#EU4Climate

Recommendations

Incorporation of Climate Mainstreaming in Sector Development Political Documents

Agriculture Sector

TBILISI I NOVEMBER, 2021

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საქართველოსთვის

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Tbilisi
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Content

Foreword

This document was prepared by the NGO Environment and Development under the EU-4Climate initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It supports countries in implementing the Paris Climate Agreement and improving climate policies and legislation. Its ambition is to limit the effects of climate change and make local communities more resilient. It will assist the Eastern Partnership countries to integrate low carbon and climate resilient development objectives into policies and plans, to improve the implementation of the Paris Agreement and support legislative alignment.

The project is a sub-component of the EU4Climate initiative and aims to assist the UNDP and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia in identifying priority directions in the energy, agriculture and health sectors by mainstreaming climate change issues and developing specific sectoral recommendations and guidelines for addressing climate change issues based on these identified and agreed priorities.

One of the main tasks of the project is to review and analyze national policy documents, strategies, programs, development plans and legislative and regulatory framework documents and identify priority directions in the agriculture sector for developing recommendations vis-à-vis addressing climate change issues in the sectoral planning process.

Overall Background

01 Overall Background

Georgia has a rich agricultural tradition which is an integral part of its history, mentality and cultural heritage. Agriculture played an important role in formation of the Georgian statehood and significantly contributed to its economic development.

A total of 43.4% (more than 3 million hectares) of the whole territory of Georgia is designated as agricultural land which also includes pastures and meadows. A total of 43% of the remaining area is covered by forest. Georgia, as a mountainous country, is characterized by altitudinal zonality where only 39% of arable land is located at an elevation of 500 meters above sea level, 29%- 500-1,000 meters above sea level, 21% - 1,000-1,500 meters above sea level and 11% is located at elevations over 1,500 meters above sea level.

Georgia has favorable soil and climatic conditions conducive to the development of agriculture which is determined by the existence of 12 different climatic zones and 20 types of soils. Many endemic species create a perfect source for the development of plant growing and cattle breeding. Diverse soil-climatic conditions support the growth of temperate climate and sub-tropical crops. These crops include cereals, early and late season vegetables, melons and gourds, potatoes, technical crops, grapes, sub-tropical crops, fruit varieties, etc. However, Georgian agriculture and food production has been lagging well behind other sectors of the economy in the past decades.

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As a result of the census of October 1, 2014, 642.2 thousand farms were registered in the country, including 640.0 thousand households and 2.2 thousand legal entities (Geostat, 2016). In total, 787.7 thousand hectares of agricultural land are used by farms. Among them, 86.5% (681.1 thousand ha) are used by households and 13.5% (106.6 thousand ha) are used by legal entities. Most of the farms are small in size. In particular, more than

three-quarters (77.1%) of farms own less than one hectare of agricultural land.

A total of 44.6% of the land used for annual crops is sown with maize, 18.6% with wheat, 9.2% for vegetables and 9.2% is sown with barley. The area of perennial plants grown on farms is 109.6 thousand hectares. The average area for the perennials grown by farms is 0.4 hectares. A total of 93.5% of farms have less than one hectare of perennials. A total of 17.6 thousand farms have and one hectare or more for perennials and 1.7 thousand have three hectares or more. A total of 54.2% of perennials are orchards, 30.1%- vineyards, 6.7%- citrus plantations and 4.2%- tea plantations.

As of October 1, 2014, the number of cattle owned by farms amounted to 1,005.0 thousand heads, sheep and goats - 989.3 thousand, pigs - 213.1 thousand and the number of poultry- 8,216.0 thousand.

According to data from Geostat Agricultural Census of 2014, the total area of pastures and hay meadows amounts to 1,940,400 ha (i.e., approximately 64% of the total agricultural land). Of this, 1,796,000 ha (i.e., 92% or 59% of the total agricultural land) falls under pasturelands. The majority of Georgian pastures is either used as common pastures or is owned by the state. State-owned pastures are either rented out with short-term leases or used informally.

Many of these pastures show only modest animal performance and provide low incomes for the farmers using them. Moreover, inadequate pasture use, particularly the overuse of erosion exposed pastures, can contribute to exposing people, property and infrastructure to the natural risk of landslides and inundation.

Work Performed and Results

02 Work Performed and Results

An active communication with the responsible agencies / experts in the field of agriculture was carried out in order to develop relevant recommendations for climate change mainstreaming.

