Georgia Country Profile
Capacity to Produce Agricultural and Rural Statistics, 2015

(Country Statistical Capacity Assessment and Strategic Planning in Agricultural Statistics)

ABBREVIATIONS

SDS	State Department of Statistics
Geostat	National Statistics Office of Georgia
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSI	National Statistics Institutions
USDA-NASS	The National Agricultural Statistics Service of United States Department of Agriculture
CADI	USDA Caucasus Agricultural Development Initiative
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MENRP	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NBG	National Bank of Georgia
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
GOG	Government of Georgia
ENPARD	European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
NSS	National Statistical System
AESD	Agricultural and Environment Statistics Division of Geostat
PDA	Personal Data Assistant
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Programme Interviewing
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephonic Interview
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
NACE	European industry standard classification system
CPC	Central Product Classification
CPA	Classification of Products by Activity
HS	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose
COFOG	Classifications of Functions of Government
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ICD	International Classification of Deceases
SNA	System of National Accounts
CPI	Consumer Price Index
WPI	Wholesale Price Index
PPI	Producer Price Index

1. COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Since 1991, achievement of independence Georgian statistical system has largely been developed. The first law on official statistics was enacted in 1997 and State Department of Statistics (SDS) was formed.

New Law on Official Statistics was enacted in 2009 and in the beginning of 2010 National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) was established as an independent institution – a Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL). The Law defines the essence, goal and principles of the official statistics and prescribes the legal foundations for producing the statistics and storing and disseminating the information derived as a result of producing the statistics, and for conducting the census of the population. The Law defines the system of the bodies responsible for the official statistics and their functions.

The law defines the system of official statistics as the ensemble of organizations and units producing official statistics in the country, responsible for collecting, processing and disseminating official statistics on behalf of Georgia. The new law provides for the development of statistics and for the improvement in the coverage and quality of official data compiled and disseminated by Geostat as well as by other government agencies.

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) has been prepared with support from the World Bank's Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building in line with international recommendations. It covered short-term 2011-2014 action plan and long-term perspectives and vision. It also provided an assessment of the current situation, identified the main constraints and challenges, setting out a vision for the future and specifies a detailed work programme, based on the main priorities. Geostat has recently started to work on the new medium-term strategy, which will cover the period 2015-2018. The strategy will be prepared on the basis of international recommendations and assistance provided by Lithuanian statisticians.

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union all statistical surveys were built on experience of advanced statistical systems and were strongly supported by international organizations or National Statistics Institutions (NSI's) of other countries. Agricultural statistical survey dates back from 2007 and form the very beginning was supported by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of USDA has collaborated with Geostat since 2006 to improve agricultural data in Georgia by enhancing the capacity of Geostat to collect, analyze, and disseminate agricultural statistics. NASS work with Geostat is part of the USDA Caucasus Agricultural Development Initiative (CADI), with funding from the U.S. Department of State Freedom Support Act. Sample Surveys of Agricultural Holdings are the main information source for current agricultural statistics in Georgia. The survey completely covers the controlled territory of Georgia, not including the territories of Abkhazia and former South Ossetia. Each round of the survey covers one reference year and consists of 5 interviews. Sampling frame is formed from 2004 Agricultural Census results. The Agriculture and Environment Statistics Division of Geostat is responsible for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on agriculture and agricultural production as well as statistics on the environment. The recent complete set of results, relating to 2014, was published in June, 2015.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is the main user of agricultural statistics. At the same time, by its regional Information Consulting Centers, MoA produces its own statistics for internal use.

Geostat has a memorandum of cooperation with MoA. The memorandum sets a mutual responsibility of data exchange as well as creates a format of cooperation and institutional support by common working group.

MoA intends to review the availability of existing information on products, prices, suppliers and markets. MoA has a plan to develop a strategy for collecting, disseminating or simply better utilizing information on agricultural markets.

