

Initiative on Regional Advisory Services Network - South East Europe

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Why is Agriculture Extension / Advisory important ?

To be successful in the rising competition in the market, especially in the EU, farmers must:

- ⦿ implement the latest technology,
- ⦿ improve product quality and traceability of origin and
- ⦿ improve management and market (sales) skills and knowledge.

Why is Agriculture Extension / Advisory important ?

Advisors must demonstrate to farmers new and better ways of farming and the benefits of having it:

- Extension aims to solve the problems of the people, ie. population is engaged in agriculture and the rural economy, as well as to serve the interests of the state.
- Extension is basically related to the transfer of technology and knowledge from research institutions to farmers.

Background

- Advisors in agriculture are one of the crucial drivers towards a sustainable development of agriculture, rural areas and regions towards growth, competitiveness and innovation.
- If the Advisors are as important to be successful, the capacity building of these key persons needs a special attention.

How to reach objectives and future challenges of Advisors: through education and networking.

Background

Initiatives for regional networking:

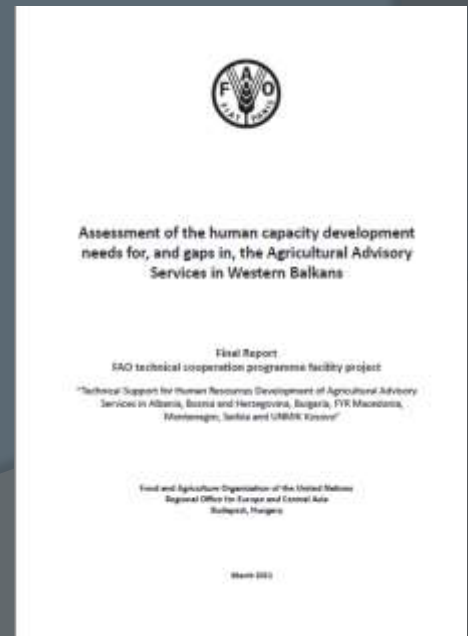
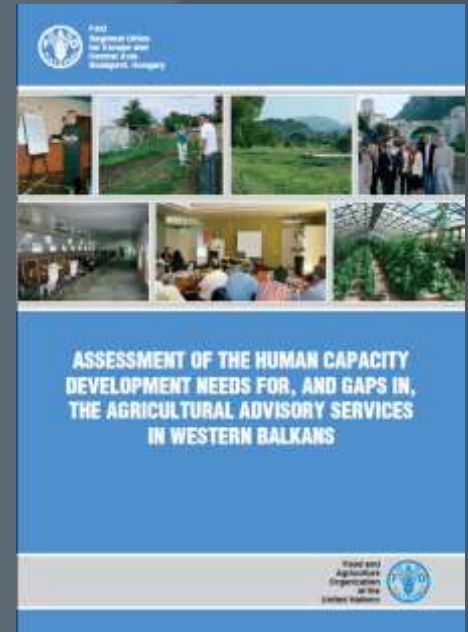
- FAO-study, 2011.
- GFRAS conference, Berlin, 2013.
- Conference in Sarajevo, 2013.
- IALB Strategy meeting, 2013.
- IALB Steering committee, 2014.

Background

Initiatives for regional networking:

- FAO-study, 2011.

FAO in study „Assessment of the human capacity development needs for, and gaps in, the Agricultural Advisory Services in Western Balkans“(2011) suggests regional linkage of advisory services due to exchange knowledge and experiences in trasfering knowledges in practise as one of the growth factor scale and competition agricultural regional production.



Background

Initiatives, opportunities and the needs for some form of networking and cooperation of agricultural extension services of the Western Balkans/ SE Europe were already issues at the following conferences:

- At the GFRAS-Meeting in Berlin (September 2013), a Workshop held by the representatives of Western Balkan countries it was proposed to examine the question.
- Symposium held in November, 2013 in Sarajevo on the topic "Advisory Services and Consultancy in agriculture and rural development" - Conclusions of the report of a FAO working group. "Cross-Border trainings in the West Balkan region for advisors".