National policy documents, strategies, programs and legislative and regulatory framework documents in the agricultural sector were analyzed using desk research, interviews and online surveys.

The mainstreaming / strengthening of climate change issues in the priority areas of the agricultural sector is considered through the development of relevant recommendations based on the country's international commitments as well as high-level documents (policies, strategies, programs) in addition to the existing legal and institutional framework.

A detailed stakeholder analysis comprised an important aspect of the work on this document. To this end, the existing strategic, policy and regulatory documents in the field of climate change were evaluated in order to identify stakeholders in accordance with the pre-designed approaches. The responsible structures and parties involved at different stages / levels were also identified.

Additionally, information was collected about individuals who are actively involved in climate change decision-making and implementation during initial interviews with stakeholders.

In order to analyze the impact and interest of stakeholders, the identified parties were assessed in terms of attitudes towards the agricultural sector and climate change issues which are detailed below in the relevant sub-section of this document.

2.1. Agriculture Risk Profile Assessment

Climate and any change in it directly affects agriculture. Georgia's diverse soil and climatic conditions determine the multiplicity of the country's agricultural production. The agricultural sector has traditionally occupied an important place in the Georgian economy. Although its market share was 7.4% of the gross domestic product in 2019, more than 38% of the employed population works in agriculture (Geostat, 2019). The low income of the agricultural sector is due to many factors in relation to the number of people employed in it but it is also negatively affected by climate change, especially its extreme manifestations such as prolonged and severe droughts, sharp temperature changes, strong winds and rain, hail, etc. It should be noted that in addition to employment, a well-developed agricultural sector ensures a country's food security and is the basis of its sovereignty. It is vital for agriculture to be a priority for every country.

Climate change threats to Georgia's agricultural sector are:

- Increasing the area of drought regions, increasing the moisture deficit at the expense of evaporation and loss of yield;
- Strengthening soil salinization processes (in Eastern Georgia);
- Decreased soil fertility;
- Intensive reproduction of diseases and pests of agricultural crops;
- Enhancement of soil erosion processes;
- Increased risk of floods and hail;
- Changes in agro-climatic zones;
- Increased demand for irrigation water in the face of the declining freshwater resources.

Taking the expected threats into consideration, the sector will not be ready to cope with the challenges posed by future scenarios and its vulnerability to climate change will increase even more due to the absence of appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change and legislative gaps in strategic documents and relevant action plans.

Gender issues should also be included in the strategy papers as the threats posed by climate change affect women and men differently. At the same time, the involvement of women and men in agriculture is different in Georgia and is often associated with gender stereotypes.

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Until now, the main focus in agricultural development in relation to climate change was to find measures for adaptation and nearly no action was taken in order to implement a mitigation strategy in the agricultural production system. Consequently, practically no mitigation measures were considered or adopted at the farm level which is conditioned by various factors, including a lack of knowledge and financial resources and no legal requirements.

2.2. Key Findings

Based on the analysis of the current situation, the following main conclusions can be drawn:

- The vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climate change is high. The importance of climate change and the need to take effective steps in this direction are highlighted in the policy documents, action plans and legislation discussed above. At the same time, however, it should be noted that strategies and specific action plans only weakly address specific ways in which to increase the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change. This may increase the existing risks and the vulnerabilities in the sector;
- It is recommended to clearly state the specific goals and objectives in the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2021-2027 document which will be aimed at the introduction / dissemination of mitigation measures which include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting carbon sequestration in soil and plant biomass as well as the implementation of adaptation measures;
- In addition, it is important to fill the existing legislative gaps that will help increase the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change. The possibility of filling these gaps is real because:
  - A draft law on windbreaks (field protection) has been prepared;
  - A draft law has been prepared in order to unify and update two existing laws on soil protection;
  - An amendment to Government Resolution #424 has been prepared which provides for the introduction of additional control mechanisms in order to protect soil from physical degradation;
  - There are plans to develop a national pasture management policy and create an appropriate legal framework for 2022 (within the Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets of Georgia through the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Pasturelands project launched with the support of the Global Environment Facility [GEF]);
  - A practical guide on good agricultural practice to reduce ammonia emissions from the agricultural sector has been prepared which is planned to be established in the form of a code.