The MoA requires upgrading of information system and improvement of quality of databases. The software for data collection analysis will be upgraded and overall quality and precision of the statistical databases will be improved as well as analytical capacity of data exchange and processing operation. Stronger emphasis will be placed on qualitative indicators, analysis of tendencies, forecasting and visualization of numerical information. Gender specific information will be collected for the further detailed analysis purposes. In close collaboration with National Statistics Office of Georgia the statistical data about agricultural sector will be improved.

Geostat also has a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP). The memorandum sets a mutual responsibility of data exchange as well as creates a format of cooperation and institutional support by common working group. MENRP produces environment, forest and water resources statistics. MENRP is an administrative source for the environment statistics produced by Geostat.

In November 2014, together with the General Population Census, the Agricultural census was conducted and various agricultural data was collected. The Agricultural census covered all households, which had agricultural land, cattle, poultry or beehives in use as of October 1, 2014. According to the preliminary data, as of 1 October, 2014 the amount of family holdings totalled 640 302. In the 2004 Agricultural census there were 728 247 family holdings. It should also be noted that the 2004 Agricultural Census did not cover 5 large cities: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Batumi and Poti. The final results of 2014 census will be published by spring 2016 and based this results Geostat plans to develop a new sampling frame for the agricultural survey.

The five key agriculture related economic indicators in Georgia:

Share of agricultural land area -2004	43.4%
Share of agriculture in economy -2014*	9.2%
Employment in agriculture -2014	50.9%
Rural population -2014 census	42.6%
Proportion of undernourished population	N/A

2. ASSESSMENT ON THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF COUNTRY CAPACITY

Survey Background

Preliminary assessments on the capacity of agricultural statistics in Georgia were measured through country assessment of agricultural statistics system for the regional implementation of FAO Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural in Rural Statistics in Asia and Pacific. Standard questionnaire was used to collect information from data producers and data users. This report therefore covers 23 indicators of "quality" assessment in four dimensions. The overall country capacity in these four dimensions is provided in the following table and figure.

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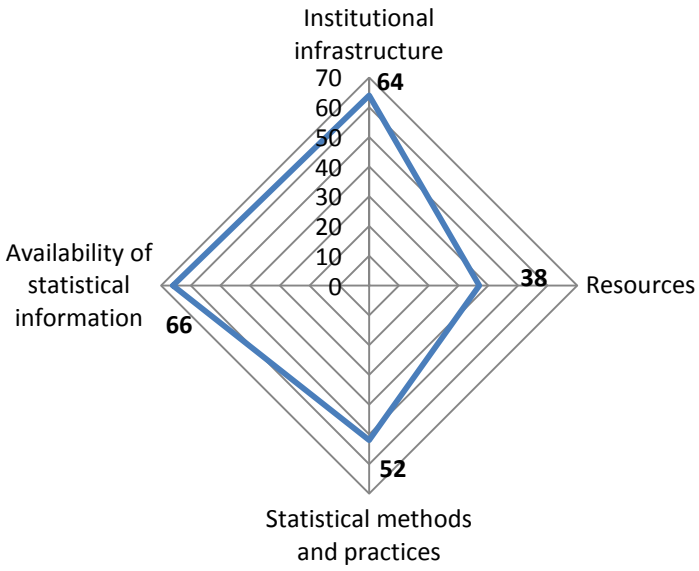
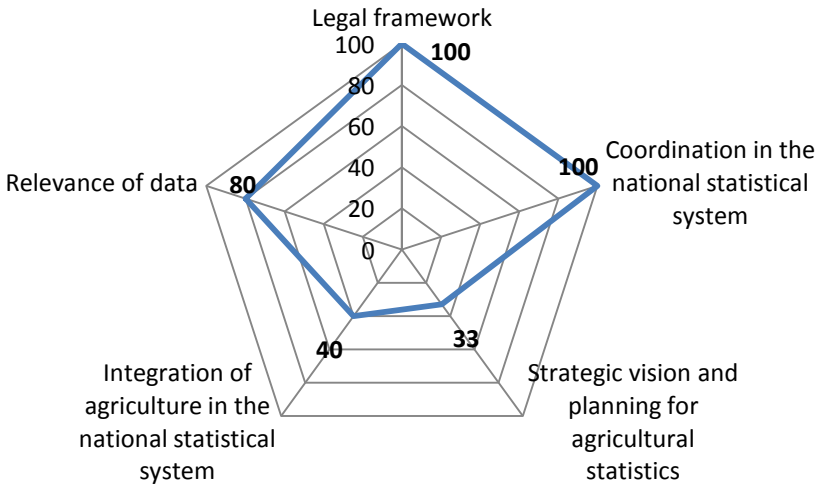
Figure 1. Over-all country capacity in agricultural statistics