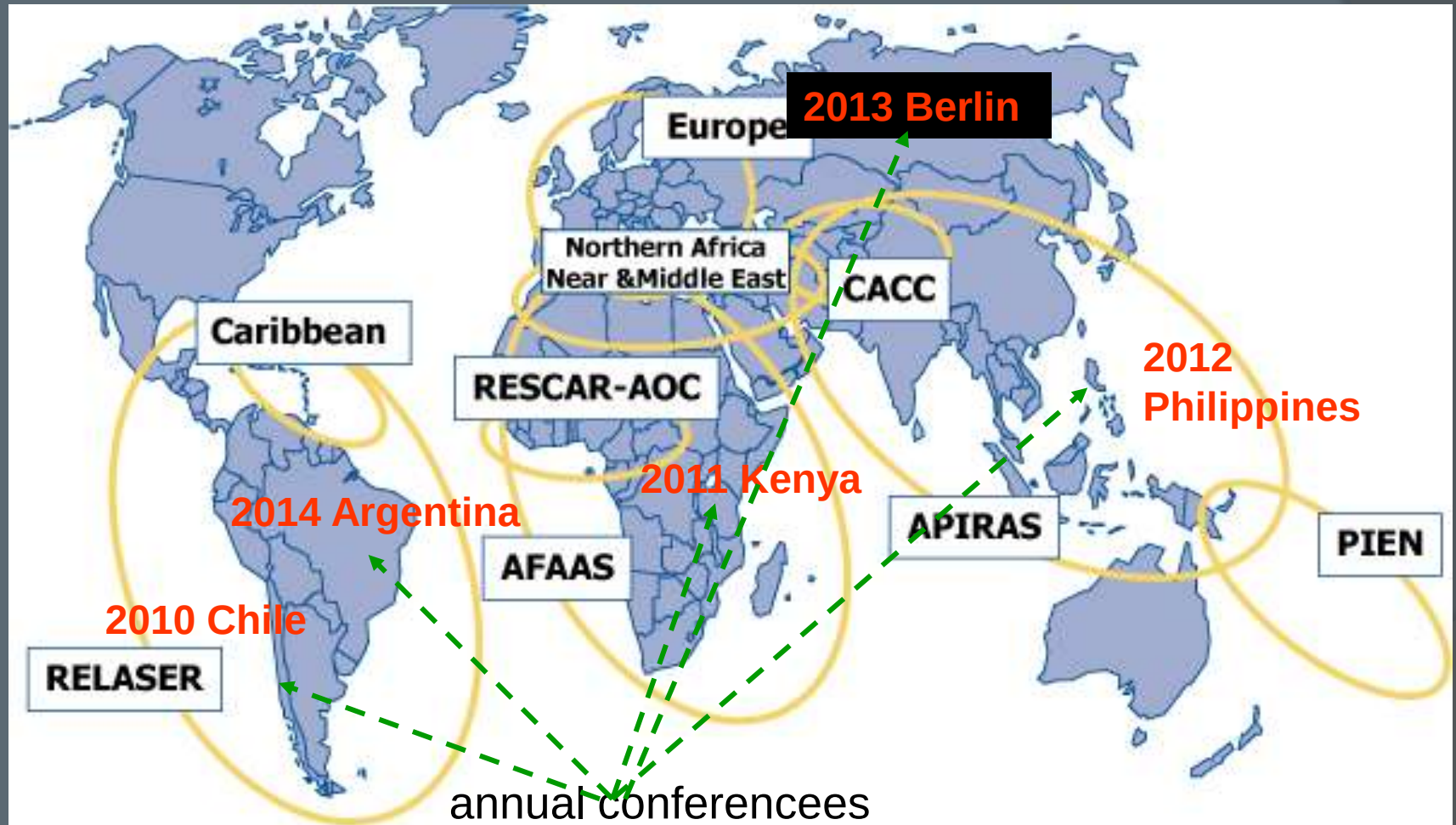
Background

- A meeting on IALB strategies held on December, 2013. at the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry, Munich, drew the following conclusion: different regions in Europe should, similar to the IALB network, establish associations on the regional actors level.
- We could imagine e.g. a western Balkan network or a Spanish speaking network ...;
- these regional networks could be represented in the newly founded EUFRAS on European level.

IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

- To obtain an update of Extension activity within the common speaking SE Europe region;
- build capacity to develop a regional network of extension leadership and advocacy;
- understand the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS); and
- launch a regional advisory network which can be affiliated to EUFRAS, GFRAS and serve to strengthen advisory services in SE Europe.

Member Networks developed since 2009 within GFRAS





Role of GFRAS

- Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)
- The GFRAS mission is to provide a space for advocacy and leadership by a variety of stakeholders on pluralistic, demand-driven rural advisory services (AS) within the global development agenda.
- GFRAS plays a catalysing role, promoting and stimulating interactions between and within the global policy level and the regional and national levels.

Role of GFRAS

- This space allows regional actors to present their perspectives in global development forums and processes.
- Similarly, it provides a mechanism for interaction and dialogue between the global and the regional levels. This two-way flow should lead to a strengthened role of advisory services within the broader agricultural development arena.

Role of GFRAS

- GFRAS fosters leadership, particularly at the regional and national level of the AS community, by providing a forum for stakeholders to interact to strengthen individual, organizational, and institutional capabilities in AS.
- Moreover, the forum supports the development and synthesis of approaches and policies that improve AS and help the AS community to better advocate.
- Through the GFRAS space, stakeholders can help to provide a voice, enable dialogue, and promote a supportive environment for investment in AS.

Role of EUFRAS



Improving quality, effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural and rural advisors' work aimed at supporting farming families, farmers, local groups, agricultural organizations and individuals involved in agricultural and rural development and addressing of the current and emerging problems (economic, environmental and social).

EUFRAS Activities

- The promotion of best practice in advisory methodologies
- The development of shared information technology services and solutions
- The sharing of technical expertise
- The skills training of advisory staff
- The development of advisory standards and frameworks for evaluation
- Promoting the activities of its members to key decision makers in the EU and elsewhere.