Based on the analysis of the reviewed documents, the main errors and gaps were identified which are part of the policy documents and legislative framework related to the agricultural sector. In particular:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in the agricultural development strategy documents are of a general nature and less reflected in specific plans;
- The agricultural development strategy documents practically do not reflect plans to reduce greenhouse gas emission from the agricultural sector which will help mitigate climate change;
- No law / normative document defining the sustainable use of common pastures and establishing a legislative regulation mechanism has been adopted. The existing legislation contains only general records which is insufficient for bringing the process within the legislative framework;
- A law on windbreaks (field protection) has not been adopted which is of particular importance in terms of climate change mitigation. It should be noted that the relevant draft law has already been prepared and is in the discussion stage;
- No resolution has been adopted on the approval of the National Indicators of Land Degradation and the methodology for determining them which has been prepared and

its implementation will assist with the establishment of land degradation monitoring and the coordinated and effective work of the agencies involved in this direction;

- No resolution has been adopted on the approval of the technical regulation on soil pollution quality. An updated version of the resolution has already been prepared;
- The norms for the use of agrochemicals (fertilizers, ameliorators, plant protection products) used in the agricultural sector are not regulated; therefore, there are no mechanisms to control them;
- No normative acts have been developed in order to protect the soil from physical, chemical and biological degradation. In this regard, the updated draft law on soil protection and the planned change in the technical regulations on the removal, storage, use and recultivation of the fertile soil layer are noteworthy;
- No Code of Good Agricultural Practice has been developed covering all areas of agriculture and aimed at reducing emissions (from barns, manure storage and application, inappropriate animal nutrition practices, synthetic fertilizer use, organic waste burning) and increasing the stock of organic carbon in the soil (applying organic fertilizers, green manure, low tillage practices, etc.);
- Gender issues are left out of the focus of the strategy and other policy documents. However, proper gender mainstreaming is essential given the urgency of the issue: the dangers posed by climate change affect women and men differently. At the same time, the involvement of women and men in agriculture is different in Georgia which is often associated with gender stereotypes.

2.3. Recommendations

1. Table 2 presents detailed recommendations for climate change mainstreaming for the selected strategic documents – Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027 and in the relevant Action Plan 2021-2023 of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027;

2. Strengthen the capacity of advisory services in the agricultural sector in terms of climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures;

3. Study the impacts of climate change in all areas of the agricultural sector which will provide a full picture of the existing risks involved. It is also desirable to focus on the issue of gender, risk assessment in terms of gender (e.g., the vulnerability to climate change of male and female farmers involved in different sectors of agriculture);

4. Facilitate the renewal of the meteorological observation network and increase the coverage area to create a complete climate picture and improve forecasting;

5. Promoting the dissemination of water-saving irrigation methods (drip, rain) and fertigation;

6. Replacement of a fixed tariff for irrigation water with a volumetric or a mixed tariff;

7. Fill in the existing legislative gaps and develop mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the regulations imposed within them.

The detailed recommendations vis-à-vis the changes to be made in the selected strategic documents for climate mainstreaming - Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027 and in the relevant Action Plan 2021-2023 of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027 to present issues related to climate change and to facilitate their further practical implementation are presented in the **table 1.**

Document	Inconsistent Context	Specific Recommendations
Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027	Strategy Goal 2: "Sustainable use of natural resources, conservation of ecosystem, climate change adaptation" – does not include climate change mitigation.	The goal of Strategy 2 should be formulated as follows: "Sustainable use of natural resources, conservation of ecosystems, climate change adaption and climate change mitigation."
Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027	Dissemination of environmentally adapted, climate-smart agricultural practices and promoting the development of bio / organic production.	Add climate change mitigation measures: 1) Reduce greenhouse gas emission by introducing good agricultural practices Through proper management of animal and plant organic waste generated during the agricultural production process, including changing the practice of waste incineration in the open field. By integrating organic waste into the soil, by anaerobic processing of organic waste using biogas plants and by spreading aerobic composting of agricultural and household waste; Providing minimal plant cover for the soil; Minimal soil tillage; Through improving livestock food rations and stall care; 2) Promoting atmospheric carbon sequestration by converting it to the organic carbon in the soil Implementing soil protection and soil improvement measures; Installation of field protection strips; Proper management of pastures; Restoration of degraded lands; 3) Promoting climate neutrality of the complete food production and supply chain- from farm to consumer;

Table 1:

Recommendations

Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027	The mechanism for carrying out the following tasks is not discussed: 1) Dissemination of environmentally-friendly and climate-smart agricultural practices and promoting development of bio / organic production; 2) Promotion of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies; 3) Preservation of agro-biodiversity.	Must be added: 1) Dissemination of environmentally-friendly and climate-smart agricultural practices. In addition, the introduction of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies and practices should be defined as one of the main preconditions to participate in programs implemented and funded by the NNLE Rural Development Agency. Define highly effective measures in accordance with the specifics of the field which will be promoted within the aforementioned programs; 2) To promote the development of bio / organic production, create a separate program that will be implemented NNLE Rural Development Agency; 3) Maintaining agro-biodiversity and promoting the adoption of new high-yielding and better-adapted varieties / hybrids; 4) Measures should be taken to ensure equal involvement of women and men.
Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2021-2027; 2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Achieving the second goal of the strategy will be difficult due to the lack of awareness of farmers / entrepreneurs. Goal 1- Competitive agricultural and non-agricultural sectors; Task 1: Ensure the knowledge / awareness of farmers and entrepreneurs.	Task 1 is formulated as follows: 1) "Ensuring knowledge / awareness of best agricultural practices in the context of climate change for farmers and entrepreneurs;" 2) Strengthening extension services to transfer knowledge about climate-smart agricultural technologies to farmers; 3) Climate change mainstreaming in agriculture professional educational programs taking into account the specifics of the field; 4) Promoting the equal participation of women and men in awareness raising activities.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Activity: 1.1.1. Provision of effective extension services for farmers.	The activity is formulated as follows: 1.1.1. Provision of effective extension services for farmers on best agricultural practices and climate-smart technologies.

2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Activity: 1.2.1. Develop criteria supporting bottom-up principle initiatives.	Define the advantage of the proposed initiative as the main criterion for supporting bottom-up principle initiatives in terms of climate change mitigation and / or climate change adaptation.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Activity: 1.2.2. Equipping agricultural cooperatives with processing machines.	Develop infrastructure for agricultural cooperatives using the best climate-smart technologies in the field.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	The following programs do not address or only partially address climate change issues: 1.2.3. Promoting the cultivation of modern orchards. The program: "Plant the Future." 1.2.4. Promoting Georgian tea production. The program: "Georgian Tea." 1.2.7. Co-financing the purchase of harvesting equipment for farmers. Harvesting Equipment Co-financing Project; 1.2.8. Establishment / co-financing of storing and processing enterprises. 1.2.12. Organizing a greenhouse cluster. "Imereti Agrozone."	Precondition for receiving financial support in these programs should be defined as climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures which take into account the specifics of the program / project. It is also important to increase access to financial resources for women farmers.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	The action plan does not envisage accounting for irrigation water consumption and changing the tariff scheme.	Change of fixed tariff for irrigation water with a volumetric or a mixed tariff.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Does not take into consideration defining climate change mitigation opportunities: 2.1.1. Identifying and promoting opportunities for climate change adaptation.	The activity is formulated as follows: 2.1.1. Identifying and promoting opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027	Does not envisage the creation / improvement of new species / hybrids of climate-adapted animals and plants: 2.5.1. Conducting research on local species and populations of Georgian fauna; 2.5.2. Conducting research on annual and perennial crops.	It is necessary to promote research on the creation of new species / hybrids of animals and plants adapted to the climate and to expand scientific activities in this direction and encouraging the equal participation of women and men in research.

A detailed description of the recommendation, along with the expected results and specific actions to be taken, is given in **Table 2.**

