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FOOD SYSTEMS  
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**Strategic national program for  
the development of sustainable food  
systems by 2030 in the Kyrgyz Republic**



# **1. Food systems objectives and assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic**

The Kyrgyz Republic has a liberal trade regime and an open investment climate, while its food trade balance is negative, with a dependence on import of a series of basic foodstuff items. The country is characterized by a mountainous landscape with limited arable land but substantial water resources.

It has experienced several food shocks over the past three decades including a particularly severe crisis that coincided with its transition to independence in the 1990s. At that time, Kyrgyzstan suffered a sharp decline in its national economy, impoverishment of its population, and an acute shortage of food. In response, agrarian reform was carried out, enabling some recovery and an increase in food production through the creation of numerous smallholder family farms giving small-scale yields.

The 2007-2008 world food price crisis triggered the next significant food shock in Kyrgyzstan. Specifically, as food prices in the world rose sharply, there was a high level of food inflation and increased poverty in the country. Subsequently, in 2009–2011 and 2014–2016, food prices in Kyrgyzstan increased again due to shocks associated with the national currency's devaluation and an increase in the price of imported food. The latest and most sensitive crisis began in 2020 and is still ongoing. This has been brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to food price inflation in 2020 (17.6%), which continues to increase in 2021. Poverty has also increased in the country while food security has deteriorated too following

water shortages due to increased climate variability in 2021.

Boosting food production and ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable are the top priorities of the Government of Kyrgyzstan. In this regard, the country has developed a legal framework for food security and nutrition issues. Meanwhile, policy measures have been incorporated into various national-level documents such as national strategies, food security and nutrition programs, and agriculture and health programs designed to enhance food production and nutrition. In Kyrgyzstan, policy measures to mitigate food crises and ensure food security include: regulating prices for basic foodstuffs; purchasing grain from local farmers; distributing food to vulnerable people; building strategic food stocks; subsidizing farmers; introducing trade barriers for food exports; introducing meal programs in schools, etc.

Moreover, its food systems development policy encompasses the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Meanwhile, Goal 5 - Gender Equality remains a cross-cutting theme, and is considered essential given the role of women in food production.



However, many problems related to food production in the country remain unresolved. A critical issue is low efficiency of agricultural production; growth of the agricultural sector continues to lag behind other sectors. The main reasons for the slow rates

of agricultural growth are small-scale commodities, low productivity of livestock and crop yields, degradation of agricultural land, limited access to water resources, especially during the growing season, due to the unfavorable state of the irrigation system, lack of investment

and new technologies. Agriculture, food processing, and food quality infrastructure need massive investments.

for socially vulnerable groups of people, supported with knowledge about the benefits of healthy food.

These problems require the development of policies that would ensure improved efficiency of agricultural production, the use of resource-saving agricultural technologies to ensure greater sustainability of the food system. Other important policy issues include the economic availability of food, especially





## **2. Expected outcomes of the food systems of the Kyrgyz Republic by 2030**

***By 2030, the food systems in Kyrgyzstan should have enabled the implementation of the following main development priorities<sup>1</sup>:***

- a) increased food production;
- b) construction of the required infrastructure to ensure the ongoing development of sustainable food systems;
- c) improved public management and administration;
- d) promotion of healthy food consumption; and
- e) protection and recovery of natural resources.

The State's policies and measures will be designed to create favorable conditions to ensure the implementation of agricultural production, support for key industries and value chains, to increase the availability and implementation of effective agricultural and production management technologies, to **develop a quality infrastructure** for food products to ensure food safety.

Improving the efficiency of agricultural production will be achieved through the agricultural integration of rural producers within **the framework of the cluster development of the country's regions**, which will ensure an increase in production volumes and, accordingly, an increase in food supply in the domestic market, and an increase in incomes of the population living in rural regions.

The regional cluster development mechanism will allow for the building of local and national food chains as well as local economic growth zones according to the competitive advantages of the given product(s) in the given region and introduction of innovation. Through the cluster approach, special measures

to protect natural resources will be implemented. Indeed, measures will be aimed at reducing the impact of climate change and introducing environmentally-friendly food production (i.e. organic agriculture), taking into account the specific conditions of each region. Each region will then implement a plan to preserve and increase agricultural land, forests, and pastures. Measures to compensate for, and reduce the risks of, climate change, as well as those to inform the population and farmers about climate change, will also be determined by the specifics of the given region.