EUFRAS is founded in 2013 on IALB's initiative



Role of IALB

(International Academy of Rural Advisors)

- 1961: founded, 53 years of networking, 53 annual conferences
- 1991: start summer-seminar on advisory methods and exchange visits (23 seminars)
- 2003 - 08: initiative for European Interreg project R.E.N.E.
- 2007: starting point project CECRA
- 2011: IALB participated in policy dialogue on RAS in EU (preparation of CAP 2014- 2020)
- 2011: IALB is participating in GFRAS and takes initiatives for a larger Network in Europe
- 2013 on IALB's initiative EUFRAS is founded.

IALB role in ASN-SEE/ MSS -JEE

- IALB takes initiatives on Networking in Europe (EUFRAS).
- IALB strongly supported establishing of ASN-SEE/ MSS–JEE.
- IALB initiated regional AS persons (Mr. Husnjak, Mr. Jusović) for networking within the SEE region.
- ASN-SEE/ MSS–JEE representative will have a position at IALB Steering committee.
- Also, IALB will accept ASN-SEE/ MSS–JEE, as a collective member
- IALB plans common Projects with ASN-SEE/ MSS–JEE.

IALB role in ASN-SEE/ MSS -JEE

- IALB supported participation of Michael Kuegler and Erich Waldmeier at Initiative meeting of MSS–JEE in Belgrade. All the activities are supported by current (Ms. Edda Albers) and forthcoming (Mr. Ulrich Ryser, from 2015) IALB President.
- **53rd IALB – European Congress of Agricultural Advisors & 1st EUFRAS Conference**, will be held from **18 to 20 June 2014** at Tuheljske toplice, Croatia.
- The topic of congress is "**The Role of Agricultural Advisory in new CAP Reform**".

MSS-JEE main objectives and activities

- Connecting to dynamically exchange of knowledge and experience in terms of content and method of financing of agricultural advisory services.
- Increasing the efficiency of agricultural advisory services in contributing to the development of agriculture and rural area in the region
- Cooperation with related regional and European associations, for example. IALB, EUFRAS, SWG.
- Organizing education, training and certification of consultants at the regional level.
- Collaboration on projects.

MSS –JEE objectives and activities

Capacity building and training



- Involvement in IALB CECRA (or CECRA-like model).

- **WHY CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAININGS AND CECRA ?**
 - tendency to source out the advisory service functions
 - the country advisory budgets decreased
 - public money is more and more restricted to collective advice and public interest advice (group interactions, education, RD activities, innovation, environmental issues, climate change, public health, etc.).

MSS –JEE objectives and activities

Capacity building and training

Involvement in IALB CECRA (or CECRA-like model).

- This model could be an answer on these restrictions and needs.
- Lets do it together because it is not possible to offer at each of the training institutions every year the whole range of modules.
- Lets offer/accept the modules in a common offer and enhance the transnational cooperation and new insights which might be a condition for innovation.
- One of MSS –JEE substantial tasks should be sharing of experiences, knowledge and information more easily, on a common local language.

MSS –JEE: members of the Initiative

- The invitations for the Initiative meeting were sent to the representatives of the advisory services of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo*, Hungary, FRY Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, Romania, as well as to the representatives of IALB and EUFRAS.
- Participation at the meeting was confirmed by the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo*, Hungary, FRY Macedonia, Serbia, IALB and EUFRAS.
- The representatives of Slovenia, Romania and Montenegro supported the Initiative but could not attend the meeting.
- No feedback was received from Albania.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

What has already been done?

- The first meeting of the Initiative for establishing a network of advisory services in Southeast Europe, held 24.04.2014. at the Institute for Science Application in Agriculture, Belgrade.
- The meeting was attended by representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo *, Hungary, Macedonia, Serbia.



*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

What has already been done?

The meeting was attended by representatives of international organizations, that provide full support for Network establishment: IALB-a (Erich Waldmeier) and EUFRAS (Michael Kuegler).

We would particularly like to emphasize the support and presence of USDA - Dr Clemen Gehlhar and representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade.



What has already been done / next steps

Conclusions of the meeting that in the next two months, ie. to the meeting of the Organizing Committee in Republic of Croatia (Tuhelj):

- Define issues concerning the establishment of:
 1. Seat (center) of Network,
 2. Funding,
 3. Membership and the membership fees,
 4. Language.



What has already been done / next steps

Other Conclusions of the Initiative meeting:

- To form one work group (WG) for making the draft Staute and conclusions. This work group would consist of each member country/organisation. The proposed WG should in the next two months prepare the draft Statute, adjustable to local legislation, depending on the future network centre.
- Each member of the Initiative should inform its relevant ministry on this Initiative, as soon as possible if it had not done it before, in order to get a general consent.



Proposed targets

- Linking agricultural advisors and their organizations at the regional level
- Increasing the efficiency of agricultural advisory
- The development of common communication strategy
- Cooperation with related regional and European associations

Proposed activities

- Organizing trainings for consultants/ advisors
- Issuing monthly Newsletter and joint publications
- The organization of the regional Annual conferences
- Collaboration on projects

WE BELIEVE IN ESSENTIAL AND
LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP WITH
YOU.

THANK YOU!