3. DETAILED INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS OF CAPACITY

I. Institutional infrastructure

Figure 2. Capacity indicators for the institutional infrastructure



1.1 Legal Framework

The legal basis for statistical activities in Georgia is stipulated under the Law on Official Statistics, which was adopted in 2009 and came into force from 2010. The goal of the law is to ensure producing independent, objective and reliable statistics in the country according to the fundamental principles of United Nations and European Statistics Code of Practice. The Law defines the essence, goal and principles of the official statistics and prescribes the legal foundations for producing the statistics and storing and disseminating the information derived as a result of producing the statistics, and for conducting the census of the population. The law defines the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) as the executive agency for all statistical activities.

Geostat is managed by Board. The main functions of the Board are: to submit relevant recommendations with regard to the statistical activities of the Geostat, to review the annual statistical work program, review and approve the annual report of Geostat, to review the statistical standards and methodology, including population census, to manage Geostat. Board consists 8 members, including Executive Director of Geostat, who is the Chairman of the Board at the same time. Three members (one from each) are representatives from the Ministry of Finance (MoF), from the National Bank (NBG) and from the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD). Other five members (including the Chairman) are not public servants.

According to the law, annual statistical work program is prepared by Geostat. The program is agreed with all ministries, at initial stage is reviewed by Geostat Board and finally approved by the decree of Government of Georgia (GoG). Annual plan consists of the list of works to be carried out and their implementers, the frequency of observation and dates of publishing.

1.2 Coordination in the National Statistical System

According to the law, production and dissemination of statistics shall be based on the 10 basic principles of official statistics. National coordination is one of those principles and it is stated in the law that coordination among statistical agencies within country is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Cooperation with the local organizations means the cooperation and coordination of the Geostat with the bodies producing the statistics in order to effectively produce the statistics. The National Statistical System is a system with a main operating office for general statistics. Geostat is the agency taking a coordinating role in the entire statistical system of Georgia.

The strategy for agricultural development in Georgia, prepared by MoA, has a strategic vision on institutional development. One of the measures of this strategic vision is supporting an efficient market information collection, processing and dissemination among the different stakeholders actively engaged in the agricultural sector. It sets the goal to improve the quality of agricultural statistics in close collaboration with Geostat. Besides, European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) sets the recommendations on improvement of the quality of agricultural statistics.

To enable efficient coordination, annual statistical work program is prepared by Geostat, where responsibilities of all administrative sources and timeline of the submission of statistical data is defined. In addition, Geostat has memorandums of cooperation with the main partners in the national statistical system, including MoA and MENRP. These memorandums set the rules and procedures as well as mutual responsibilities of signed parties.

Consistence of Geostat Board supports the coordination of the national statistical system.

1.3 Strategic vision and planning for agricultural statistics

NSDS in Georgia has been prepared with support from the World Bank's Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building in line with international recommendations. It covered a short-term 2011-2014 action plan and long-term perspectives and vision. It also provided an assessment of the situation, identified the main constraints and challenges. Vision for the future and a detailed work programme, based on the main priorities, was specified in the strategy.

At the present, new strategy is under development. The strategy will cover the period 2015-2018 and will be prepared on the basis of international recommendations and assistance provided by Lithuanian statisticians.

1.4 Integration of agriculture in the National Statistical System (NSS)

The NDSD included agricultural statistics and agricultural census. In the new strategy, agricultural statistics will also be included.

In November 2014, Geostat carried out an agricultural census in conjunction with the population census. The Agricultural census covered all households, which had agricultural land, cattle, poultry or beehives in use as of October 1, 2014. The one of main outcomes of the census will be a new sampling frame for the agricultural survey.

