the table below shows the number of employed persons by sex in Georgia both in general and in rural areas.

Table 4. Number of persons employed in agriculture and percentage distribution by sex (national and rural)

Year	National			Rural		
	Thousands	Women (%)	Men (%)	Thousands	Women (%)	Men (%)
2010	849.8	49.4	50.6	782.4	48.9	51.1
2011	882.0	50.9	49.1	815.5	50.3	49.7
2012	909.1	50.9	49.1	843.0	50.7	49.3
2013	886.0	50.2	49.8	813.8	49.7	50.3
2014	888.2	50.2	49.8	819.1	49.9	50.1
2015	865.0	50.5	49.5	801.4	50.3	49.7

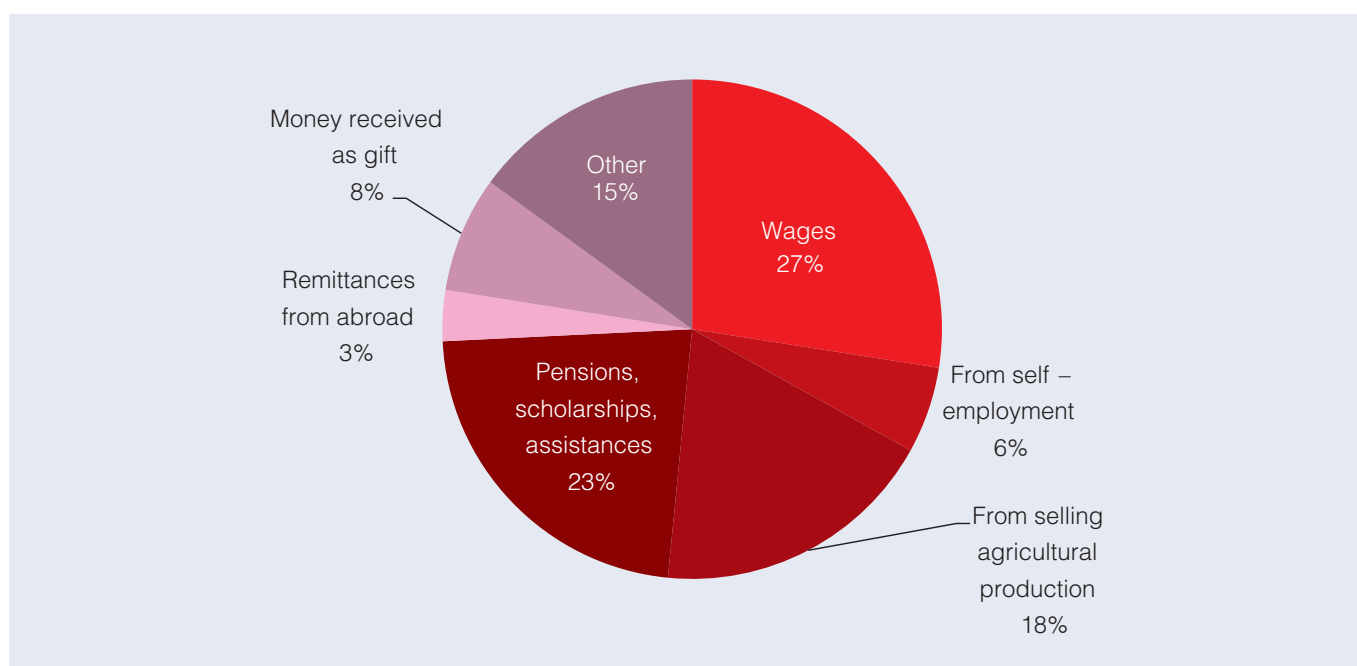
Source: Geostat, 2015

The lack of agricultural equipment, the low quality and high price of fertilizers and chemicals, undeveloped irrigation systems, low-quality seeds, and limited knowledge and agricultural technology negatively affect the incomes of those working in agriculture (FAO, 2018). According to Geostat, in 2016 7.8 percent of the cash income of rural households was generated from the selling agricultural production (Geostat, 2016c, p. 19). This was less than the income received

from hired employment (27 percent, but most people are hired in agribusiness) and less than the income received as pensions, scholarships, and assistance (23 percent). As for non-cash income, 16 percent of total income gained by rural population in 2015 was non-cash income.

During the field research conducted for this report, focus groups participants emphasized the high costs of engaging in agriculture, along with the high risks and instability of income that agriculture provides. Participants affirmed that they preferred other more stable and less risky sources of income. However, according to the participants of the focus groups, the limited number of vacancies and the mismatch between qualifications offered by rural populations and the qualifications demanded by employers makes difficult for farmers – both women and men – to find employment outside agriculture production. Because of the lack of employment opportunities, women and men are migrating from rural areas to urban settlements within the country or neighbouring countries, abandoning some of the land.

Chart 4. Distribution of average monthly incomes of the rural population, 2016



Source: Geostat, 2016

In rural areas, the unemployment rate was 2.9 percent for women and 6.4 percent for men in 2015. Because statistics identify many women as housewives, women's unemployment rate is lower. Even though they may work informally on the family farm or outside the farm, they are considered to be outside the labour force. This is the reason why women account for more than the double of the population outside the labour force, as reflected in table 5.

Table 5. Distribution by economic status of the female and male population aged 15 and older in 2015, thousand persons

	male	female
Active population (labor force), total	1084.9	936.7
Employed	938.9	841.0
Hired	401.8	351.6
Self-employed	533.6	484.5
Not-identified worker	3.5	4.9
Unemployed	145.9	95.7
Population outside labor force	305.1	653.2
Unemployment rate (percentage)	13.5	10.2

Source: Geostat, 2015, p. 10-11

According to Geostat (2015), the average monthly salary of employees in 2015 was 900.4 Georgian Lari (GEL). The average salary was 692.5 GEL for women and 1074.3 GEL for men. The average salary in agriculture was 578.2 GEL (total): 458 GEL (women) and 613 GEL (men). This means that a woman earned around 75 percent of a man's monthly wage in agriculture. Unfortunately, official statistics in Georgia do not provide disaggregated data on rural and urban salaries.

In 2016, 887 338 persons (24 percent of the total population) received a pension and social packages. The majority of these beneficiaries (65 percent) were women. This can be explained by the longer life expectancy of women compared to that of men. Women live an average of 77.2 years and men 68.6 years (Geostat, 2017a). In addition, the retirement age for women is 60 years and 65 for men. As a result, women spend on average 17.2 years on a pension while men spend only 3.6.

Geostat does not provide data on rural and urban beneficiaries. It gives the number of beneficiaries by Tbilisi (the capital of Georgia) and regions. According to these statistics, 27 percent of beneficiaries live in Tbilisi 73 while percent are in the regions. Besides the pension and social packages, the Georgian Government provides a subsistence allowance to the poorest of the population: 476 084 persons, or 12.7 percent of the total in 2016. Women made up 55 percent of the total beneficiaries receiving subsistence allowances. Twenty percent of all beneficiaries (women and men) lived in Tbilisi and 80 percent lived in the in regions of Georgia.⁸

⁸ The Law on the Development of Mountainous Regions envisages special privileges for the residents of high mountainous settlements covering social issues.

3.2. Family farming

Agriculture production in Georgia is concentrated among small-scale farming households. There are 642.2 thousand agricultural holdings in the country, 640 thousand of which are households (Geostat 2014b). Women holders (who are registered owners) make up 30.9 percent of these, and 571.9 thousand households operate agricultural land (Ibid.).

There are 787.7 thousand hectares of agricultural land operated by holdings, of which 86.5 percent (681.1 thousand ha) are operated by households and 13.5 percent (106.6 thousand ha) by private companies (Ibid.). The majority of the holdings – 77.1 percent – are operating less than one hectare (Ibid.). This severe land fragmentation – the reasons of which will be discussed in section 4.1 – significantly diminishes the competitiveness of smallholders.

Most employees in rural areas – 76.6 percent – were self-employed in 2016 (Own calculation, based on Geostat, 2018c). The main shares of agricultural output are plant and animal production. Women are actively engaged in both plant and animal production, especially in family farming. However, many of these women are involved in unpaid and informal work, and their role remains mostly invisible and unrecognized. According to the results of the focus groups conducted for this report, women involved in unpaid or informal work identified themselves or were identified by others as “helpers” or “servants” whose work is regarded as secondary, despite the fact that they performed harder work with longer hours in the field than men.



A rigid division of female/male roles (including women facing a double burden) in and outside the family is perceived as normal (UNDP, 2013). In family farming, there is a rigid, gender-based distribution of tasks. This was reflected in the results of the field research conducted for this report. Women are the majority in work-intensive activities, while men are the majority in capital-intensive activities. Activities that are stereotypically defined as “men’s responsibilities” include: managing machinery, working as shepherds, dealing with transportation and going to the city or large markets. Activities that are stereotypically defined as “women’s responsibilities” include: taking care of the household, children and dependents, manual work in agricultural production and processing, taking care of the animals, milking, and cheese production. Similar results were found in the UNDP assessment of 2013 on Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Business. Women usually take care of poultry and cattle. They also collect fruits and vegetables in the field (similar findings are included in UN Women, 2016). Men take care of vineyards, beehives, timberwork and irrigation, do ploughing and work in the field.