Raising awareness of the principles of **healthy nutrition**, of safe, high-quality, including organic products produced in the country, among the population will play a key role in making the food systems efficient. The tasks of informing will be solved within the framework of the implementation of projects for the digitalization of the country. The policy of increasing public awareness will motivate manufacturers to increase the quality of their products and create local commodity food brands, taking into account the preferences of the country's population.

<sup>1</sup> In the document the results of discussions in the framework of subnational and independent dialogues and national dialogue that took place during the preparation of the program are used



**The Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Regional Development** will play a central role in food systems development.

The main goals to be reached by 2030 are: assuming greater control of the changes in the food systems (food prices, foreign food trade, climate-change-related challenges, labor market trends, and innovations) and making necessary policy adjustments; development of food system forecasting based on new digital technologies; supporting domestic production through government purchases; improving the quality of public management and administration through the development of potential of relevant government bodies, transparent decision making processes and accountable budget spending.







### **3. Food systems of the Kyrgyz Republic by 2025 - forthcoming tasks**

The food systems of the Kyrgyz Republic are to be developed in conjunction with the strategic development goals of the country related to agriculture, energy, tourism, health, specific industrial sectors, and an overall improvement of living standards.

**1.** To support the **growth of agricultural efficiency** in Kyrgyzstan, the draft Concept of Agro-industrial Development until 2025 has been prepared. The concept revolves around the following priorities: food security; organic farming; adaptation to climate change; development of agricultural clusters; digitalization of agricultural production, new technologies, and development of new export markets. The document proposes a set of measures to address these priorities through boosting the production potential of rural producers, increasing the use of innovative agricultural production methods, expanding the integration of agricultural producers, and ensuring better access to financial resources and incentives.

**2.** Greater importance is given to the **agricultural producer's integration support** through the stimulation of cooperation processes and the creation of sustainable value chains and clusters using economic incentives and technical support. As part of agricultural integration policy, the following tasks are planned: to increase the quantity of processed agricultural products; to support the creation of trade and logistics centers; to support export infrastructure and export-oriented commodity transport corridors; to increase the availability and

quality of technical regulation conformity services; and to introduce a traceability mechanism, etc.

**3.** The expansion of organic agriculture and the halal industry has also been given a leading role in the policy of the transition to **sustainable consumption patterns**. At the same time, the following tasks are also considered important: increasing the participation of local communities in ensuring food security at the local level; promoting the principles of healthy nutrition; supporting the process of food fortification; limiting the advertising of food products that contribute to the growth of non-communicable diseases (NCD); increasing the availability of quality food for vulnerable groups of the population; and offering support to socially vulnerable groups generally. These measures will significantly improve the sustainability of consumption.

**4.** A critical factor in increasing the **resilience of food systems** is making changes to land and water use modalities. There are plans to solve problems here by consolidating arable land, preserving and restoring the fertility of arable land, adopting new approaches to managing the lands owned by the State Fund of Agricultural Lands, and pasture management. Increasing irrigation water resource efficiency and reducing water losses must be ensured with large investments into the development of the state irrigation networks and improved water management and use by the Water Use Associations (WUAs). Solving water problems in Kyrgyzstan entails both national and international

dimensions. Indeed, solutions are needed which consider the mutual interests of neighboring states, bringing about economic benefits and ensuring good neighborliness.

**5.** Improving the resilience of food systems requires putting in place **measures to mitigate the negative effects of natural disaster shocks** such as droughts, floods, and mudslides. Climate shocks harm agriculture and create the need for adaptation measures such as the development of water-saving technologies for irrigation, the improvement of the genetic potential of farm animals and seeds, and modifying the composition of cultivated crops.

**6. Food shortages** associated with an instability of food supplies, food price inflation, pandemics, epizootics, and

other unpredictable circumstances lead to unstable commodity distribution channels, and cases of profiteering. These challenges need to be addressed through the collective action of state bodies, local authorities, agricultural producers, and commercial enterprises.





## **4. Collective action of food systems stakeholders**

The main stakeholders of the food systems in Kyrgyzstan are food producers, processing companies, good and service providers in the area of agricultural industry, consumers, the public sector, and civil society representatives promoting healthy eating (Figure 1).

