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Bridging the Gaps: Government Planning and Private Investment in Agricultural Development in Sulaimani Governorate

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kawan Sirwan Ismael

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Iraq, Sulaymaniyah, Saeed Kaban Street, House No. 28
www.visionfoundationiq.org
+964 772 330 0005

Research Department – Vision Foundation for Strategic Studies

Researcher:

Assist.Prof.Dr. Kawan Sirwan Ismael

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Executive Summary

This policy paper is a part of the “Open Eye” program of the Vision Foundation organization for strategic research named “Agricultural Sector Development: Government Plan and Private Sector Investment." In the study, the systemic issues that have slowed down agricultural development in Sulaimani Governorate, despite its considerable natural potential, are critically considered. It lists major obstacles in the legislative/bureaucratic, economic/financial, infrastructure/technical, and socio-environmental categories, such as out-of-date land laws, budgetary disregard, inadequate marketing infrastructure, and rural exodus. The research gap between the government planning process and the government's ability to influence the investment process is bridged by introducing a Public-Private Synergy Model. In this model, the government is an Enabler, focusing on legislative reforms (e.g., reforming investment acts, encouraging the private ownership of land), resource infrastructure (dams, soil mapping), regulatory oversight (border control, annual agricultural calendar), and incentives (land to graduates, agricultural media). At the same time, the private sector will be the “Engine of activity, which will start value-chain investment (marketing, processing, cold storage), modernization (hydroponics, organic fertilizers), and market expansion (based on successful models such as poultry/egg exports). A four-step roadmap—Stabilization and Protection, Structural Reform, Diversification and Industrialization, and Global Integration—is introduced to systematically foster sustainable agricultural growth, food sovereignty, and export readiness, emphasizing a phased, collaborative approach between public policy and private initiative.

1.Introduction

Economic prosperity and food security rest on agricultural development (Giller et al, 2021). Productive, inclusive, and sustainable agricultural development is an effective way to reduce poverty, raise incomes, and make food more available and affordable. Nevertheless, it can have its full potential only in the presence of supportive policies, investments, and environmental and social considerations (Chand, 2025). Many of the structural dynamics that can be witnessed in transitional agrarian economies can be seen through the agricultural sector in Sulaimani Governorate. The governorate also enjoys a relatively fertile land mass, a wide range of agro-climatic environments, and a rich agricultural tradition, which has a large latent potential for sectoral growth and productivity improvement (Sirwan and Harun, 2024). However, this potential can only be effectively implemented after the institution of a consistent and mutually supportive relationship between the planning of the public sector and the involvement of the private sector. Specifically, sustainable agricultural development requires a well-balanced combination of both strategic government actions, including regulatory reform, provision of infrastructure, and management of resources, and proactive investment of the market by the private sector in the development of the value chain, technological advancement, and market-oriented production systems (Sirwan, 2024). The Sulaimani governorate has a favorable natural environment for farming, yet the Kurdistan Region of Iraq remains overly reliant on oil and imports, and economic diversification is a pressing need.

This study has shown that the agricultural sector in the Sulaimani Governorate, despite its undoubtedly high potential, is massively stifled by a complicated systemic nexus of problems. Such obstacles include, but are not limited to, outdated legislative systems and strong bureaucratic inertia, which are all hindrances to effective governance and policy enforcement. Moreover, the sector is under attack by gross budgetary neglect and the widespread lack of proper infrastructure. Adding to these problems are the urgent socio-environmental problems, especially the growing rural exodus resulting in a shrinking agricultural labor force, and the encroachment of urbanization on agricultural land. This policy paper has the following main objectives: to carefully identify and examine the systemic issues that hamper agricultural development in Sulaimani Governorate, and then, to address the major gap between the government planning and the private sector investment in agriculture. This is through the establishment of a strong Public-Private Synergy Model that defines the roles of collaboration, and culminates with the establishment of an overall, phased policy roadmap that can promote sustainable agricultural growth, food sovereignty, and export preparedness of the region.

2. Methodology

2.1. The study area

This study was conducted in the Sulaimani Governorate, which is located in the KRI. Sulaimani is a mountainous area with a rainy, cold winter and a hot, dry summer, covering a total area of about 1,844,884 hectares. It hosts both Sharazur and Bitween Plain with a rich supply of water resources letting the government a huge capacity for agricultural production. If the resources are sustainably utilized, it can give self-sufficiency in agrifoods (Neima et al., 2023). The main sources of the water resources in the Kurdistan Region are surface water and groundwater resources of which most is rainfall. The largest renewable water resources in the area are rainfall and snow. Further, humidity is affected by the land surface temperature, surface water bodies, soil moisture, precipitation, temperature variations, and plant density (Sirwan, 2024).