Women do this “male work” in many cases. For instance, in Kvemo Kartli, a large number of men travel to Russia to work for seven to eight months a year, leaving the women responsible for both farm and household work. In this case, women do all the work considered male work in their farms, including ploughing and applying pesticides. Widowed, single and divorced women also face the same situation, dealing with both the work that is considered female and male. Some men and women in other regions also affirmed that in many cases women do all the hard (manual) work even though men are at home. Focus groups conducted by UN Women also showed that despite female/male farming activities and family roles, women still spend more time on crops and animal production (which are perceived as “male tasks”) than men.

In fact, women are involved in agriculture for more days per year than men in all regions of Georgia, women being engaged an average of 344 days per year and men 263 (UN Women, 2017). On top of this, women’s unpaid work exceeds that of men’s by 13 times (Ibid.). Therefore, there is a large dissonance between perception and reality on women’s involvement in agriculture, time use by women and men, and the gender-based distribution of roles.

This means that men in agriculture have more free time than women, along with more free time regarding domestic and care activities. The perception of men as heads of households, as principal breadwinners and decision-makers in a family and community, not only affects women’s access to economic opportunities and decision-making negatively but also their self-confidence in areas that are socially considered to be linked to masculine gender roles.

Gender roles in agriculture are socially justified by several factors based on gender stereotypes and perceptions of physical abilities (UN Women, 2016; Oxfam, 2015). “Female” or “Male” personalities that supposedly further determine their performance in certain activities were also identified during the field research. As for the physical attributes, this is also grounded in the idea that women are physically weak while men are strong. Hence, work that needs physical strength or more complexity (such as the management of machinery) automatically is perceived as a man’s activity and is assigned to them, in spite of who ultimately performs it (in many cases women). This stereotypical assumption ignores the physical strength and endurance required for many activities conducted by women (such as fetching water or cotton-picking) and the complexity required for much of the work that is associated with female roles (such as dairy production).

3.3. Status of women in rural areas

A patriarchal system still prevails in Georgia, especially in rural areas (UNDP; 2013; UNFPA, 2014; Oxfam, 2015).

As a rule of thumb, a household tends to be identified as women-headed in the absence of men performing this role. As found in a survey conducted by UNDP on public perceptions on gender equality, even though 30 percent of breadwinners in 2013 were women, 86 percent of the urban and 90 percent of the rural population believed that a man should be the breadwinner in a family (UNDP, 2013). Women become only heads of households in the absence of men, and 90 percent of the rural population consider that men should be the breadwinner of the family (UNDP, 2013). Men are considered the decision-makers even in the households where the women earn higher salaries than the men or the men are unemployed and women are the de facto breadwinners. This strongly applies to rural areas. In a 2014 UNFPA survey, the majority agreed that a woman's main responsibility is to take care of the family (93 percent of men and 86 percent of women) and that "men have the last say in the family" (88 percent of men and 70 percent of women) (UNFPA, 2014b, p.20). At the same time, 57 percent of men and 51 percent of women considered that gender equality has already been achieved (Ibid.).



In a 2013 survey conducted by UN Women, 66.8 percent admitted that they know victims or survivors of domestic violence (UN Women, 2014). Older generations and people with lower levels of education were more tolerant to violence. Around 17 percent of respondents believed that women should put up with violence to keep the family together (Ibid.).

FAO field research showed that equality is perceived as a rigid division of gender roles, where men are empowered to take decisions in and outside a family. Some participants of the focus groups expressed a fear that gender equality may lead to the dilution of this status quo and may endanger Georgian tradition, identity and culture. There was a general attitude among women affirming “women have their duties and men their own tasks.” When the same women were asked about the cases of divorce, gender discrimination and domestic violence, they agreed that women should claim their rights. However, none of the participants recalled cases when divorced women or domestic violence victims claimed their rights. Field research also demonstrated that equal distribution of household chores in families among women and men is rare. Focus groups and interviews confirmed that while women equally participate in family farming along with their husbands, equal participation in decision-making is rarely achieved in practice.

There is not a clear perception of existing gender inequalities related to access to entrepreneurship or in decision-making. However, women (wives or daughters in a family) need to have a green light from their husbands or fathers before putting new ideas into practice and eventually need men’s permission to launch business ideas. Women who were documented being able to decide freely for themselves and not experiencing any obstacles when launching a business were rare. These gender attitudes and perceptions feed gender roles and status in and outside a family in rural areas. In fact, the significant gap between the perception and reality of gender inequalities poses a challenge to effectively targeting gender inequalities and supporting rural women’s empowerment. Combatting gender stereotypes is a necessary step for achieving rural women’s economic empowerment and unlocking the full potential of rural development.

4. Gender issues in agriculture and rural livelihoods

4.1. Land ownership and access to other productive assets



In 1992, land privatization reform was initiated in Georgia, distributing land with a maximum allocation of 1.25 hectares per household, often in the form of different plots, which were then divided by the households, bringing about an extreme and unsustainable fragmentation of land (Hartvigsen, 2015).

Because the plots were provided to households, these plots were considered common property owned by all household members. During the privatization process of 1992-2007, the parcels allocated to households were listed on the “Receive-Delivery Act” only in the name of the head of the household (usually the husband) (Landesa, 2013). Therefore, only husbands were listed as registered owners in the “household” records of the State Department of Land Management (Ibid.). Generally, the same practice of registering land only in the name of a man in the family is continued for any land which is newly acquired. Therefore, during sales or transfer of parcels, family members’ (and particularly women’s) rights were and still might be overlooked (Ibid.).

In addition, less than 30 percent of all agricultural land of the country is registered (Ibid.). Many farmers use land for which they have old documents (before the land reform of the 1990s) which do not coincide with current boundaries or no documents at all.

The government of Georgia is engaged in a land registration reform. The Action Plan for the implementation of the nationwide farm registry system foresees the registration of at least 100 000 farmers by the end of 2018 (Ibid.). This is a good step towards the co-registration of land

between spouses, as the SDG target 5a establishes. A World Bank project is currently conducting land registration in 12 settlements (Ibid.).

Article 21 of the Constitution of Georgia states that both men and women have the same inheritance and property rights within marriage and in the case of divorce. More detailed provisions are stated in Civil Code of Georgia which regulates property rights in a family as well as the relationship between spouses. However, social practices in rural areas privilege men over women in property ownership. There is a distinct 'son preference' regarding inheritance and legal ownership of land and other property (Caucasus Research Resource Center, 2010). This son bias is linked with patrilocal marriage practices in which it is expected that daughters will move to live with their spouses' family and that sons will head the family farm and take care economically of their parents in old ages. Women rarely claim any inheritance right on the land of their family and have no rights over the land that their husbands owned before marriage. In particular, while spouses have the same co-ownership rights over property acquired during marriage (articles 1158-1160 of the Civil Code), property owned by one spouse before the marriage or inherited or given to a spouse during marriage is the separate property of that spouse (article 1161 of the Civil Code). This leaves women in a vulnerable position in case of divorce. Women can only make claims on property they and their husband acquired after marriage, but land tends to be registered only in the name of men who are regarded as the heads and representatives of the household.

Participants of the focus groups believed that any property should be divided equally between men and women. However, this ideal consideration of what was the fair, just, or the right thing to do differed with what participants had done in reality (the exception was when women were the only children in a family). When participants were asked about the reason for this practice, some participants considered it a "wrong custom." Other participants affirmed that sons were the inheritors because they are perceived as major breadwinners and decision makers, while women receive the dowry which includes jewelry, furniture and clothes, among others items. Some strong stereotypes also flourished during the focus groups, as found in the following quotation:

"Most of the women are not interested in agricultural activities, so why do they need land. They usually prefer precious things such as earrings, rings, dishes, clothes... and their husbands have property. So, the overall family is in a winning position."

Man from Telavi

It is interesting to note that those male participants who supported gender stereotypes saying that women, in general, are not interested in agriculture at the same time affirmed the active involvement of their wives and other women family members in family farming. This is because the same male participants do not view family farming as "employment in agriculture" for women. Instead, it is perceived as helping the family business occasionally. Some of the female participants shared this gap between reality and what is believed or perceived.

According to the National Agency of Public Registry, which launched a Gender and Property campaign in 2015, 56 percent of property registration cases were done in the man's name (Agenda, 2015). Based on the same source, in some of the rural areas, this number is much higher. Based on anecdotal evidence, even in cases when women are registered owners, men may still be the major decision-makers. Unfortunately, no information on the siblings of women landowners is available if they are women who are the only children in a family and women who

have male siblings. There is also no sex-disaggregated data on co-ownership, which makes it difficult to make a detailed statistical analysis on the issue.