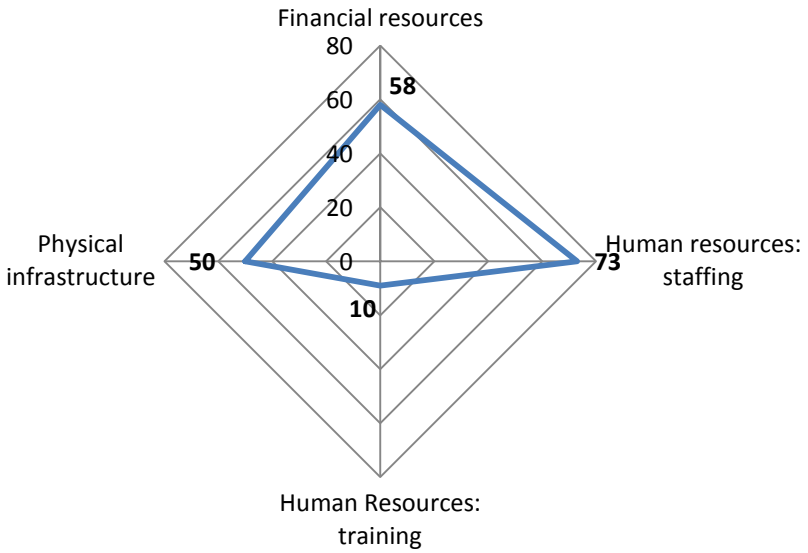
1.5 Relevance of data

There is no official or formal forum for dialogue between suppliers and users of agricultural statistics in the country which includes representation from members of the relevant line ministries, representatives of socio-professional bodies, and other development partners. The only format for this dialogue is Geostat Board, annual statistical work program and memorandums of cooperation between Geostat and other administrative source agencies.

There is informal functioning forum for dialogue between producers and users of agricultural statistics. But this forum is not regular. Data users-producers meetings are conducted not quite often.

II. Resources

Figure 3. Capacity indicators for the resources



2.1 Financial resources

As an independent LEPL, Geostat has a separate budget, which is fully used for statistical activities. Draft of annual budget is prepared by Geostat management, reviewed and approved by Geostat Board and finally discussed and agreed with MoF. Budget is discussed with the draft of annual statistical work program. According to law, Geostat is allowed to have commercial works. In 2010, Geostat Board approves the tariffs for different statistical products and since 2010, Geostat has commercial income. Budget for agricultural statistics is independently drafted and approved in Geostat's annual budget.

Table 1. Geostat annual budget (thousands of Georgian Lari)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Annual Budget (State budget financing)	4332	3166	4201	4855.2	6708.9	16934.5	9060
Commercial works	-----	180	325.4	218.2	124.8	267.5	160
Grants	1082.5	1687	311	137	784.1	2067	0
Budget for agricultural statistics	380	350	345	350	350	345	362

*2013, 2014, 2015 census years

MoA has a separate budget. But Policy and Analytical Department is part of the budget in terms of salaries. Department does not have a separate budget for its activities. The main responsibilities of the department is to define agricultural sector development policies, strategies and action plans, faultlessness in agriculture sector existing database and analytical work completion. Statistical work is not the only task of the department; it's the part of its activities. There is a Statistics and Analytical Division in the department. The division is responsible for statistical works. Same refers to the Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations of MENRP.

2.2 Human resources: staffing

Geostat has established 221 permanent posts for official statistics and 15 posts are in the Agricultural and Environment Statistics Division (AESD). All 15 posts are filled. The turnover of professional staff is a relevant constraint. The number of staff at AESD has been increased in 2014, because it has been planned to use the sample size after the results of agricultural census will be published.

Table 2. The number of Geostat staff

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of staff	169	149	149	149	149	211	221
Number of staff at AESD	5	5	5	5	5	15	15
Number of Enumerators		420	420	400	346	360	364
Enumerators at Agricultural Sample Survey		250	254	238	214	192	193

The number of officially established post in the Statistics and Analytical Division is 4 but 2 only to posts are filled. The number of workers at Information Consulting Center is 59. Collection of statistics is not primary job of the workers at Information Consulting Centers.