2.2. Research Design and Data Analysis

The policy paper employs a qualitative research design to analyze the intersection of government planning and private-sector investment in the agricultural sector. The qualitative research is designed to understand how people are involved, explain, and give meaning to their worlds. It is mainly useful when the goal is a deep, contextual, holistic understanding rather than measurement or prediction (Lochmiller, 2021). Thematic analysis was used in this policy paper to categorize themes from the focus group. According to Sirwan (2024), thematic analysis is an adaptable and robust method for analyzing qualitative data in social and organizational environments because of its independence in theoretical approaches, versatility, and comprehensive, in-depth analysis.

2.3. Data Collection

The primary qualitative data were collected as a multi-stakeholder focus group organized and facilitated by the Vision Foundation on April 1, 2026, as a part of the "Open Eye" program titled "Agricultural Sector Development: Government Plan and Private Sector Investment". The participatory form has been selected to encourage intersectoral dialogue and pinpoint subtle points of friction and synergy among players within the agricultural system. To obtain a comprehensive and representative study of the agricultural landscape in the Sulaimani governorate, the 35 participants were purposely sampled in five main areas. The following stakeholders formed the focus group cohort:

Public Sector: The current government officials in the Sulaimani governorate, such as the strategic planning and implementation, such as the Director General (DG) of the Sulaimani General Directorate of Agriculture, the Deputy DG, and the Directors of the respective planning, livestock, horticulture, forestry, pasture, extension, and lands departments.

Legislative and Institutional Context: Current members of the Kurdistan parament, and People who offer continuity of history and legislative acumen, namely the retired Members of Parliament and the former DGs and spokespersons of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Private Sector: The major market participants, including active agricultural investors, agribusiness proprietors, and exemplary farmers, who gave ground-level insights on commercialization, market obstacles, and returns on investment.

Knowledge and Research Institutions: Professors and researchers of the College of Agricultural Engineering Sciences at the University of Sulaimani.

Civil Society and Future Workforce: Community lobbyists and future professionals, with environmental and agricultural Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) activists and media, as well as current agricultural students, are the future of the sector workforce and innovation.

3. Results

3.1. Key Challenges to Agricultural Development in the Sulaimani Governorate

The agricultural sector analysis in Sulaimani Governorate shows that the industry is complex and intertwined, making it difficult to develop and invest in it. These barriers are classified into four broad areas, which include: Legislative and Bureaucratic, Economic and Financial, Infrastructure and Technical, as well as Socio-Environmental, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Challenges to Agricultural Development in the Sulaimani Governorate

Category	Specific Themes and Challenges
Legislative and Bureaucratic	• Outdated Land Laws: Dominance of public ownership over private; "boring" and rigid land settlement laws. • Implementation Gap: There are laws in place (e.g., Local Crop Protection Act), but not enforced. • Bureaucratic Routine: The plans go out of date because it takes the administration a long time to implement the plans.
Economic and Financial	• Budgetary Neglect: KRI has not had a parliamentary budget since 2013; historically, allocation (1.8%) for the agricultural sector. • Lack of Safety Nets: No force majeure (fire, drought, natural calamities) compensation. • Unfair Competition: failure of the border control, and insufficiency of the protection of low-quality and cheap imports.
Infrastructure and Technical	• Marketing Infrastructure: Critical shortage of silos, cold storage, and modern slaughterhouses. • Resource Management: Poor water management despite high resources; lack of soil/crop maps and statistical surveys. • Quality Control: Prevalence of carcinogenic pesticides; lack of soil/crop analysis laboratories.
Socio-Environmental	• Rural Exodus: Migration to cities, turning producers into consumers; abandonment of traditional livestock. • Environmental Degradation: Deforestation, soil damage from nylon/chemicals, and "urban master plans" consuming arable land.

Source: from the study results.