Limited or no access to property is one of the major barriers for women's empowerment in rural areas (Oxfam, 2015). Even if women legally own land, this is rarely registered in their name and to claim this right they need to go to court. This lack of land registration limits women's access to governmental subsidies, credit and grant schemes because of lack of collateral. More importantly, limited access to land (or any other property) ownership and registration also diminish women's status in and outside the family. It has been demonstrated that women who own property are less likely to suffer from domestic abuse as they have a way out (FAO, 2016c).

4.2. Crop agriculture



Both women and men are major contributors to crop production in Georgia as in other countries of the region (FAO, 2014). Crop production represents 46 percent of Georgian agriculture (Geostat, 2014). The primary annual crops grown on agricultural holdings are maize, haricot beans, potatoes, vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, red beets, cabbages, capsicum and paprika peppers, garlic, dry onions, green onions, greens, carrots, eggplants and other vegetables) (Geostat, 2016c). Annual crops also include wheat, barley, oats, maize, melons, hay from perennial grasses and hay from annual grasses (Ibid.). As far as permanent crops go, Georgian agricultural holdings primarily produce fruits (grapes, apples, pears, quinces, plums, cherries, apricots, peaches, sour plums, walnuts, hazelnuts, subtropical fruits, berries, other fruits), citruses (tangerines, orange and lemons) and tea. Regarding time use, the crop value chain is slightly more dominated by men (98.15 days a year) than women (84.29 days a year) (UN Women, 2016). Based on focus groups and interviews conducted by FAO, while women are mostly engaged in producing substance crops for home consumption, men are responsible for cash crops due to its specificity (e.g., mechanization, traveling long distances and dealing with providers and middle persons are associated with masculine gender roles). Pest and disease management are also viewed as men's tasks.

Women are responsible for buying, sowing and sorting and are heavily engaged in the manual harvesting of crops.

4.3. Livestock

Based on the results of the 2014 agricultural census, 46 percent of all holdings (297 326 in all) have livestock, (Geostat, 2014). Women own almost a quarter (24.6 percent) of these holdings. Animal production makes up 49 percent of all agriculture (Geostat, 2014). Georgian holdings have cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, poultry and thousands of beehives. Most rural livestock farmers are small-scale and/or subsistence farmers (FAO, 2017). Based on a 2017 FAO survey, farmers consumed 73 percent and sold 21 percent of their livestock over a 12-month period. Almost half of the households (45 percent) sold their products directly from home. Dairy production is more common than meat production. Both women and men farmers identified the small number of slaughterhouses as one of the challenges limiting meat production.

"The [slaughterhouse] is in Erge village and we live in Akhalsofeli village. We should take our livestock to that village to slaughter them properly and this is very difficult." (Woman, 35 years of age, Adjara, Khelvachauri district). Source: FAO, 2017, p. 11.

The two major problems related to the sale of livestock products identified by farmers are low market prices and issues with transportation (Ibid.). Food safety issues throughout meat and dairy livestock are also issues needing to be addressed (Ibid.).

Women generally devote more time to livestock than men do across all regions of Georgia (UN Women, 2016; Oxfam, 2015). Based on FAO field research conducted for this report and on the results of the abovementioned 2017 FAO survey, women are involved in milking and milk processing while men are mostly in charge of cattle maintenance (cattle feeding and cleaning) and pasturing. As reported during focus groups, decision making regarding dairy sales and other types of livestock processing is generally done by both women and men, equally. On the other hand, men usually make financial decisions regarding livestock. Women are believed to be better informed on the topics related to livestock healthcare and vaccination because they tend to spend more time looking after them (FAO, 2017). However, male members of the household make the final decision on whether or not to call the veterinarian.

While women's de facto access to their ownership rights over land is uneven, women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over cattle may even be more blurred. This has been documented by FAO in other countries of the region (FAO, 2017b).



According to the existing law in Georgia, women and men acquire equal ownership rights on goods obtained and purchased after marriage. Therefore, even if women do not have any property rights over the land inherited by their husbands in patrilocal marriages, they do acquire property rights on livestock and other common goods purchased during the marriage. However, women farmers, their spouses and other family members may have little knowledge of the wife's rights over the livestock and other goods that are purchased for the farm.

Beekeeping is a sector that is mostly developed by family farms. Its production, as well as its export potential, is increasingly growing (FAO, 2018). However, the introduction of new standards that need to be met to access the European Union market may create challenges for those farmers who have limited access to information, in particular for women farmers and vulnerable groups (Ibid.). The ACDA has been providing beehives and other equipment to agricultural cooperatives at 30 percent of their value (20 percent if they were women agricultural cooperatives, or cooperatives representing vulnerable groups) since 2015 (Ibid.).

4.4. Forestry and hunting



Forests cover slightly more than 40 percent of the country (FAO, 2016d). Most forests – 97.7 percent – are in mountainous, and only about 20 percent of this is considered suitable for commercial production (Ibid.). The contribution of the forest sector to GDP was 1.3 percent in 2016, but this does not include non-wood forest products (Ibid.). In many villages, wood is still the main source for heating, so therefore accessible nearby forests are an essential resource for the livelihoods of those farmers (FAO, 2018). Wood from those forests is a key resource of energy for cooking and heating. Non-wood forest products (most of the cases procured illegally) are often a significant source of income (FAO, 2016d).

Only 22.4 percent of those employed in the forestry sector are women (Geostat, 2014b). Of those, 53.6 percent are involved in large-sized, 20.7 percent in medium-sized and 25.6 percent small-sized enterprises (Ibid.).

Men largely dominate the timber sector. Women are mostly involved in the collection of non-timber forest products (CENN, 2014). Men are involved in the production of wood materials, which generates higher income. In the National Forestry Agency⁹ (including central and regional offices) only 9.7 percent of employees are women. While 45 percent of employees in the central office are women, almost all of them in administrative positions (Ibid.).

The existing gender stereotypes and rigid division of gender roles lead to the underrepresentation of women in the forestry sector. Poor access to transport in forest management is also one of

⁹ National Forestry Agency which is legal entity under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection governs Georgian Forestry Fund and is responsible for forest protection and recovery as well as regulates and controls use of forest.

the barriers making women less involved in forest work. Even though no sex-disaggregated data exists, as identified during interviews with key informants, women's access to ownership and use of forests is also seen to be limited.

4.5. Fisheries and aquaculture

Geostat data on economic activity shows that there are 384 entities involved in fisheries and aquaculture. From this number only 122 are economically active. The fishery sector is socially regarded as a male domain. According to official statistics (Geostat, 2014), of the 409 people working in the fisheries sector, 13 percent are female and 87 percent are male. As for salary, in 2015 the average monthly salary in fisheries and aquaculture was 331.8 GEL for women and 938.5 GEL for men (Geostat, 2017a), meaning that a woman working in fisheries earns in three years around what a man earns in one (women earn 35 percent of the man's salary). The gender pay gap in fisheries and aquaculture is the largest documented pay gap in Georgia. There are 719 holdings engaged in aquaculture. Women head eighteen percent of these.



Based on anecdotal evidence registered during the field research conducted for this report, women's participation to fisheries is generally invisible since many women are involved in fish production and processing as family members whose time and contribution are not registered. As a result, their work is unpaid. According to the respondents, women are heavily involved in fish processing; however, the lack of relevant data and difficulties to capture the numbers due to the informality of the work performed by women results in an incomplete picture of women's role in fisheries and aquaculture.

4.6. Access to rural finance

Commercial Banks and Microfinance Institutions (MFI) operate within all regional towns, but evidence of coverage and credit access varies. According to legislation, MFIs provide following types of loans in Georgia: extend microloans, including personal, collateral, unsecured and group loans (credits) or loans on property and other to legal and real entities. The MFIs require collateral, bank guarantee, or guarantors for the loans. Most movable and immovable property types can be treated as collateral (e.g., land, house, apartment, cars and machinery).

Interest rates may reach up to 20 percent annually (FAO, 2018). Agricultural loans and credits are issued from most of the banks in Georgia. However, the issues of guarantee, short periods of returns and high rates come up as major barriers for the majority of local farmers. Although MFIs and banks make no distinction in criteria for loan provision to women (UNDP, 2013), women are less likely to be registered as property owners, whether land, houses, or capital equipment, leaving them at a significant disadvantage. For the same reason, funding schemes in rural areas are less accessible for women except for the cases when women are the target. According to participants of the focus groups, in both sex groups, those who have achieved a comparative success in their farming have either grants, loans, or both grants and loans from banks. Without loans, it is very difficult to improve or to start any farming activity. Banks require guarantees that in most cases are impossible to provide. Female participants added that this puts women in a more disadvantaged position because of prevailing property ownership practices.



In 2013, the Agricultural Projects Management Agency (APMA) initiated a Preferential Agro-credit program involving 15 of the 19 existing banks in the country (FAO, 2018). Smallholders received 47 percent of loans for fixed assets and 72 percent of loans for working capital. However, the total number of smallholders who benefited (13 849) amount to only two percent of the total number of family holdings in the country (Ibid.). Furthermore, considering that women head 30.9 percent of households (Geostat, 2014b) and that only 7 percent of those who benefited from the program were women (see table 6), it is evident that the programme failed to reach and engage female-headed households. An evaluation of the programme conducted by Oxfam in 2017 pointed out the need to develop gender-responsive proactive measures so existing burdens that limit women’s access to the program can be overcome.