MENRP has 25 people working on statistics, 16 in headquarter and 9 in field offices. 21 people are working on forestry, 2 on air and 1 on water resources.

2.3 Human resources: training

There is no regular training programme for statistical staff of Geostat and the line ministries. Periodically, Geostat interviewers are trained by Geostat staff and USDA experts. During the last 12 months three people from Geostat AESD and one person from MOA have been trained abroad.

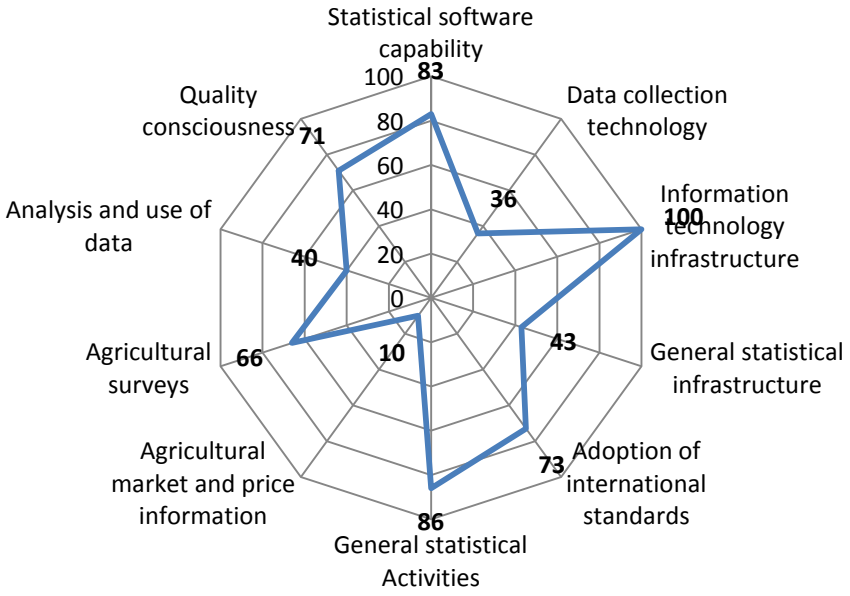
2.4 Physical infrastructure

The Geostat has 17 four wheeled vehicles. There is no personal car for AESD, but one car in duty is used for AESD if needed. MoA and MENRP does not have any cars for the statistical purposes.

Transport equipment, office space and office equipment are relevant constraint for all three institutions.

III. Statistical Methods and Practices

Figure 4. Capacity indicators for statistical methods and practices



3.1 Statistical software capability

The Geostat uses the following statistical software: SPSS, STATA, Microsoft Access and specially elaborated software.

MOA uses Access and Excel. MENRP doesn't use any statistical software. These agencies use EXCEL.

3.2 Data collection technology

Data are mostly collected through personal interviews and manual entry of data into computer. This method used during 2014 population and agricultural census. PDA and The Computer-Assisted Programme Interviewing (CAPI) as well Computer Assisted Telephonic Interview (CATI) are used.

3.3 Information technology infrastructure

Geostat uses 200 personal computers in headquarter and 80 personal computers in field offices. All these computers are connected to the internet. For agricultural statistics, Geostat has access 15 computers at headquarter and 60 computers in the field office, all connected to the internet. Geostat has 2 servers.

MoA has 130 computers in headquarter and 195 computers in the field offices. All computers in the headquarter have an access to the internet. Only 60 computers in the field offices have an access to the internet. For agricultural statistics, MoA has 3 computers in the headquarter, all of them connected to the internet. MoA has 12 servers.

MENRP has 787 computers in headquarters (including headquarters of MENRP and headquarters of

subordinated agencies: (Forest Department, Environment Protection Supervision Agency and Protected Area Agency). MENRP has 140 computers in the field offices (all institutions). All computers are connected to the internet. For statistics (water, forestry, air, protected areas, natural disasters) MENRP has 25 computers (16 in the headquarters), all connected to the internet.