3.1.1.Legislative and Bureaucratic Hurdles: The underlying problems in this group are the result of old land legislation, which is dominated by the focus on the importance of the state ownership of the land instead of the tenure of the land. This not only suppresses private investment but also makes land settlement processes tough and inflexible. An implementation gap is also apparent in that, despite the existence of favorable legislation, like the Local Crop Protection Act, the legislation has not been enforced, and thus it has not offered the desired protection to the local producers. In addition, the widespread nature of the bureaucratic routine, along with the corresponding administrative procrastination, often causes carefully drawn-up plans to be shelved before they can even get off the ground, a symptomatic lack of connection between the processes of policy formulation and implementation.

3.1.2.Economic and Financial constraints: Economic neglect is deep-seated and affects the economic viability of the sector. A notable pointer to this is that there has not been a parliamentary budgetary allocation to agriculture since 2013, and even when there has been, it has been very meager, at only 1.8%. This neglect is translated into a severe shortage of safety nets for the farmers who are not compensated when they suffer any losses due to force majeure like fire, droughts, or other natural disasters, leading to many farmers going to the verge of bankruptcy. Further, the industry is plagued by unfair competition due to poor border controls and the absence of protective mechanisms against the importation of inexpensive and, more often, poor-quality agricultural products that constantly lower the prices in the local market and lead to local production being discouraged.

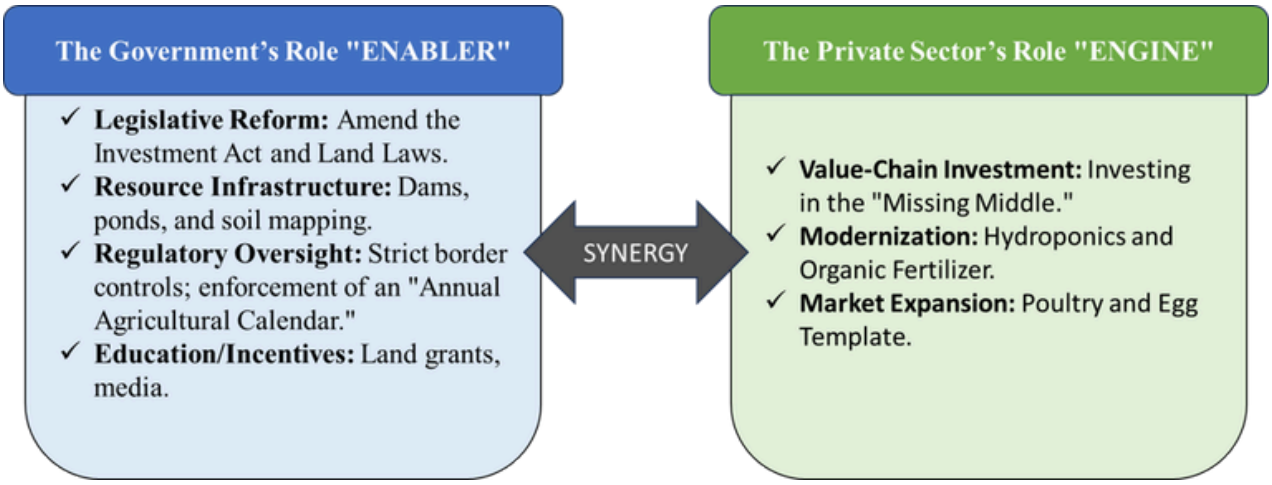
3.1.3.Infrastructure and Technical Shortages: Marketing infrastructure is in a very immature state, where there is a serious shortage of modern silos to store grains, a lack of cold storage units to store perishable products, and a shortage of modern slaughterhouses. This will restrict the capacity of producers to store, process, and market their produce effectively, resulting in massive losses after harvest. Resource management-wise, although the region has plenty of water resources, there is poor management of the water resources. This is also compounded by the fact that there is a great deficiency of the necessary tools, such as detailed soil and crop maps and periodic statistical surveys, which are critical in making informed decisions and in the effective distribution of resources. Finally, the problem of quality control is also a significant concern due to the abundance of potentially carcinogenic pesticides and the evident lack of modern soil and crop testing facilities that would be imperative in preventing health hazards to consumers, and the impossibility of exporting the products.

3.1.4.Socio-Environmental Pressures: Socio-environmental pressures are also important factors that influence the agricultural landscape. The rural exodus is turning the producers into consumers as the population moves into the urban centers, leaving the agricultural land and traditional livestock practices. This change in demographics not only decreases the workforce in the agricultural sector but also eliminates priceless traditional knowledge. At the same time, widespread environmental destruction is witnessed in the form of deforestation, long-term soil erosion caused by the inappropriate disposal of nylon and chemical wastes, and the disastrous erosion of prime arable land by the so-called urban master plans, which are disastrously reducing the agricultural foundation of the governorate.