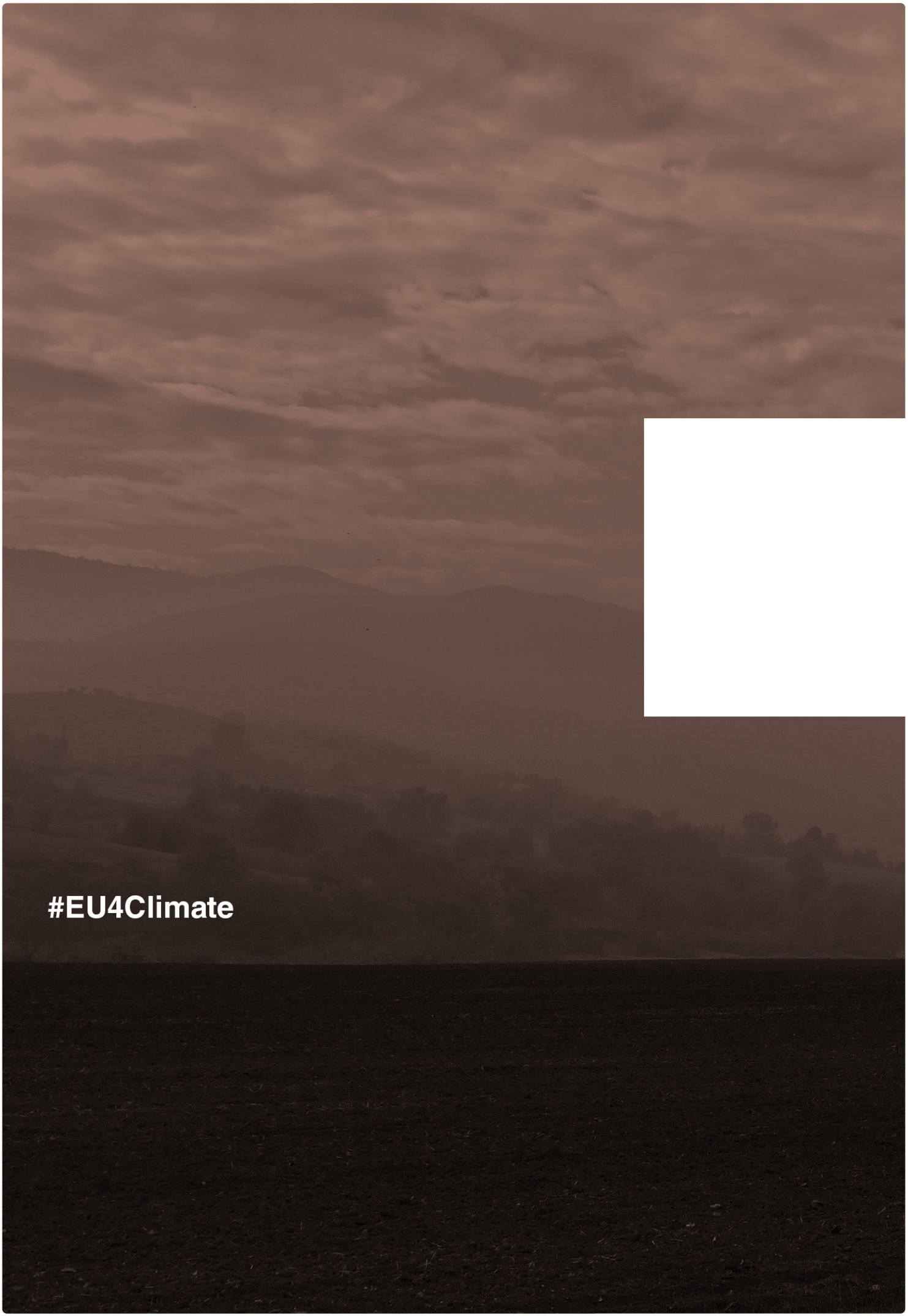
Recommendation	Possible Outcome of Implementation (Problem-oriented)	Specific Actions / Measures	Responsible Structure	Risks / Assumption
Goal 2 of the Strategy should be formulated as follows: «Sustainable use of natural resources, conservation of ecosystems, climate change adaption and mitigation.»	Dissemination of specific climate mitigation measures / technologies in the agricultural sector and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the sector.	Relevant tasks should be written in order to identify / research climate change mitigation opportunities.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Lack of incentive mechanisms.
Climate change mitigation measures should be added to Goal 2 of the Strategy: 1) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by promoting the dissemination of sound agricultural practices through the proper management of animal and vegetable organic waste originating in the process of agricultural production; among others, changing the practice of burning waste in the open field; Ensuring minimal cover soil cover with minimal processing of soil and through improving cattle feeding and stalls. 2) Promoting the sequestration of carbon in the atmosphere by converting it into organic carbon in the soil through implementing soil protection and soil improvement measures: through the creation of windbreaks, improving pasture management and the restoration of degraded land. 3) Promoting climate neutrality from farm to consumer- the complete food production and supply chain.	Disseminating specific climate mitigation measures / technologies in the agricultural sector and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the sector.	Recommended measures should be reflected in the tasks of Goal 2.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Lack of incentive mechanisms.