A critical challenge here is to build synergies between stakeholders. Some problems hindering collective actions among food systems stakeholders must be addressed, which include: a lack of knowledge and skills among government officials; cases of corruption; a lack of transparency and conflicts of interest of different stakeholders; insufficient control and low accountability of government agencies; and a lack of interaction among government agencies, private producers, and civil society, a high level of mistrust and fierce competition among some participants in the food systems.

The need for collective action requires the implementation of the following measures: increasing the capacity of government officials; ensuring the

transparency of the work of state bodies; the creation of a platform for dialogue between government bodies, civil society, and private producers; the creation of a decision-making mechanism through dialogue with all stakeholders; strengthening control over compliance with rules and technical regulations in the production and marketing of food; implementation of PPP and attracting both private and donor funds to food systems; making efforts to inform the population; and motivating the population to take an active role in food systems.

The ultimate goal is to provide opportunities for the population to consume more diverse, healthy, high-quality, nutritious food through a fairer distribution system, and food production needs to harm the environment as little as possible.

**Figure 1. Food systems stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan**



<sup>2</sup> Key ministries – the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Regional Development, the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Emergency Situations.



**5. Linkages between the program for the development of sustainable food systems and other strategic development documents**

Ensuring linkages between the sustainable food systems development program and other policy documents is of both national and international significance. At the national level, the first group of tasks and measures entails harmonizing the food system sustainability program and the goals, objectives, and indicators of the country, as well as sectoral/sub-sectoral development programs. The primary documents here include the draft Concept of Agrarian Development of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2025, the Food Security and Nutrition Program until 2023, the sectoral strategies of key government bodies, and policy documents relating to the development of SMEs.

The second group of tasks and measures aim to improve the regulatory documents that ensure coordination of the actions of government agencies to enhance the sustainability and productivity of food systems.

The third group of measures and tasks and measures is oriented toward improving the reporting system of all government bodies involved in ensuring the sustainability of food systems and the monitoring and evaluation system to ensure a deeper analysis and assessment of its sustainability, and to developing policy measures to improve governance in food systems.

The fourth group of tasks and measures will be focused on enhancing the effectiveness of institutions and institutional mechanisms, primarily the Council for Food Security and Nutrition, in terms of monitoring the resolving of tasks within the framework of a joint objectives tree and processes related to ensuring the sustainability of food systems.

The fifth group of tasks and measures aim to improve food systems financing, supported from the state budget funds through economic sectors and public agencies.

### ***National-level contributions should be set through the following measures:***

- *Financial plans to be outlined regarding funds allocated by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic annually to develop food systems, indicating the tasks to be completed, and formulating the expected results for 2022–2025 and by 2030.*
- *Systems of measures to be put in place to support food systems through harmonized and coordinated state development programs.*
- *Non-financial actions including the civil society, private businesses, and food producers in the processes of collective action, discussion, and in joint decision-making.*
- *A final stage requiring coordination through the United Nations Framework for Cooperation for Sustainable Development.*

At the international level, work includes attracting international support for measures to increase the sustainability and productivity of the food systems of the Kyrgyz Republic. Each donor (development organization) has its own mandate (i.e. a range of actions and measures approved at the global level). Commonly, the SDGs are reflected in donors' priorities. Kyrgyzstan needs to develop a productive approach to work with donors by coordinating joint actions and studying experiences and best practices, and promoting corresponding pilot approaches to be taken.



By doing so, it will be possible to attract additional funding, technical and consultation support, as well as assistance in developing effective strategies and innovations, and in implementing best practices.







## **6. Timeline for main national strategic programs**

	2021	2022-2025	2025-2030
Development and adoption of the agricultural sector development concept	Fall 2021		
Coordination and harmonization of development programs, including interagency commitments and collective action	Fall-winter 2021		
Detailed stakeholder action plan including monitoring system and evaluation criteria drawn up	Fall-winter 2021		
National-level contributions determined	Winter 2021		
Implementation of agricultural sector development concept for 2022-2025 starts		2022	
Implementation of a set of policy measures and collective action		2022-2025	
Progress evaluation of national-level contributions		2025	
Policy cycle renewal: cases of failure reviewed and lessons learned analysis undertaken, success stories and achievements analyzed, and development of a new policy cycle for 2026-2030		2025	
Updated agenda for sustainable food systems 2030 – development, adoption, and implementation			2026-2030