In 2014, an Agro Insurance Program was also introduced by the APMA that gave farmers protection from weather events (FAO, 2018). In all, 21 000 policies were sold, 94 percent of which were paid by the government. Women comprised 26.2 percent of the beneficiaries (see Table 6), which was closer to the figure of 30.9 percent of women-headed households.

The Agricultural Projects Management Agency (APMA) implemented nine projects in 2017. In addition to the two above mentioned these were: Plant the Future, Georgian Tea Plantation Rehabilitation Program, Program of Agro-production Promotion, Co-financing of Agro Processing and Storage Enterprises, Produce in Georgia, Small Farmers Spring Works Support Programme and Seasonal Projects. Some projects have co-financing components. Sex-disaggregated data for 2016 is only available on the four projects that count women and men members as individuals and sole proprietors.

Table 6. Sex-disaggregated data on members (as individuals and sole proprietors) of four projects of APMA

Projects	Women (%)	Men (%)
Agro Insurance	26.2	73.7
Plant the Future	17.5	82.4
Small Farmers Spring Works Support Programme	34	66
Preferential Agro Credit	7	93

Source: APMA, personal communication, 2016 (M.Kvaratskhelia, personal communication, 2016)

4.7. Rural advisory services and training

Information Consultancy Service Centers (ICCs) were created in 2013 by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. Currently, there are 59 ICCs distributed across ten regions. The Extension Strategy for 2018-2019 – developed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture with the support of the European Union and FAO – aims to develop these ICCs to be more results-oriented and farmer demand-driven (FAO, 2018). In 2018, pilot extension packages are being delivered in pilot regions. The results both qualitative on the substance of the communication, and quantitative on the number of farmers outreached will be monitored. The required adjustments will be made and in 2019, this model will be up-scaled (Ibid.).

Access to information is not only a challenge for women in particular, but also for men living in high mountainous regions, especially from ethnolinguistic minorities. Language remains to be a barrier in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ibid.).

One of the major objectives of the ICCs is to promote and distribute new knowledge on agricultural practices through farmer education. Women make up between 9 and 25 percent of employees of rural advisory services in the regions (Personal communication with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture). Apart from regular advisory services to farmers, many international organizations and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture use them to organize trainings for locals on a variety of themes related to agricultural knowledge. Despite the importance of rural advisory services for agricultural and rural development, there is still insufficient coverage of its activities in the regions. Many farmers are not aware of the available rural advisory services and fewer women than men are informed about them (UN Women, 2016).

A little more than ten percent (10.2) of farmers have heard about the centres; 57.8 percent of those were men and 42.2 percent were women (Ibid.). Only 1.4 percent of the respondents to a survey conducted by UN Women affirmed that they consult agricultural issues with extension service staff. Based on an FAO qualitative study conducted for this report, the major reason that could be traced to not being part of the networks and channels of communication with the administration, less time availability for women (due to domestic, agricultural and care work) and more mobile daily routine of men. Only those very few female farmers who are usually proactive are well informed about all the agricultural activities and events in the region. In most cases, TV was mentioned as the major source of new information, but not as the source of news on trainings or financial assistance. Generally, information on trainings or events is received from a friend, neighbour or acquaintance.

Focus groups showed how local people are usually recruited for trainings. Preliminary lists of potential participants are formed through private contacts. Later, actual participants are recorded and contacted in case of future trainings. For these reasons, the involvement of new people is restricted. When asked about Internet use, the following problems were documented: limited coverage (especially in the villages), local people cannot afford it and farmers (especially from the older generation) have very poor computer or internet skills. Focus groups also revealed that current distribution of gender duties and roles in agriculture determine enrolment in capacity

building trainings. For example, men mostly attend trainings on pesticides, as it is believed to be a man's work. This assumption ignores the fact that women have close contact with pesticides and their roles in storing and handling pesticides at home.

In 2012, the SDC-funded and Mercy Corps-implemented Alliances Lesser Caucasus Programme (ALCP) developed "Women's Rooms" which seek to improve the access of women to information in rural areas. After launching Women's Rooms in three municipalities of Kvemo Kartli, they were duplicated in other municipalities of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The similar facilities are now open in Batumi, Khelvachauri, Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo. The Women's Rooms are municipal services (currently financed by municipalities) functioning as resource centres and communal spaces for the local population, especially women. Their primary goal is to help urban and rural women to be informed and to help make their voices heard. Because of these activities, since 2014 women's participation in community meetings of the Women's Rooms has increased from three to 33 percent on average¹⁰. However, according to UN Women, the future of these Women's Rooms might be at risk, given that local governments may decide to stop supporting these rooms in villages where they are still not actively used (UN Women, 2017). The major problem documented for the use of these Women's Rooms is a lack of understanding of what these rooms are meant for and lack of a knowledge of their existence by women (Ibid.).



When FAO focus groups participants were asked about attending trainings provided by either governmental institutions or FAO, there was a high level of interest in trainings by women and men farmers. However, the fragmented approach of the trainings conducted so far was raised as an issue. Focus group participants, especially women in all the regions, affirmed the need for a training scheme that will cover all stages of business plan writing including searching for funding schemes, business idea and structure development, budget writing, etc. Most of the participants of the focus groups, especially in Gori, talked about the lack of knowledge of chemical management of diseases among farmers which leads to failure and the wasting of funds. At the same time, the lack of professionals in this field was also mentioned.

¹⁰ Information available at: <http://alcp.ge/index.php?cat=8>

4.8. Access to agricultural inputs

To achieve high agricultural productivity, accessibility to high-quality agricultural inputs (farm chemicals, medicines, machinery and equipment, among others) are important. According to the Village Infrastructure Census, 73 percent of farmers use fertilizers and chemicals, whereas 36 percent of farmers do not need/have not heard of seeds/seedlings/saplings, and 75 percent of all farmers use veterinary services (2011). However, the census does not disaggregate by sex and does not indicate either the reasons behind not using the inputs mentioned above for the population that *does/not need/has not heard or cannot use*. The lack of blended fertilizers and high quality of seed hinders increased productivity. The main reasons cited for the low use of blended fertilizers and high-quality seed in some regions is the perceived limited need and/or a limited awareness regarding available services (USAID, 2011). Focus group participants confirmed these problems. Both women and men indicated the low quality of fertilizers/chemicals and the lack of knowledge about the appropriate uses of these agricultural inputs as the main reasons for not using them. The lack of highly qualified veterinaries and accessibility to veterinary services was also identified as an obstacle for small-scale farmers.

Table 7. Access to the agricultural inputs

Type of inputs	Does not need/has not heard	Cannot use	Uses
Fertilizers & Chemical	21%	7%	73%
Seeds/Seedlings/Saplings	36%	75%	57%
Local Veterinary Service Centers	7%	18%	75%

Source: Geostat, 2011



During the focus groups, women mentioned that they face more barriers to accessing water and irrigation systems, agricultural equipment and production inputs and facilities than men do. As men are more mobile and are better connected to local farmers' networks, it is more likely that men will have access to inputs in the regions. Machinery, pesticide/fertilizer use, and water management are stereotypically linked with masculine gender roles. The fact that women have less access to credit, extension services and information also restricts their access to these agricultural inputs and therefore hinders their productivity.

4.9. Access to entrepreneurship and markets

In 2016, women established 31 percent of new enterprises (Geostat, 2017). Woman-owned private companies make 28.4 percent of total registered companies. Nearly thirty percent (29.1) of the CEOs in the business sector are women (Geostat, 2015). As it has already been mentioned, the share of women headed agricultural holdings in total rural agricultural holdings is 30.9 percent (Geostat, 2014). The barriers to women's entrepreneurship are various: women face greater obstacles in accessing credit, training, networks business knowledge and information (Khitarihvili, 2015). Out of 8 700 members of farmers' cooperatives in the country, 2 206 are women (25 percent). Out of 2 106 existing cooperatives, only 100 are headed by women (19 percent) (ACDA, personal communication, 2017).

Regarding access to markets, rural areas of Georgia are characterized by subsistence farming (FAO, 2018). Any surplus products usually are sold to collection centres (particularly for milk) or middle persons. It is also common that some products are sold on the sides of the roads (Ibid.). Another option for farmers is to take the products to the local markets and sell them to the wholesalers or to have the products picked up by them. The two largest markets where farmers sell their products are Tbilisi and Adjara (a touristic destination) in the summertime. Small farmers are still not reaching public institutions (like prisons, schools and the army (Ibid.).



With the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union, the export potential is increasing for agricultural products. However, the large number of regulations needing to be met make it difficult for small farmers (in particular those farmers with less access to networks and information, including women) to adapt to this new scenario (FAO, 2018).