3.2. The Public-Private Synergy Model

This model correctly points to one main objective that must inform all policy actions: becoming food sovereign and export-ready. This is a twofold objective. Food sovereignty not only provides the fulfillment of the local needs but also decreases the dependence on imports, which increases national security and stability. Export preparedness, in its turn, exploits the economic growth potential, diversifies the local economy, and earns income. This model focuses on the role that the government and the actions of the private sector play in the direct contribution to these overarching goals, as shown in Figure 1

Figure 1. The recommended division of labor between the government plan and the private sector investment.



Source: from the study results.

3.2.1. The Government (The "Enabler)

The role of the government can rightly be considered as an Enabler. This entails the supply of the circumstances, infrastructure and the regulatory circumstances within which the private sector can prosper. Lack of a good enabling environment will cause the private investment to be reluctant or off track.

3.2.1.1. Legislative Reform:

✓ **Revise the Investment Act:** It is an initial starting point. There are possibilities that the existing Investment Act may contain provisions that discourage agricultural investment, like foreign ownership restrictions, excessively complicated licensing processes, or a lack of incentives. In this policy paper, certain amendments have been suggested that will streamline the process, provide tax incentives or subsidies to agricultural projects, and guarantee equitable and open land acquisition.

✓ **Laws on land to promote private ownership:** Farming needs a secure tenure of land to invest in. The farmers and investors have to be assured that their land rights are not compromised. Unless the present land regulations are clear, they prefer long-term leasing to the detriment of state ownership, or in which case there will be no chance of investment by the private. Recommendations could include:

- Simplification of land registration and titling.
- Leaving the possibility of longer-term leasing or outright purchasing to farm development, but with well-defined rules to exclude speculative buying.
- Introduction of a clear land valuation and compensation system.
- Preserve Agricultural Areas against Industrial/Urban Sprawl: This is pivotal to sustainable agricultural development. Unrestrained urban sprawl will permanently transform arable land. The conservation of agricultural lands is suggested to be carried out by means of: There are definite zoning laws that stipulate certain zoning areas as agricultural lands. Also, Industrial and urban development incentives are to take place on non-arable land. As well as more stringent measures to guard against encroachment.

3.2.1.2. Resource Infrastructure:

✓ **Dams and Ponds:** Water is the lifeblood of agriculture, particularly in areas where water shortage or unbalanced rainfall might occur. The traditional example of a public good is to invest in water infrastructure.

- **Dams:** To store large quantities of water, irrigate, and control floods. The location of the new dams must be well chosen, or the restoration of the old ones with special attention to their purpose to provide a stable water supply to both rain-fed and irrigated agriculture.
- **Ponds:** To collect water locally, especially in small farms and livestock. These may be key to climate change adaptation.

✓ **Soil Mapping:** This is a preparation stage for effective and sustainable agriculture. Knowledge of soil types, nutrient levels, and suitability to various crops can enable optimal use of fertilizers, a better choice of crops, and higher yields, and this information is publicly accessible to farmers and investors, making it possible to conduct agriculture using data.

3.2.1.3. Regulatory Oversight:

✓ **Stringent Border control of Animal health and Chemical quality:** This safeguards the domestic agriculture and consumers.

- **Animal Health:** The livestock industry is sensitive to preventing the introduction of diseases (e.g., avian flu, foot-and-mouth disease). This necessitates strong veterinary border inspections.
- **Chemical Quality:** The imported fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural chemicals of concern should be of safe and efficient quality. This safeguards the health of people, the environment, and farmers, who do not use ineffective or harmful products.

✓ **Implementing an "Annual Agricultural Calendar":** This may be an effective coordinating production and market stability.

- It can entail guiding farmers on the best planting and harvesting dates of different crops in order to stagger the production to avoid the overproduction causing gluts in the market, and also to ensure a steady supply.
- This requires robust agricultural extension services to disseminate the calendar and support its implementation.

3.2.1.4. Education/Incentives:

✓ Land to Graduates: This is a solution to youth unemployment, skilled human capital introduction into the agricultural sector, and can also rejuvenate rural regions.

- **Implementation of specific programs:** long-term leases, subsidized land purchase schemes, or incubation programs that couple land with training and initial capital.
- This could target agricultural college graduates, ensuring they have the practical means to apply their knowledge.