3.4 General Statistical Infrastructure

Georgia has up-to-date topographic maps including boundaries of administrative and/or regional sub-divisions. Digitized maps are also available for statistical purposes. Statistical units (location of agricultural holding headquarters, household or land parcel) are Geo-coded at the village level.

Remotely sensed satellite data for crop monitoring and production forecasting is not developed yet in Georgia. Census of economic units has never been done and therefore, no any agency in the country does not maintain an up-to-date list of large active agricultural farms. Printed maps for data collection from the field were provided only during 2014 census. Only the list of large agricultural holdings is updated regularly. Whole updated master sampling frame for agricultural holdings will be available in 2016, when 2014 census data will be published.

Country needs assistance in conducting economic census and in the preparation of printed maps for data collection from the field.

3.5 Adoption of international standards

Georgia has adopted international classifications in:

- ISIC (International Standard Industrial Classification) – NACE, revision 2;
- CPC (Central Product Classification) - CPA (Classification of Products by Activity), 1999;
- HS (Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System), 2012;
- COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose), 1999;
- COFOG (Classifications of functions of government);
- ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations), 1988;
- ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education);
- ICD (International Classification of Deceases), 10.

3.6 General statistical activities

Geostat is the responsible for conducting the population census. The last population census together with the agricultural census was conducted in 2014. The next population census is planned for no later than 2024.

Geostat is the main office responsible for compilation of the National Accounts Statistics. Estimates of quarterly production from the agriculture sector are prepared and published in the in the country with the most recent data available for 2015. Methodologies for the compilation of the national accounts are currently done under the UN SNA version 1993.

A Consumer Price Index (CPI) is compiled and published, but separate indices of important agricultural commodities used for direct consumption are not separated in the CPI. An index to monitor agricultural input prices does not exist and an index number on Terms-of-Trade4 for Agriculture is not published in the country. Neither Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is published in the country.

Geostat publishes Producer Price Index (PPI) but it does not report indices separately for crop commodities, livestock products, fish and related products.

3.7 Agricultural market and price information

Only PPI is published in Georgia by Geostat. Other agricultural market and price information is not available in the country.

3.8 Agricultural surveys

Geostat is conducting following quarterly surveys:

- Crop area surveys (planting and harvest);
- Crop production surveys;
- Crop yield surveys;
- Costs of production surveys (sampling errors are not calculated, data and metadata are not published);
- Livestock population or livestock inventory survey;
- Productivity/Yield survey for livestock and animal products;
- Poultry survey;
- Area treated by mineral fertilizers;
- Area treated by pesticides;
- Mineral fertilizers used by agricultural holdings;
- Household survey covering wood energy consumption (metadata is not published).

Water survey provides data on area equipped for irrigation and area actually irrigated.

The most of these surveys have a probability sample, sampling errors are calculated, data and metadata are published and micro data is archived. The year of latest surveys is 2015 (except household survey covering wood energy consumption, the latest data available is for 2014).

MENRP collects data on forestry, environment (protected areas, atmospheric air and natural disasters) and water resources.

MoA produces its own statistics for internal use.

- Crop production data– during the season it is collected forecast data and after harvest - final data;
- Sown areas by crop - annual;
- During season reports about aggregated sown areas - weekly;
- Livestocks Numbers - annual;
- List of companies in agricultural sector - annual;
- Land balance, land distribution by size of agricultural holdings – annual;
- Agricultural Machinery and Equipment – annual;
- Market price information – weekly.

Referring to the ongoing and future plans in agricultural data collection, following surveys are planned to be conducted in Georgia in coming years:

Table 3. Plans for agricultural data collection

Data collected by Geostat with MoA assistance	Data collected by MoA
-Commercial livestock slaughter -Storage in grain elevators -Storage in cold storage facilities -Aquaculture production – preparatory work will start in 2015, survey conducted in 2016 - Production in green houses - preparatory work will start in 2015, survey conducted in 2016	- Corn objective yield - Crop condition and crop progress - Apple objective yield - Wheat objective yield - Citrus objective yield

USDA-NASS will provide technical assistance to GeoSTAT and MoA on all areas of designing and implementing the new surveys, depending upon funding from donor.