Generally, men are associated with wholesale and women with retail (Oxfam, 2015). This, as the field research conducted for this report revealed, is explained in part by gender inequalities in access to transportation. Focus group participants mentioned that more women than men sell products in local market. As the same respondents further elaborated, this was because of transportation problems such as the lack of access to vehicles needed to transport large amounts of goods and products.

Focus groups conducted by FAO demonstrated that both women and men participate equally in selling their products. However, who is selling what always “depends on the product.” Women and men sell those products that they prepare. For instance, men usually sell meat as it is socially considered that it is “dirty work that needs physical strength” and it is more “appropriate” for men. The participants of the focus groups affirmed this. Women usually sell milk, berries and greens and other products such as vegetables and fruits. It is more likely for women to have higher control over the income of the products they sell.

Problems with transportation of the products in reaching different local markets were mentioned as a major challenge for women. Female farmers usually do not have their own vehicles to move products from one place to another. Hiring a car is quite expensive, so they can afford it only once or twice during the year, which is not enough to reach different markets and increase the likelihood of their sales.

5. Rural infrastructure and its impact on rural women

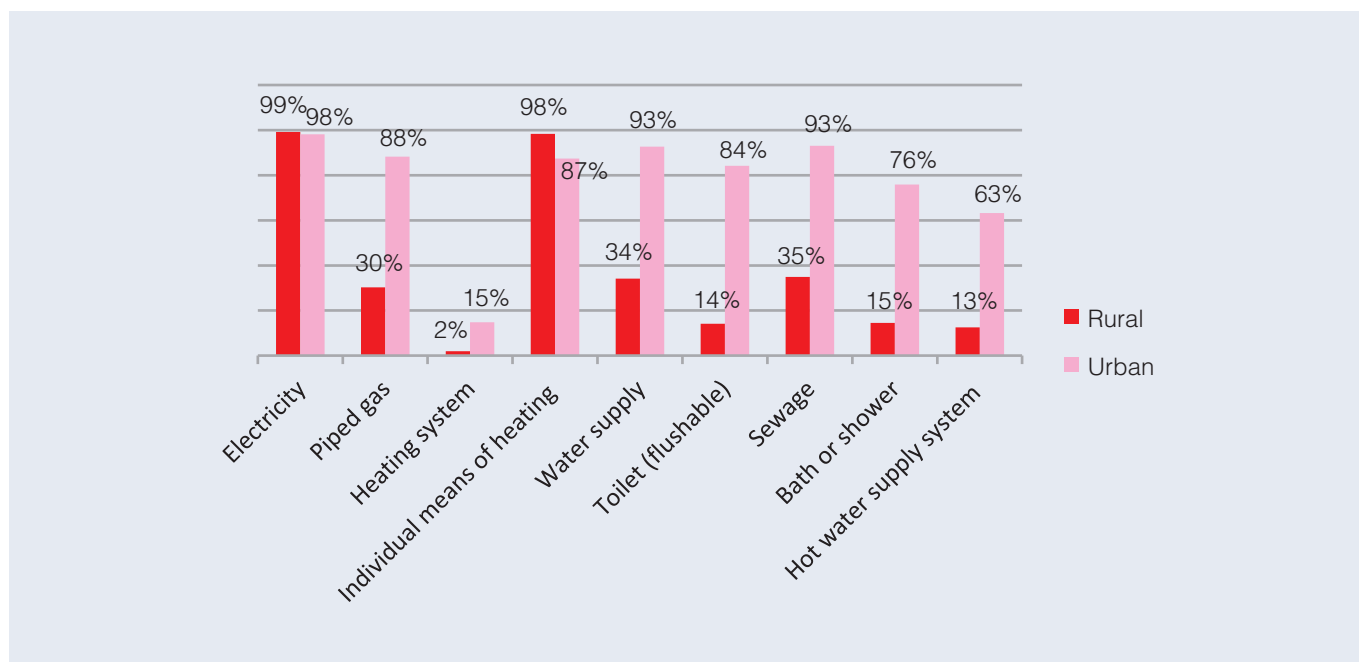
5.1. Housing conditions and housing goods



Almost all (93 percent) of the dwellings in rural areas are individual houses, and 93 percent of the entire rural population live in those houses. Only five percent of dwellings are separate apartments in rural areas (Geostat, 2014). Individual houses in rural areas are from the time of the Soviet Union. The rural population faces poor housing conditions directly linked to household income (AYEG 2014). For example, the majority the population in Kvemo Kartli needs of repairs in their flats, and this problem is more pronounced in villages (ISSA, 2012). There is a significant difference between rural and urban housing amenities. Thirty percent of rural dwellings have access to piped gas compared to 88 percent of urban dwellings (Geostat, 2014a). Thirty-four percent of rural dwellings have a water supply (tap water), compared to 93 percent of urban dwellings (Ibid.). Only 35 percent dwellings in rural areas have a direct connection to the sewage system, compared to 93 percent in urban areas. Only 15 percent of rural dwellings have a bath or shower, compared to 76 percent of urban dwellings (Ibid.).

Poor housing has a significant impact on rural women's workload. Since domestic activities are socially linked with female gender roles, infrastructural development (e.g., women's lower access to transportation and mobility) and the low level of modernization of households – including access to domestic appliances – create an increased burden for local women. Women are also severely affected by water restrictions. When there is no centralized water supply, they are responsible for fetching water, adding an extra burden to their workload.

Chart 5. Housing Amenities by Rural and Urban Households (Geostat, 2014a)



Source: Geostat, 2014a

5.2. Energy sources

coverage of electricity is almost the same between rural and urban areas: 98 percent and 99 percent respectively (Geostat, 2014a). Only two percent of rural dwellings have central heating system (based on gas) and 13 percent have a hot water supply (Ibid.). Women generally experience energy poverty (access to electricity and gas) differently, and in many cases more severely, than men do. Without access to basic energy resources as well as modern energy services, rural women spend most of their day performing basic subsistence tasks including the time-consuming and physically draining tasks of collecting biomass fuels (WEFC and RCDA, 2014). It is most often women who must spend large amounts of time and physical effort supplying fuel for their households and productive needs, carrying heavy loads over long distances, risking their health and safety (Ibid.). Other health hazards arise from the fact that women do most of the cooking. They and their young children are exposed to large amounts of smoke and particulates from indoor fires and suffer from a number of respiratory diseases (Ibid.). The reliance on biomass fuels has put considerable pressure not just on the safety of families, but on the environment as well, increasing both deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Based on the same source and other sources (CENN, 2014), access to energy is gendered and usually determined by intra-household decision-making, women's social position and the value attached to women's labour. Unequal gender relations limit women's ability to participate and voice their energy needs in decision-making at all levels of the energy system.

5.3. Safe drinking water and sanitation

Drinking water coverage has improved significantly in rural areas. Piped household water connection coverage located inside the user's dwelling (plot or yard) has increased in rural areas. The proportion of the population living in rural areas using improved water supplies has increased from 42 percent in 2000 to 74 percent in 2015. (WHO and UNICEF, 2017, p.65). As for sanitation, improved facilities, which is the last step on the sanitation ladder, cover 73 percent of the rural areas (figures that goes up to 95 percent for urban areas) based on 2017 data from the WHO/UNICEF joint monitoring programme for water supply, sanitation and hygiene (Ibid., p.82). While in 2000, 11 percent of the sanitation facilities had sewer connections, this dropped to 2 percent in 2015 (Ibid., p. 83).

As reported by Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, substantial investments in the water sector have led to improvements in both the reliability and quality of water supply available to the local population. The Ministry, with the support of EU, developed a regional development program the first phase of which was launched in 2011. The second phase started in 2014. Under this program, the modernization of infrastructure is underway. There are already some improvements regarding an increased number of hours of access per day to water as well as the provision of better facilities. By the end of 2018, it is planned to have water supply and improved water quality in 23 towns. The Municipality Development Fund has already implemented projects in 17 towns where most of the locals are already benefiting from the program¹¹.



¹¹ For more information visit: <http://infocenter.gov.ge/501-evrokavshiris-rol-i-regionebis-tsyli-th-momaragebis-aghdgenith-samushaoebshi.html>

Despite some progress, access to safe drinking water remains still a challenge. Safe water supplies still often work based on a schedule in the regions, especially in villages. The number of hours when safe drinking water is available varies according to different places. In addition to this, the problem of polluted water affecting locals' health remains an issue to be addressed. Because domestic activities are linked with female gender roles, women are the major users of water in households. Also, waiting for water access during the day hinders women from planning their days according to their convenience. Women need to be at home most of the time to use water whenever it is available. Sometimes this limits their involvement in family farming or it is impossible to cook dinner whenever it is the most convenient for them.

5.4. Rural transport



Women comprised 33 percent of all recipients of driving licenses issued in 2016 and were only 15 percent of the owners of registered vehicles (Geostat, 2017). Even though no disaggregated rural-urban data is available, the evidence from the field research conducted for this report suggests that women drivers are considerably more of a minority in rural areas compared to urban areas.