✓ Funding Agricultural Media/Newspapers to raise consumer awareness: This is not directly related to production but deals with market forces and perception by the people.

- **Promoting Local Produce:** Educating consumers about the benefits of buying local, seasonal produce can strengthen demand and support domestic farmers.
- **Food Safety and Quality:** Informing consumers about safe food handling, organic options, and the quality standards of local products.
- **Market Information:** Providing farmers with price information, market trends, and best practices.

3.2.2.The Private Sector's Role (The "Engine")

The driver of innovation, investment, and market growth is the private sector, the "Engine" of the economy. The government develops the song, but the private sector gives the power.

3.2.2.1. Value-Chain Investment:

✓Investing in the "Missing Middle": It is a critical insight. In many cases, attention is paid only to primary production, and no one considers the steps that must be taken after the farm gate and before the consumer.

- **Marketing:** Developing brands, promotional strategies, and distribution channels for agricultural products. This moves products from being commodities to value-added goods.
- **Packaging:** A necessity to preserve products, keep them hygienic and attractive. Proper packaging will increase shelf life and increase access to a wider market.
- **Cold Storage:** A significant bottleneck in most developing agricultural economies. Cold chain logistics can help farmers to reduce after-harvest losses by enabling farmers to store their products and sell them when the prices go up.
- **Industrial Processing (Tobacco, Cotton, Sugar):** This is vertical integration and diversification. Rather than simply exporting raw materials, their local processing adds a lot of value, generates employment, and enables the capture of a larger portion of the value chain.

3.2.2.2. Modernization:

✓Hydroponics adoption: Hydroponics is an advanced method of farming that consumes less water and land, and thus it is applicable in areas that have scarce resources or in urban setups. It is also capable of yielding more and having more control over the growing conditions.

✓Production of Organic Fertilizers (Compost): This will promote sustainable agriculture, decrease dependence on chemical inputs, enhance soil health, and create a circular economy of agricultural waste.

- Private companies can invest in large-scale composting facilities, potentially partnering with cities to process organic waste.
- This aligns with growing consumer demand for organic produce.

3.2.2.3. Market Expansion:

✓Using Poultry/Egg Success (70% Export to Central/Southern Iraq) as a Model to Other Sub-sectors (Olives, Peanuts, Honey): It is a strong strategy to identify what has worked in the past and replicate its drivers.

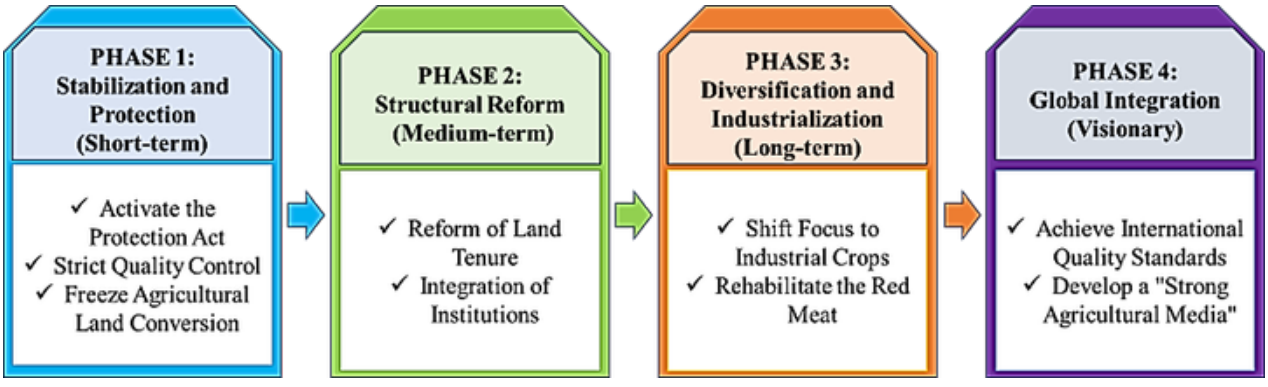
- **Olives:** Investment in the production of olive groves, processing (olive oil and table olives), and branding.
- **Peanuts:** Cultivation, Processing (roasting, peanut butter), and access to the market.
- **Honey:** Support for beekeeping, quality control, and developing unique honey products.

This strategy focuses on a market-based, proactive approach to agricultural development.