Mechanisms for implementing climate change adaptation tasks should be added to the Strategy.	Practical implementation of climate change adaptation measures in accordance with the following tasks: Promoting environmentally-friendly, climate-smart agricultural practices and promoting the development of bio / organic production; 2) Promoting the introduction of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies and practices; 3) Preservation of agro-biodiversity.	The objectives of the given tasks should become prerequisite for the implementation of relevant thematic programs, sub-programs and projects.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Lack of relevant programs / sub-programs and / or scope.
Climate change and the actualization of related issues should be emphasized in the first task of Strategy's first goal.	Awareness of farmers / entrepreneurs on adaptation to climate change and climate change mitigation.	The first task of Strategy's first goal should be formulated as follows: «Ensuring the knowledge / awareness of farmers and entrepreneurs in the direction of adaptation to climate change and climate change mitigation.»	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Low interest from farmers / entrepreneurs.
Provision of information / knowledge on best agricultural practices and climate-smart technologies should be reflected in "Activity 1.1.1. Provision of effective extension services to farmers."	Creating / enhancing supply / training opportunities for climate change practices and technologies related to climate change by extension services.	Activity 1.1.1 of the 2021-2023 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027 to be formulated as follows: "The provision of information / knowledge on best agricultural practices and climate-smart technologies should be reflected in providing effective extension services to farmers	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Insufficient human resources, insufficient involvement of farmers / entrepreneurs.

The key criterion for supporting bottom-up initiatives is to define the advantages of the proposed initiative in terms of climate change mitigation and / or adaptation to climate change.	Stimulating and implementing outstanding initiatives in terms of climate change mitigation and /or adaptation.	Reflecting Activity 1.2.1 ("Developing bottom-up criterion for supporting initiatives") of the Action Plan 2021-2023 of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021-2027 as a mandatory criterion for mitigating climate change and / or adapting to climate change.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Insufficient financial resources.
Infrastructure of agricultural cooperatives should be developed by using the best climate-reasonable technologies in the field.	Creation / distribution of climate-smart infrastructure and technologies in agricultural cooperatives.	While implementing Activity 1.2.2 ("Equipping agricultural cooperatives with processing equipment ") of the Action Plan 2021-2023 of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021-2027 climate-friendly infrastructure and technologies should be selected	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Low activity on the part of cooperatives.
Climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures should be defined as a precondition for receiving financial support in state support programs for farmers, taking into account the specifics of the program / project.	Disseminate climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures and agricultural practices to beneficiaries of state support programs for farmers.	In accordance with the 2021-2027 Action Plan of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2023 in the state programs for farmers support: 1.2.3. Promoting the cultivation of modern orchards. «Plant the Future» program; 1.2.4 Promoting Georgian tea production. "Georgian Tea" program; 1.2.7. Co-financing the purchase of harvesting equipment for farmers. "Harvesting Equipment Co-financing" project;	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Lack or and / or narrow nature of relevant programs.

		1.2.8. Establishment / co-financing of saving and processing enterprises. 1.2.12. Establishing a greenhouse cluster. "Imereti Agrozone;" Defining climate mitigation and mandatory adaptation measures as a mandatory criterion taking into account industry specifics.		
Registration of irrigation water consumption and change of tariff scheme according to the volume of consumed water or the introduction of a mixed tariff.	Reducing water losses and inappropriate spending.	Reflection of relevant activities for the implementation of irrigation water accounting and effective tariff policy in the Action Plan 2021-2023 of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture; Georgian Land Reclamation Ltd.	Insufficient financial resources and relatively difficult administration at the initial stage.
Adding identification of opportunities for climate change mitigation in the Action Plan.	Defining opportunities for climate change mitigation for the agricultural sector.	Activity 2.1.1 in the Action Plan should be formulated as follows: "Identification and promotion of opportunities for adaptation to climate change and climate change mitigation."	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and its subordinate sector agencies.	Insufficient financial resources for large-scale research.
Promotion of research into the development of new species / hybrids of adapted animals and plants and expand scientific activities in this area.	Creation / testing and propagation of new species and hybrids of climate-adapted animals and plants on farms.	Promoting scientific research facility and develop / testing of climate-adapted, including local, highly productive species / hybrids and plants, to expand selection work.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture; Agricultural Research Center.	Time required to obtain varieties / hybrids.

Table 2: *Recommendations and Specific Implementation Actions*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