



SWG

Current Status and Challenges

Agricultural Policy Forum 2009

Ministers` Meeting

Jahorina, 8th October 2009

1. Status



1. As per the Conclusions of the Ministers' Meeting in Kolashin, Montenegro 2008, the SWG Assembly has made the following decisions

- Statute amendments- accepted;
- Head Office/ Secretariat defined;
- Financing of the SWG - Membership fee – obligation for SWG members` determined.

2. Under the Presidency of Montenegro the legal status of the SWG completed

- Agreement on the status and the activities of the SWG prepared and signed on March 28th, 2009 in Skopje, Macedonia, between SWG and the Macedonian Government;
- Formal registration and accreditation as an Intergovernmental Organization completed in July 2009
- Law on Ratification of the "Agreement" adopted by the Macedonian Government on September 7th 2009.

2. Projects and Activities of SWG



1. **SWG - GTZ Open Regional Fund for SEE**

“Strengthening the regional cooperation in the EU integration process and increase of economic competitiveness in the rural areas;



2. **SWG - FAO**

“Support Capacity Building for Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Analysis and Formulation in view of EU-Approximation of the Western Balkan Countries”;



3. **SWG - InWEnt Capacity Building**

“EU Integration of Rural Economic Areas 2009”.



2.1. Major Activities within the existing projects



- Assessment/study of the situation and development potentials of Drina-Tara Region (SER, MNE, BiH) and Debar- Peshkopy Region (AL,MK);
- “Best Practices in Regional Rural Development” documentary for educational purposes (A,D, CH);
- SWG Web Platform (www.seerural.org);
- Planning Workshop on the SWG activities, Durres, Albania;
- Events which promote rural regions and cultural heritage (Serbian and SEE Village; Regional Sheep Breeding Day etc.);
- Job creation trainings for Rural Women;
- Set of informational brochures in SEE languages (EC publications);
- Expert meetings on various subjects (Agro-biodiversity, Base line analysis on rural development policy in the Balkan countries);
- Involvement/organization of various trainings, targeted conferences, study tours and thematic discussions (PCM, PDO, PGI, TSG).

3. Forthcoming Projects and Initiatives decided by SWG Assembly



- Increased competitiveness of companies and associations from SEE in the agro and food sector through implementation of food safety standards, networking and increase of volume and value of trade;
- SEE Regional Tree Day- Plant your Future;
- Study/ research on employment in the agricultural sector in SEE countries, current situation and modulation for the future;
- Diversification of Economic Activities in Rural Areas -Job creation through the production of Traditional handicrafts in SEE;

4. Forthcoming Projects and Initiatives (continuation...)



- Support and Development of Rural Tourism-Web Platform in SEE;
- Creation of a Rural Network –Montenegro;
- Training program for Young Professionals from SEE;
- Strengthening of the competitiveness of rural areas in SEE through cross-border cooperation measures (area based development, cross-border projects and enhancement of the policy dialog).

5. What needs to be done?



Internal Issues

Actions to be taken by the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat

- Preparation of the planning meeting for the year 2010 (November 2009);
- Establishment of official SWG office/premises;
- Preparation of the internal Rule Book in accordance with the Statue and the Agreement;
- Expansion of the SWG internal structure.

Responsibilities of the Member Institutions

- Financing of SWG (Kolashin Meeting Conclusions)
Membership Fee (As per the decision of the SWG Assembly, the fee for 2009 is 15,000 Euros, and from 2010 and onwards is 20,000 Euros);
- Appointment of country "Liaison Officers"/ representatives as an international staff.

Responsibility of the Host Country

- Grant of premises for the Head Office/Secretariat;
- Fulfillment of other provisions in accordance with the Agreement.

5. What needs to be done?

Cooperation with partner organizations, institutions and governments

- Intensify the discussions and contacts with European Commission- DG Agri and DG Enlargement (fine tuning and modalities for cooperation to be determined);
- Establishment of new and strengthening of the existing communications with partner countries, international organizations (signing the frame cooperation agreements and MOUs, searching for possibilities for regional project funding).



6. Shortcomings to be prevailed



- Improved communication with some member institutions;
- Strengthened ownership over the activities of the SWG;
- Providing full-time international personnel from the member institutions;
- Involvement of RCC.

7. General subjects



- Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed to takeover the Presidency for the year of 2010;



- The next Agricultural Policy Forum 2010 to be organized in Germany;



- Upon the discussion within the SWG Assembly, Croatia is proposed to takeover the Presidency and to organize the Agricultural Policy Forum in 2011.





Thank you very much for
your attention!