3.2.Phased Strategic Roadmap for Agricultural Development in Sulaimani Governorate

Figure 2 depicts the Four-Step Policy Roadmap to Agricultural Development, which provides a strategic, practical framework to enhance the agricultural sector in Sulaimani Governorate and directly correlates to Government Planning and Private Investment. The roadmap systematically addresses challenges and opportunities across various time horizons, highlighting the synergistic roles of public and private actors that help enhance the value chain.

Figure 2: A Four-Step Policy Roadmap for Agricultural Development



Source: from the study results.

3.3.1. Phase 1: Stabilization and Protection (Short-term)

It is a period of development of a stable and secure environment, which is largely shaped by the government intervention in order to protect the already existing agricultural assets and productions.

- **Enforce the Domestic Product Protection Act:** This is a critical government action to shield local producers against unfair competition, which usually discourages the parties from investing. The Act will help local farmers to keep producing and even increase production, knowing that their market will not be overwhelmed by cheap imports. This creates a feeling of security needed to support the long-term involvement of the private sector in the primary production level.
- **Strict government regulation of the quality of pesticides and imported livestock:** This is a government control measure that is essential to the health of people, their environment, and the long-term sustainability of local agriculture. Quality control is meant to ensure that farmers are able to use effective and safe inputs to ensure the safety of their farms/livestock as well as the confidence of consumers. In the case of the private sector, this instills confidence in the market, triggers investment in quality-based production, and safeguards the livestock in the hands of the locals against the diseases that could wipe out the personal stakes of the locals.
- **Freeze agricultural land conversion:** It is one of the most important government planning decisions. The agricultural land is a limited resource. In preserving its undeveloped character as a rural, as well as an industrial, area, the government guarantees the basic assets to all future agricultural development, and to all future development of the industrial area. This gives stability to the agricultural investors since they are now assured that the capital invested in production or processing plants will have a stable land base.

Synergy in Phase 1: The Government planning establishes the protective boundaries, which allow the private sector to work under reduced external risks, which ensures basic market stability and availability of resources.

3.2.2.Phase 2: Structural Reform (Medium-term)

This step aims at systemic changes that would enable a more dynamic and investment-friendly agricultural landscape, balancing between public oversight and the agility of the private sector.

- **Reform of Land Tenure:** A decisive structural change by the government concerns changing the existing land tenure laws to be more pro-investment. Having secure and transparent rights to own land or long-term lease rights are basic provisions for private investors. This reform will promote major investment of private capital in agriculture as investors will feel that they can make long-term improvements (e.g., irrigation systems, modern farming facilities) and use land as collateral to finance.
- **Institutional Integration:** The creation of a formal system of coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Environmental Authority, and the Syndicates of the Private Sector can be regarded as intelligent planning of government collaborative governance. This helps to reduce bureaucracy, make policy practical and responsive to market needs, and integrate environmental sustainability into agricultural development. In the case of the private sector, it would mean smooth operations, a voice that is more audible in the policy-making processes, and a more predictable regulatory environment, which collectively lowers the risks of operation and encourages investments in new projects.

Synergy in Phase 2: Government reforms unlock the potential of the private sector by making investments less risky and enhancing coordination, transforming the operating environment to be less restrictive to growth.

3.2.2.Phase 3: Diversification and Industrialization (Long-term)

This stage focuses on strategic changes in production and value addition, whereby government planning leads to diversification, and industrial processing is stimulated by private investment.

- **Shift focus from common crops to Industrial Raw Materials (sesame, sugar cane, tobacco):** This is a strategic government planning decision to develop higher-value industrial linkages. With the government steering production in these particular raw materials, it forms a stable supply of these raw materials to the processing industries of the private sector. This promotes individual investment in processing plants, a new value chain, employment, and diversifying the agricultural economy beyond primary produce.

- **The red meat sector should be reformed by encouraging traditional animal husbandry in villages to reverse the rural-urban migration:** This is a focused government intervention, both economically and socially. Incentives (e.g., subsidies, technical assistance) can stimulate the investment of private people and small enterprises in rural areas in livestock, thereby increasing local production. This not only enhances a useful agricultural sub-sector but also resolves the rural depopulation problem, preserving traditional knowledge as well as providing a labor force for future agricultural growth. The success of this rehabilitation will depend on the response of the private sector to such incentives.