This shows that women and men have different access to and use transport differently. Women are more likely to travel by public transport. A lack of regularly scheduled public transport to villages and some secondary towns makes it difficult for men and mostly for women to access employment opportunities. Enhanced roads and transport systems can save women time and facilitate their access to markets, jobs and services. Access to roads and affordable public transport will thus bring important benefits for gender equality.

5.5. Time use

Women spend more hours engaged in both household and agricultural tasks than men do, mostly because of unpaid household tasks and informal/unpaid employment (UN Women, 2016). When analysing the daily engagements in animal production and crop cultivation value chains combined, women are involved in agriculture more days than men across all regions: men spend 263.92 days per year, while women spend 344.25 days per year, a gap of 80.33 days per year (UN Women, 2016). On top of that, women do multiple household tasks increasing the gap even more.

There are strong social perceptions about appropriate time uses for women, including issues around women's mobility in public spaces outside the home, about women's responsibility for domestic tasks and about their decision-making roles. All of these affect decisions about how, where, and to what ends women spend their time (Walker et al., 2014).

The field research conducted for this report demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between the social perception and the actual time use and availability of women and men. Although some women highlighted the heavy double burden of domestic and agriculture work placed on women, a general perception was documented – especially among male respondents – that women enjoy from more free time during the day than men do. However, house chores and much of the work on the farms performed by women regarded as helpers are not taken into consideration. In particular, focus groups demonstrated that women generally do the housework, take care of children and work on land at the same time. Men rarely engage in household or care work.

6. Nutrition and food security

Recent data shows that undernourishment has been replaced by malnourishment (i.e., micronutrient deficiencies, obesity, overweight) in Georgia (FAO, 2015). Georgia is one of those countries that: 1) met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1c target by halving the proportion of hungry people or bringing it under 5% by 2015, and 2) reached both the MDG 1c target and the World Food Summit (WFS) goal of halving the number of hungry people by 2015 (Ibid.).



Table 8. Prevalence of undernourishment and progress towards WFS and MDG) targets in Georgia (millions)

Number of people undernourished						The proportion of undernourished in total population					
1990-92	2000-02	2005-07	2010-12	2014-16	Change, %	1990-92	2000-02	2005-07	2010-12	2014-16	Change, %
3.0	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.3	-89.4	56.5	16.3	6.0	19.1	7.4	-86.8

Source: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2015

While the population no longer faces widespread hunger, providing stable and high-quality food is still a challenge. The two main nutrition issues are imbalances in the diet of the general population and inadequate affordability of food for vulnerable groups (Ibid.).

Table 9. The share of food, beverages and tobacco expenses in the total consumption expenses of Georgia Population, the percentage by urban and rural areas

2015		2016	
Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
34.4%	40.33%	33.68%	39.40%

Source: Own calculation, based on Geostat, 2017b, p. 52

The financial problems of population hinder the availability of food in Georgia. (Oxfam, 2016). According to Oxfam, in 2015 the consumption rate of iron-rich products in women and children was very low, varying between 33-34 percent of the recommended dietary intakes (Ibid.). Half of the women whose monthly salary is 100 GEL consume four categories of products instead of the recommended ten, whereas the other members of the family consume five or more categories (Ibid.). The same source reports that women whose monthly income is more than 1 000 GEL regularly consume fruit and meat. An analysis of the data also shows that women have lower dietary diversity score than individuals and households in all wealth tertiles (table 10). As for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, the most frequently consumed food groups are cereals and oils and the least frequently consumed are fresh meat, eggs, vitamin B, rich fruits and legumes. Organ meat, fish and seafood are extremely rare in the diets of pregnant women breastfeeding mothers.

Table 10. Dietary Diversity Scores by Households, Women, and Individuals Dietary Diversity Score (DDS)

Dietary Diversity Score	Low wealth tertile	Medium wealth tertile	High wealth tertile
Households	4.87	5.37	5.71
Individuals	4.77	4.95	4.99
Women	4.58	4.87	4.85

Source: Oxfam, 2016

The number of infants who die each year has decreased; in 2008, 959 died compared to 507 in 2016 (Geostat, 2018d). Maternal malnutrition during pre-pregnancy, as well as maternal malnutrition during pregnancy, are important factors in infant mortality in Georgia (Transparency International Georgia, 2016). The 2015 Strategy on Food Products and Healthy Eating of Georgia's National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), which is prepared based on WHO data, pregnant and breastfeeding women are among those groups where iron-deficiency anaemia occurs most frequently.

As above evidence shows, there are reoccurring gender imbalances in food and nutrition security. Taking into consideration the fact that the percentage of undernourished women is higher than that of men, the utilization component (e.g., access to a range of resources) has to be examined from a gender perspective. In particular, guaranteeing women's access to land, credit, and other critical resources is paramount to ensuring equal opportunities and access to income.

In 2015, the Georgian Government adopted "2015-2020 State Strategy on Rural Development." One of the seven directions of the Strategy is related to the Food Security. Article 3.5 establishes that the objective of the State is to ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food supply that meets the nutritional requirements of and creates the opportunity for a healthy and active life for the population.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Main findings

This gender assessment has identified the major gender inequalities in agriculture and rural livelihoods within the available data that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers. They are as follows:

There is still a gap between legislation, policies and their implementation.

Despite the progress made by the Government of Georgia over the last two decades in improving the national legislative frameworks and developing policies in gender equality and in enforcing and monitoring these laws and policies, challenges remain.

The social status of women in rural areas remains low, gender stereotypes persist and there is a low awareness of existing gender inequalities.

This implies a rigid division of gender roles and decision-making within the household and family farming that directly and negatively affects women's economic opportunities. FAO field research conducted for this report reflected that gender inequalities and gender stereotypes are perceived as somehow natural or acceptable. Agricultural work (as helpers and not as managers) along with domestic and care work are both believed to be women's primary responsibilities, and there is a general underestimation of time workload of women for this work. The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes are reinforced at different levels of life. For example, rural households have less interest in investing in girls because the potential economic returns are perceived to be significantly lower than that of boys given the social existing patrilocal form of marriage. This has long-term implications on young women's status and life opportunities, limiting their abilities to have access to well-paid jobs and other various resources, but also having an impact on overall agricultural productivity and rural development (See for example FAO, 2016b).

There is a significant gender pay gap, and women are overrepresented as unpaid workers.

Because of the perception of women as helpers or contributing family members, they are more likely to be involved in unpaid and informal work, and the gender pay gaps in agriculture, forestry and fisheries are significant. Women are also paid less in almost all the sectors of agriculture. In agriculture, hunting and forestry, women earn 75 percent of men's salary. That falls to 35 percent of men's salary in fisheries (Geostat, 2017). Nearly 60 percent of self-employed women are non-paid workers (Geostat, 2015).

There is a gender gap in technical and professional expertise in agriculture and rural development.

There is both a vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in employment, with men being more represented in higher managerial positions and in technical subjects as agriculture, engineering and construction, where very few women are represented (Geostat, 2015).

Women's access to information, innovation and knowledge is lower compared to men.

Due to deeply entrenched bias, “farmers” are only perceived as men, while women are only seen as “wives of farmers.” As it was revealed by FAO field research, rural advisory services inform farmers by contacting small numbers of men from local communities who tend to inform other men farmers in the neighborhood. Women are usually excluded from these communications and mobilization channels because they are less likely to be regarded as farmers in their own right. Furthermore, women are only between 9 and 25 percent of employees of rural advisory services in the regions, which reinforces the perception of extension service channels as “masculine” domains. This limited access to information, knowledge and agricultural innovation hinder women's economic opportunities.

Women's access to new technologies, machinery and agricultural inputs is lower compared to men.

According to official sources, women and men from rural areas have similar access to computers and internet (Geostat, 2017). However, in family farming practice, men are usually involved in agricultural activities that require technology and machinery, and women are mostly involved in manual and labor-intensive work. According to FAO field research, women have less access to labor-saving technologies partly because of the widespread stereotype that machinery is a “man's thing” and because women have limited access to finance and decision making.

The same happens in accessing irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. Because men are regarded as decision-makers, and those responsible for dealing with providers, women experience *de facto* barriers in accessing these resources.

Women have limited access to ownership of land and other property.

This diminishes their empowerment possibilities. This lack of land registration limits women's access to governmental subsidies, credit and grant schemes that operate in

the regions because of lack of collateral. More importantly, limited access to land (or any other property) ownership and registration also diminish women's status in and outside the family. It is demonstrated that women who own property are less likely to suffer from domestic abuse as they have a way out (FAO, 2016c).

Women have limited access to large, more profitable and wholesale markets.

Wholesale marketing is mostly associated with men and retail and small marketing with women. Women have less access to mobility and transportation means, including trucks, and usually can only carry a small number of products, so they mostly only have access to local markets. Women usually sell milk, vegetables and fruits, including berries and other non-wood forest products. These are usually products that women produce or collect themselves. As for men, they are mostly associated with selling meat. FAO focus groups also revealed that, in some cases, women were perceived as better sellers due to the stereotype that women have better communication skills than men.

Women are underrepresented in cooperatives both as members and as chairpersons.

