

Activities preformed in the period September – December 2013

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2nd National Networking Workshops for the FAO-SWG Project: "Streamlining of agriculture and rural development policies of SEE countries for EU accession", 1-7 September 2013, Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo*

The following topics were also presented and discussed:

- Update of status of alignment with EU policy at national level; results and progress of the performed work focusing on the collected information and documents on EU agriculture and rural development policies;
- Comparison of Statistics between EU member states and Western Balkan countries;
- Update on implemented actions on networking and cooperation campaign –the web-site is active and will be further improved: <http://app.seerural.org/>
- Best cooperation model among policy makers and scientific and research institutions.

5th Stakeholders Group meetings for “Sharra” and “Prespa” cross border regions, 17 and 19 September 2013 in Prizren, Kosovo* and Voskopoje, Albania and on 8th and 10th October 2013 in , Sabac, Serbia, and Bijelo Polje, Montenegro

The following was decided:

- The Stakeholders’ group members endorsed the process of preparation of Programme for economic development of “Prespa”, “Sharra”, “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava” regions and proposed draft measures for economic development of the cross-border regions without amendments.
- The work on the project proposals in all four regions continued in cooperation with the SHG members. The SWG organized follow-up working meetings in “Drina-Tara” region for definition of next steps related to implementation of the integrated economic development approach.
- The Stakeholders’ group members endorsed the proposed Operational Protocol and Rules of Procedure for the cross-border region of “Prespa” and “Sharra” without amendments.
- Discussions and endorsement of proposed Operational Protocol and Rules of Procedure for the cross-border region of “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava” will be finalized by the end of 2013.



Training Workshop: “Development of concept notes into project proposals for Organic Agriculture in the SEE Region”, 22-27 September 2013, Bari, Italy

During the three working days, the participants:

- Acquired a broader and common vision on all three priorities for the development of the Organic Agriculture in the SEE region – Harmonization, Promotion and Trade – where to put emphasize when finalizing the project proposals;
- Acquired an expert instruction on how to develop and widen the existing concept notes into appropriate and more structured logical frameworks and how to build a logical framework and to transfer it from a table into a text.

Participants visited Italian Organic projects and success stories:

- JONICABIO
- ValleRita Country Resort

PREPARE Gathering 2013, 4- 7 September 2013, Bosnia & Herzegovina

The main objectives were to:

- provide rural civil societies with an opportunity to discuss and express views on the current challenges of rural development in Europe and beyond it;
- create a space for exchanging experience and ideas, in particular to stimulate an exchange between rural actors from those Central and Eastern European countries which are already EU members, and those which are preparing for accession, especially from the South Eastern European region;
- promote dialogue between the public, private and NGO sectors and contribute to networking for sustainable rural development.

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Panel Discussion on “Economic Perspectives of South Eastern Europe – Sectors and People” 26 September, Belgrade

Representatives from the SWG were among the three (3) chosen organizations – panelists for the discussion.

The following issues were discussed:

- Where do the panelists see the most perspective assets and sectors of the region?
- Where are the strengths of the countries? Where are topics to improve? Which strategies shall be chosen for economic development?
- Which role plays regional cooperation among the SEE states and cooperation with other countries?

Second Meeting of the Project Steering Group (PSG) of the SWG EC ABDA Project, September 26th 2013, Sevilla, Spain

- The meeting hosted by EC JRC IPTS aimed at presentation of the progress made, discussions about the Programming documents for economic development of the four ABDA target areas, as well as discussions related to preparation of project pipe-line.
- The PSG concluded that SWG has made great progress related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA.
- The forthcoming period is crucial related to finalization of the ABDA programmes which will provide basis for funding of actions/ project for economic development of the WB cross-border areas.

Streamlining the implementation of rural development measures (IPARD) 2014-2020, 3 – 4 October 2013, Brussels

- Workshop organized in co-operation with TAIEX;
- The main objective of the meeting is to give IPARD stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on problems, concerns, experiences gained and areas of improvement in the implementation of the rural development pre-accession assistance post-2013;
- The event builds onto the work started by DG Agriculture and Rural Development on identifying the main bottlenecks in the implementation and onto the reflections on the potential role and structure of the rural development programmes

Agricultural Policy Forum, 16 – 17 October 2013, Pristina

- Entitled: “*New Prospects for Agriculture and Rural Development in South Eastern Europe towards Sustainable Future*”, the APF 2013 addressed the implementation of future EU agricultural and rural development policies and the reflection contributing to the countries of SEE;
- The results from the Working Groups (Area Based Development, Balkan Rural Development Network and Water and Forest Management) contributed to the formulation of the APF Agenda providing guidelines for suitable agricultural and rural development policies in SEE;
- Final outcome: Pristina Agenda 2013!

12th International Trade Fair in Brčko, 14-17 November 2013, Brcko, Bosnia and Herzegovina

- The great potentials and the diversity of the cross-border regions “Drina-Sava”, “Drina-Tara”, “Prespa” and “Sharra” were promoted during the 12th International Trade Fair in Brčko from 14-17 November.
- Through a variety of promotional material and direct presentation of the tradition, products and services of the exhibitors, the visitors of the fair were able to see a very diverse and interesting offer from the Western Balkan countries.
- During the Fair, the SWG representatives participated at the round table session entitled: "The work and cooperation Tourist Boards in the region, and the application of the joint projects through EU funds".
- The SWG was awarded with a certificate for special contribution to Tourism Development.

7th Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South Eastern Europe, 16 November 2013, Kopaonik

During the meeting the Ministers discussed the following:

- Reforms of the Common Agriculture Policy and Rural Development Policy of the EU for the period post-2013;
- EU integration and the agriculture and rural development assistance under IPA 2014 – 2020;
- Regional territorial cooperation in South-East European countries within the Area Based Development.
- Outcome of the meeting was: Declaration for cooperation signed by all participating Ministers and Heads of Delegations from South Eastern Europe.

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International Danube Soya Congress, 25 – 26 November 2013, Augsburg, Germany

During the Danube Soya Congress the following issues were discussed:

- European Soya Production – Chances, Challenges and the Impact of CAP;
- Europe's Protein Supply – Regional and Worldwide Perspectives;
- Who's Going to Pay all That? Danube Soya as a Building Block for Great Brands;
- Improving Genetic Diversity and the Danube Soya Research Project: Breeders Workshop.

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Promotion of Project Management Unit – SWG Secretariat for “Prespa” cross-border region, 27th November 2013, Korca, Albania

- Secretariat/ Project Management Unit of “Prespa” cross-border region was promoted on a Press Conference in Korca.
- The SWG Project Management Unit - as a SWG Secretariat of the cross-border region of “Prespa” located in the premises of the Center for Technology Transfer in Agriculture within the Ministry of Agriculture of Albania, should improve the communication between the stakeholders and facilitate the implementation of Area Based Development Approach oriented towards economic development of the region.

Conference on Family farming: A dialogue towards more sustainable and resilient farming in Europe and the world, 29th November 2013, Brussels

- The Conference was organized by the European Commission in Brussels
- The main objective of the Conference was the role of family farming, related key challenges and priorities for the future, as well the best means of supporting family farms.
- In particular, the conference emphasized the diversity of family farms in Europe and the world and the value of family farming in a sustainable rural model, as a producer of food, source of income, cultural values and of agrarian know-how and as a guarantor of the preservation of the environment and biodiversity.

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