Synergy in Phase 3: Government planning identifies strategic areas to grow in, and the required incentives are provided, and the responses are made by the private investment, which is creating processing capacities and increasing production in specific high-value areas.

3.2.2. Phase 4: Global Integration (Visionary)

The last stage is to establish the agricultural sector of Sulaimani as a competitive participant in both regional and international markets, which will require a close interaction between the government and the dynamic private sector.

- **Achieve international quality standards:** It is an important program of government planning to help market access. The government establishes the credibility of the agricultural produce of Sulaimani by setting and enforcing the international standards (e.g., food safety and hygiene). These standards then require investment by the private sector to upgrade facilities, adopt new technologies, and implement quality management systems to achieve these standards, which then allows them to penetrate lucrative export markets. The effectiveness of the egg production model itself can be used as a viable outline by private investors.
- **Establish a Strong Agricultural Media to brand local products:** This is a strategic government-supported marketing and branding program, although its effectiveness is highly dependent on the involvement of the private sector. The media platform will be able to market the quality and safety of products in the local market, which will generate consumer demand within the country and abroad. The private business can then use this branding to promote their specific product and invest in packaging, logistics, and distribution channels to reach consumers in the region and beyond and capture a higher value and brand loyalty.

Synergy in Phase 4: Government planning determines the framework of international competitiveness and market promotion, and the entry mode of international markets through the establishment of the necessary quality upgrades, branding strategies, and logistical infrastructure to implement the regional export.

Overall, this Four-Step Policy Roadmap is a useful tool in outlining how government planning can offer the required protection, reform, and strategic direction, and create a conducive environment to allow robust private investment. At the same time, the engine will be the private investment responding to these conditions by driving innovation, value addition, and market expansion, which in turn systematically bolsters the agricultural sector in the Sulaimani Governorate and achieves the overall objective of this paper, which is to: Bridge the Gap.

Conclusion

The agricultural sector of the Sulaimani Governorate, despite its inherent potential, is greatly impaired by a complex interplay of systemic issues, including legislative inertia and lack of public investment, critical infrastructure deficits, and pressing socio-environmental concerns. For this, the Vision Foundation in the “Open Eyes” program under the name of “Development of Agricultural Sector – Government Plan and Private Sector Investment” as indicated in this Policy Paper, the only way to unlock this potential is to initiate a paradigm shift: a strong, cooperative Public-Private Synergy Model. The in-supportive efforts by the government as an Enabler have been to create a favorable environment by means of strategic legislative reform, investment in basic infrastructure, strict regulatory control, and focused incentives to guide the sector towards sustainable practices and skilled human capital. At the same time, the private sector needs to operate as the “Engine" to drive innovation, value addition along the supply chain, and aggressive market expansion. The Four-Step Policy Roadmap proposed provides a pragmatic, staged approach to operationalize this synergy, not only to immediate stabilization and protection but also to long-term global integration. In the end, closing the historical divide between government planning and the private investment is not only an economic necessity but a structural requirement to the realization of food sovereignty, diversification of the region’s economy and the future prosperity of the region in terms of agriculture. Failure to harness this synergy will continue to stifle self-sufficiency in the governorate as far as sustainable development is concerned.

Recommendation

1.The Kurdistan Region Government, through the Ministry of Agricultural and Water Resources, should set up a special Value Chain Development Directorate or department within each general directorate in all governorates to identify high-potential agricultural sub-sectors, and enable private investment in post-harvest processing, branding, and market linkages.

2.Prioritize and carry out extensive reforms in land tenure, such as simplifying land registration, encouraging long-term agricultural leasing, and enacting very strict zoning laws to permanently protect arable land against urban encroachment.

3.Establish and strictly implement a multi-pronged protection system by stringently regulating agricultural imports in terms of quality and animal health, and investing in modern laboratories to ensure the safety of products and their meeting of international standards.

4.Initiate a special-purpose program known as Youth in Agriculture, which will provide agricultural graduates with long-term land leases, starting capital, mentorship, and continuing technical assistance to fight rural exodus and rejuvenate the workforce.

5.Establish integrated water resource management through investing in new and rehabilitated dams and ponds with a complete agricultural data infrastructure, such as soil mapping and an Annual Agricultural Calendar, to make informed decisions.

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Vision Foundation
for Strategic Studies

info@vfssiq.org
+964 772 330 0005
www.visionfoundationiq.org
Iraq, Sulaymaniyah, Saeed Kaban Street, House No. 28.

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