The Strategy of Regional Development of Georgia aims to promote women's social and economic advancement. However, gender equality considerations are not systematically mainstreamed in other laws and decisions, including the Law on Cooperatives. Some programs focus especially on women's participation, but they are insufficient. Women make up only 25 percent of the members of all farmers cooperatives, according to the latest data (ACDA, personal communication, 2017). Out of 2106 cooperatives, only 100 (4.7 percent) are headed by women.

There are reoccurring gender imbalances in food and nutrition security.

Access to diverse, high-quality food is problematic especially in mountainous regions due to difficult climatic conditions and poor infrastructure. Despite the fact that women buy and cook food for their family, they consume food with lower nutritional value than men do. This has direct effects on women's health, preterm complications and mortality as well as the health of newborns and infants (FAO, 2016).

Poor rural infrastructure, limited access to transport and modern energy supplies have a direct impact on time use.

Poor public transport and infrastructure are reflected by a lack of regularly scheduled public transport to villages and smaller towns, the lack of lighting, bus stops, commuter information, pedestrian crossings and road signs. This restricted mobility also poses other burdens on women, from limited access to social services – including medical services – to access to administration, information and decision-making.

Poor housing has a significant impact on rural women's workload. Since domestic activities are socially linked with female gender roles, infrastructural development (e.g., women's lower access to transportation and mobility) and the low level of modernization of households, including access to domestic appliances, create an increased burden for local women. Women are also severely affected by water restrictions because when there is no centralized water supply they are responsible for fetching water. This adds an extra burden to their workload.

Without access to basic energy recourses as well as modern energy services, rural women spend most of their day performing basic subsistence tasks including the time-consuming and physically draining tasks of collecting biomass fuels (RCDA and WECF 2014; CENN, 2014). Other health hazards arise from the fact that women do most of the cooking. They are exposed to large amounts of smoke and particulates from indoor fires and suffer from a number of respiratory diseases. Unequal gender relations limit women's ability to participate and voice their energy needs in decision-making at all levels of the energy system.

Given that care responsibilities are mostly placed on women's shoulders, the limited availability of childcare facilities in rural areas limits women's economic opportunities. This also has a direct impact on women's access to learning and economic opportunities and access to decision making.

There is low-level access to rural finance.

Women's access to financial resources is dependent on women's access to property in rural areas. Due to limited or no access to land and other property, women cannot participate in some of the agricultural funding schemes and are not always eligible for bank loans. Based on FAO research, women are less likely to be registered as property owners – whether of land, houses, or capital equipment – leaving them at a significant disadvantage.

For the same reason, funding schemes in rural areas are less accessible for women except for the cases when women are the target.

Rigid gender-based roles also affect men negatively.

Men in Georgia are stereotypically expected to be the main breadwinners, providers and protectors of women and a family. These masculine gender roles, often associated with alcohol, tobacco consumption and risk-taking behaviours, place a great deal of pressure on men, leading to frustration when these social expectations are not fulfilled. It is documented that the loss of status and position as provider of IDP men has led to increased mental health problems, higher rates of suicide and higher rates of violence against women) (Martkvishvili, 2010). In fact, 81 percent of those who committed suicide in 2016 were men (Geostat, 2017).

There are still data gaps on gender issues in agriculture and rural development.

The availability of sex-disaggregated data at the national level has increased in recent years. Since 2011, Geostat has regularly collected sex-disaggregated data in health, education, social protection, labour, income and expenditure, entrepreneurship, crime and representation in the institutions of governance policy areas. These statistics are presented in Geostat's annual publication "Women and Men in Georgia." However, in spite of the progress made, there are still the areas where accurate and reliable gender-sensitive data and gender-specific indicators are needed.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the review of the gender issues in agriculture and rural development and conclusions of this assessment, the following recommendations are proposed to the FAO country team and national policymakers and practitioners involved in programme and project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in agriculture, rural development and gender equality.

7.2.1. For the FAO country team

- Continue to strictly follow corporate policies of gender mainstreaming, ensuring that the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and projects, including under the EU ENPARD programmes, are based on analysis of the potential impact on socially deprived and disadvantaged groups, primarily rural women and men;
- Continue to actively support national partners in achieving the SDGs in a socially inclusive manner by formulating evidence-based and gender-responsive policies and programmes in order to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security, and to ensure equal access to and control over natural and productive resources, infrastructure, services, markets, technology, decent work and social protection;
- Build knowledge and competencies in gender equality and women's empowerment to support rural and agricultural development in the country by raising the awareness of the staff of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Agricultural Cooperative Development Agency, Agricultural Information Consultancy Centers (extension services) and other key national stakeholders, and equipping them with the tools and instruments for effective gender mainstreaming;
- Support policy makers in developing comprehensive rural development and agricultural strategies and programs that are responsive to the practical and strategic needs of women and men and contribute to reducing structural barriers that limit rural women and girls access to resources and economic empowerment;
- Support the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Geostat and other relevant national institutions in collecting, analyzing, disseminating and using gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data in agriculture, food security, nutrition and sustainable development in the context of the SDGs.

- At policy and field level, support and conduct awareness-raising trainings on gender equality, and implement women-targeted programmes and activities that not only address capacity development in farming activities, but also address gender stereotypes and inequalities, and improve women's access to land, knowledge and information, finance, markets and agricultural inputs, technologies and equipment;
- Support the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and other relevant stakeholders in identifying promising practices from Georgia, as well as from other countries of Europe and Central Asia in improving women's access to land, and in disseminating those practices to key stakeholders;
- Support national partners in identifying successful rural women-entrepreneurs and women-farmers to serve as role models, actively engage them in advocacy events;
- Address the heavy burden of rural women's unpaid work by bringing the subject into the policy discourse and encouraging investment in labour-saving technologies accessible to women;
- Encourage the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and support other relevant national institutions in developing a plan for promoting women's access to vocational and tertiary education institutions which provide training in agricultural studies, forestry and other areas that challenge the existing gender-based occupational segregation;
- Ensure equal outreach and benefits to rural women and men through projects and trainings adapted to their (substantive and logistical) needs and interests and use of all possible communication channels (including municipal Women's Rooms, women-leaders at the community level and local networks) for mobilisation.
- Address the issues of women's limited access to land and other productive assets and promote the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (FAO, 2012) endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in 2012, with particular attention to its technical guide: Governing Land for Women and Men (FAO, 2013);
- Promote co-registration of land by spouses and ensure that any FAO intervention on land consolidation and land management is gender-mainstreamed through the support of the on-going programme on land registration;
- Support the reformulation of requisites to access to farming subsidies, including the need to have land registered in one's name, to improve women's access to these subsidies;
- Support formulation of a gender-sensitive law on nutrition and food security and the action plan;
- Support gender-responsive ICT in agriculture, including the development of e-agriculture national strategy;
- Work in partnership with relevant regional and international stakeholders, including those within the UN system, in support of results at national level.

7.2.2. To the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture

- Develop inclusive rural development and agricultural strategies and programs which are responsive to the needs of rural women and men, and the disadvantaged groups, and to challenge structural social barriers that limit women's economic empowerment;

- Ensure that development interventions reach and empower rural women. MEPA, as a leading institution for implementation of the Strategy of Agricultural Development and Rural Development Strategy, implements the gender-specific actions of these strategies;
- Strengthen capacities of the Ministry in gender mainstreaming by adopting a specific strategy and action plan and assigning a high-level official as a Gender Focal Point;
- Monitor the progress made by the extension services in undertaking a proactive approach to reach women and provide them with knowledge and information they need;
- Support rural women's access to decision making at the community or higher levels;
- Support successful rural women to act as role models for next generations of younger women in the country and as community leaders;
- Support awareness raising and advocacy campaigns using the promising practices of how gender equality at household, farm and community level helps to eliminate poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity;
- Support income diversification and off-farm employment for women and men and develop measures for the reduction of the existing vertical and horizontal labour segregation;
- Support rural women's access to social protection schemes and social services and infrastructure (including access to child day care facilities and kindergarten), especially those who work as self-employed and at family farms;
- Develop and implement women-targeted capacity development schemes based on the thorough identification of their needs;
- In collaboration with other relevant national institutions and agencies, develop and implement a plan for promoting women's enrollment in vocational and tertiary education and training in agriculture, forestry, fishing and other areas that challenge gender-based segregation in professional occupations;
- Initiate and engage with extension services and other relevant bodies in developing and implementing programs in agriculture innovation and subsidy application adapted to the needs of women and men;
- Increase the number of professional women among the extension service staff so they can serve as role models and engage more women working on farms to get access to learning and agricultural innovation opportunities;
- Equip the agricultural extension system, structures and staff with the required resources (knowledge, time, equipment, transportation, etc.), so reach-out to women can be technically ensured. Extension services can also create a network of women local leaders, in collaboration with the municipal women's rooms, that can reach, mobilize and inform women farmers;
- Provide accessible information to rural communities on women's land rights through local ICCs and conduct awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns in media on women's rights over land and other productive assets, such as livestock;
- Engage in the reformulation of requisites to access to farming subsidies, including the need to have land registered in one's name, to improve women's access to these subsidies;
- Ensure that the current land registration reform does not oversee the legal rights of all family members that own land and that all legal members are registered as such;
- Develop capacities of ICCs and other key partners to be better equipped to assist women in addressing the barriers in accessing markets;