3.9 Analysis and use of data

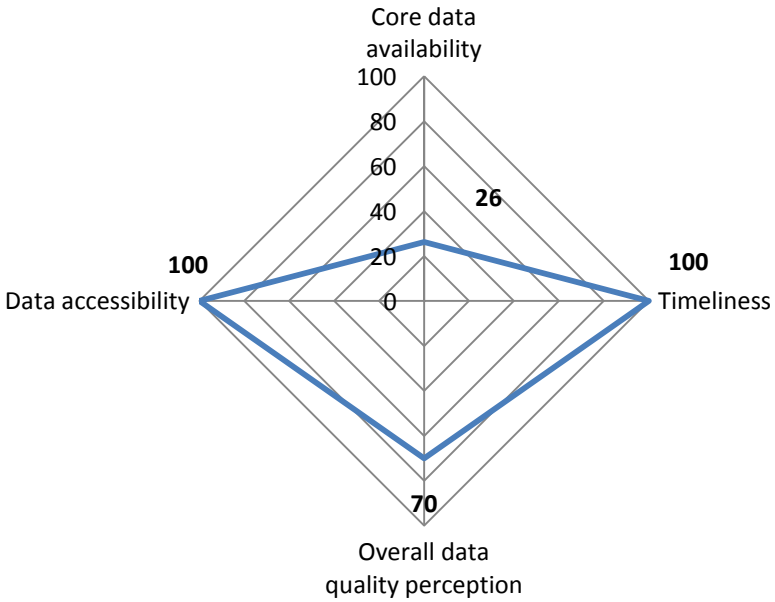
The estimates of quarterly production from the agriculture sector are prepared and published by Geostat. Geostat is the responsible agency for compiling the food balance sheets which were last produced in respect of 2014.

3.10 Quality consciousness

The methodology for most national agricultural surveys is accessible to the public. Generally, information on the sampling error of estimates, post-enumeration surveys and technical issues faced during the survey are not published. Nonetheless, the reports of surveys undertaken by Geostat include quality information for their surveys.

IV. Availability of statistical information

Figure 5. Capacity indicators for the availability of statistical information



4.1 Core data availability

Production. Reliable data on the production of crops and livestock are available from the Geostat. Crop production data is available on the annual basis and only in quantities, not in values. Livestock production in quantities is available on the quarterly basis.

Fisheries and aquaculture data are not published in the country.

Data on area of woodlands and forests is collected by MENRP and published by Geostat.

External Trade. High reliable external trade data is made by the Geostat on the monthly basis. Export and Import data are available in quantities as well as in values.

Stock of Capital and Resources. Livestock Inventories in data (numbers) is published by Geostat on the quarterly basis. Agricultural machinery (number of tractors, harvesters, seeders, etc) and Stocks of main crops (in quantities) is published by Geostat on the annual basis.

Annual land and use of the land (eg. cropland, forest land, grassland, wetlands, settlements, other land, water) was published by the State Department of Land Management of Georgia in 2003.

Agricultural Inputs. Only annual fertilizer and pesticides quantities and values are available from Geostat.

Agro-processing. Information not provided.

Prices. A broad array of price data is collected monthly by Geostat for price data at the producer and consumer levels. Data for export and import prices for agricultural products are also collected.

Investment, Subsidies or Taxes. Information not provided.

Rural Infrastructure. Information not provided.

Environmental. MENRP collects information on protected areas, water resources, atmospheric air, and natural disasters.

Geographic Location. Information not provided.

4.2 Timeliness

Most information is available with one year time lag, except for land and land use data.

4.3 Overall data quality perception

The overall modal quality of available data is “acceptable”.

4.4 Data accessibility

Geostat has a website for the hosting of official statistics at www.geostat.ge. The website includes a database for official statistics that is accessible to external users on the internet. Some environment statistical data are available at MENRP website: www.moe.gov.ge

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