- Conduct value chain analyses to identify key issues in selected economic clusters and engage in developing capacities of rural women (and men) to overcome them;
- Support, guide and implement infrastructural programs that will take into account specific needs of women and men farmers -- and also women working in farms -- in transporting goods from local to large wholesale food markets;
- Revise and amend the 2013 Law of Georgia on Agricultural Cooperatives to mainstream gender concerns;
- Support the Agricultural Cooperative Development Agency in researching reasons for women's low participation in the agricultural cooperatives, and organize awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of agricultural cooperatives for local women;
- Develop and support specific programs encouraging women participation as members and as chairpersons of cooperatives;
- Initiate and adopt a gender-sensitive law on nutrition and food security which will be followed by an action plan;
- Initiate collection of data disaggregated by sex and location (urban/rural) to identify needs and target groups in rural areas;
- Initiate and develop awareness raising training schemes on nutrition and food security targeting rural women and men;
- Invest in rural infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy and labour saving technologies) that free up women's working hours and improve the quality of life in rural areas;
- Consider the provision of subsidy schemes for rural women to obtain driving licenses and strengthen rural transport services to ensure that rural transport services are women-friendly.
- Collaborate with Geostat and other relevant national institutions to advance the production, analysis and use of gender statistics in the context of the SDGs through the general population census as well as other data collecting mechanisms provided by Geostat and other relevant national institutions;
- Ensure that the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Agricultural, Environmental and Rural statistics 2016-2020 is monitored through gender-specific indicators.

7.2.3 To NGOs and civil society organizations (academia, media and the private sector)

- Support rural women's empowerment by strengthening rural women's networks, improving women's access to information and raising rural women's needs and voices at the local, regional and national political arenas;
- Support the generation of evidence in gender equality issues, including in the areas such as fisheries and forestry;
- Contribute to the fight against gender stereotypes, which are more pronounced in rural areas, by giving greater visibility to women's role and contribution to agriculture and rural development;
- To the private sector: ensure equal pay for equal jobs, particularly in the areas of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, within plans of social responsibility.

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Legal materials available at matsne.gov.ge:

- Constitution of Georgia
- Civil Code of Georgia
- Law on Gender Equality
- Law of Georgia on Public Service
- Labor Code
- Law on Agricultural Cooperatives

Online resources:

- Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/georgia>
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure Georgia: <http://www.mrdi.gov.ge/ge/main>
- Parliament of Georgia: <http://parliament.ge/ge/parlamentarebi/qalebi-parlamentshi-23>
- The Economist – The Intelligence Unit: <http://country.eiu.com/georgia>
- Transparency International Georgia: <http://www.transparency.ge/en/node/6007>
- UNDP: <http://georgianwine.gov.ge/eng>
- UNDP: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GEO>
- Unicef: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>
- Unicef – 2015 Welfare Monitoring Survey : <http://data.unicef.ge/en/datasets>
- WECF: http://www.wecf.eu/download/2017/10-October/WeResearch_GenderAssessmentReport_21_07_20171.pdf
- WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme: <https://www.wssinfo.org/>
- World Bank: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Gender-Statistics>
- World Economic Forum: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/rankings/>

Annex 1

Focus Group Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on challenges, problems and successful stories in your agricultural activities. The purpose of this study is to learn how farmers (women and men) view their role in agriculture and how satisfied they are with working conditions. We hope to learn things that the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture can use to improve working conditions and other factors that would improve men's and women's participation in farming.

The information you give us is completely anonymous and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the focus group. We would like to tape the focus groups so that we can make sure to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas we hear from the group. No names will be attached to the focus groups.

We will have a discussion on various topics and we will ask you to respect each other's opinions. If you have any questions now or after the discussion, you can always contact me.

A. Introduction: Welcome

A.1 Introducing moderator and the note taker.

A.2 Participants should introduce themselves:

- Your name
- Your role agricultural activities (wine, cereals, etc.)
- What are the main activities for women and men in agriculture/rural development?
- Describe one day

As you know, agriculture takes a number of steps to achieve success. I would like to discuss these steps with you from your perspective. In the first place, we will discuss land issues, then access to finances, information and machinery. The last issues to discuss would be access to the market and income distribution in a family.

B. Land

B.1 In most cases, how the ownership over land is practiced in the region?

- *Who owns land?*
- *How was land acquired (inheritance, purchase, governmental)?*
- *Is land owned individually or jointly?*
- *How is land documented?*
- *Who works most on the land from the household members?*
- *The rights that individuals have over each plot, ownership?*
- *How are rights of ownership and inheritance allocated within the household?*
- *How well are you and your family member's familiar with land ownership documents?*

B.2 Recent research on women's role in agriculture suggest that one of the barriers for women to be involved/decision-makers in agricultural activities is access and rights to a land. Women own either small plots of a land or they own none. Do you agree/disagree with that? (*Respondents should explain their answers*)

B.3 How do you envision landownership rights for your children or future children (equal rights for son/daughter)?

C. Access to finances

C.1 Tell us about your personal experience and your attempts made to access financial support from:

- the state
- the banking institutions (credits/leasing)
- funding agencies

C.2 Are there any differences in **fund availability for women and men?** Why?

In case of *the state, the banking institutions, funding agencies*

C.3 Do you know about any **special funding programs for women?**

- If yes, tell us more about it.

C.4 What do you think what type of funding schemes should be developed in order to contribute to the development of agriculture and rural development in the region?

C.5 What type of funding schemes would be the most efficient in order to support women's participation in agriculture and rural development?

- On each stage: *primary production, secondary production, sales*

D. Access to information and modern technologies

D.1 Are there any opportunities in your region to get agricultural education on specific issues that would be useful for your farming activities?

D.2 Training programs funded through donor organizations are usually attended by men. What do you think, what can be the reason for that?

- Do you think it is a right approach?

If yes, why? If no, how the situation can be changed?

D.3 Tell us about your social capital network (contacts) related to your farming activities?

- *AICC, Universities, Ministry, donors, sales channels, agricultural experts*

D.4 Could you describe the process of accessing relevant information (e.g. funding opportunities, business projects, educational activities from different sources, Agro portals, Internet, etc.)?

D.5 What would be a desired way of accessing relevant information (for agricultural purposes) in your region?

E. Access to machineries and equipment

E.1. Tell us about your experience and attempts to obtain equipment's for your farming activities such as tractor for plowing, harvesting, fertilizing, chemical management treatment.

- challenges/problems

a) in general

b) for women

E. Access to Market/Sales Channels

E.1 How do you sell your products: bulk or to retail stores? Who is involved (men/women)?

E.2 Could you please tell us about your sales channels?

E.3 Who is negotiating with buyers?

E.3 What are the major challenges? For men/women?

E.4 Give us your suggestions how to improve this process?

F. Income Distribution in a family

F.1 Who is the main contributor of income within the household? Why?

F.2 How household income is shared within the family?

F.3 Which economic decisions are made by men and women? Why?

F.4 How decisions about new investments are made?

G. Women Entrepreneurs

F.1 Do you know about special programs for women entrepreneurs?

F.2 Is there any secondary productions in your region run by women?

F.3 What are the challenges in this direction?

F.4 Could you tell us about successful women entrepreneurs?

Annex 2

N	Respondent	Organization	Location
1	Ketevan Jikashvili	Community Development Center "Aisi"	Village Pshaveli, Kakheti
2	Tamar Maisuradze	Mtskheta-Mtianeti Committee of Anti-Violence Network	Mtskheta, Mtskheta-Mtianeti
3	Leila Maisuradze	Local farmer	Mtskheta, Mtskheta-Mtianeti
4	Izolda Qistesashvili	Cooperative "Gile"	Gurjaani, Kakheti
5	Leila Chochia	Cooperative "Vardi-2014"	Abasha, Samegrelo
6	Lia Papiashvili	Cooperative "Alvani"	Akhmeta, Kakheti
7	Nargiza Ghvinjilia	Cooperative "Aroma of Tea"	Tsalenjikha, Samegrelo
8	Tea Tsisagi	Local farmer	Village Sveneti, Shida Kartli
9	Marina Bjalava	Association "Women and Universe"	Bolnisi, Kvemo Kartli
10	---	Local Farmer	Marneuli, Kvemo Kartli
11	Marika Gelashvili	Deputy Head of Regional Coordination Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture	Tbilisi
12	Nino Telia	Agricultural Cooperatives Development Agency	Tbilisi
13	Natia Tatishvili	Agricultural Information Consultancy Center	Telavi, Kakheti
14	Dimiti Misheladze	Agricultural Information Consultancy Center	Tsalka, Kvemo Kartli
15	Zura Kapanadze	Agricultural Information Consultancy Center	Marneuli, Kvemo Kartli

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