

**Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group  
(SWG)**

**Activities of the Secretariat of SWG**

**REPORT No. 1  
July- August 2006**

**Prepared by: SWG Secretariat**  
"Kole Nedelkovski" 5  
1000 Skopje Macedonia

Cc:  
- Ministries of Agriculture in SEE Countries  
- SWG members  
- GTZ Head Quarters Office, Eschborn, Germany  
- InWEnt, Germany  
- FAO, Rome

## **Major activities carried out during the period July- August 2006**

### **Summary**

During the Agricultural Policy Forum in SEE, held in July 2006 in Sofia the SWG held a meeting and the following decisions were taken:

- GTZ MAFP Project - Macedonia has been appointed by the SWG to serve as the secretariat of the SWG.
- The Permanent Secretariat of the SWG during the next three years will act as an operational, administrative and organizational body of the SWG.

The secretariat of the SWG prepared and disseminated the report of the Third working meeting of the SWG held on July 5, 2006 in Sofia Bulgaria by e-mail to all SWG members, potential future members and present participants on the meeting as well as to the SWG supporters.

The secretariat of the SWG during the reporting period actively communicated with the members of the SWG as well as with the Ministries of Agriculture potential members of the SWG.

### **1. SWG membership, Statute of SWG**

Signing the Statute of the SWG, Ministry officials of the SWG member countries (Deputy Ministers, Assistant Ministers, Director of Rural Development Directorate/ Department) expressed their political will to establish an informal organization, consisting of representatives from institutions responsible for rural development, working in rural development on sustainable principles through networking and permanent co-operation between all stakeholders of rural development in the region.

The following Ministries submitted signed statutes to the Secretariat of SWG:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, Albania,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Macedonia,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Serbia,
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Bulgaria,
- Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, Vojvodina,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, UNMIK Kosovo.

As per the conclusions of the third meeting, the Secretariat of the SWG prepared and disseminated the official invitations and complete documentation representing the initiatives and recent activities of the SWG to those Ministries of

Agriculture which are still not official members of the SWG. The invitations have been delivered to:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Croatia,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mr. Boris Tadic from GTZ DEZA project in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the contact person for the B & H Ministries of agriculture),
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Ministry of European Integration of Romania (General Director of General Directorate for International Relations), Romania
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Turkey.

During the communication with ministry representatives' a positive response should be expected from the:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia and the
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Croatia.

The Ministry of European Integration and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development (Romania) as it was reported by Mrs. Agrigoreu, Counsellor for EU-integration and rural development, are in the process of decision making, but due to administrative procedures it might take a longer period, before becoming a member.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Turkey, gave a negative response to the invitation to join the SWG.

## **2. FAO project document: "Support Capacity Building for Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Analysis and Formulation in view of EU-Accession of Western Balkan Countries"**

The SWG Secretariat in co-operation with the FAO-office, Rome, co-ordinated the Ministries from SEE interested to participate in the above mentioned project. The SWG member ministries delivered their requests to the FAO - REUS department in Rome.

## **3. Participation at the EuRegia Fair and the Congress in Leipzig, Germany during the period October 23-25, 2006**

The SWG will present its activities at the EuRegia Fair and the congress in Leipzig. As discussed, the Secretariat of the SWG is also preparing promotional materials (flyer, poster) in order to promote the initiative and activities of the SWG at the EuRegia Fair and the conference.

The draft documents will be delivered to the SWG members for suggestions.

#### **4. Web – site of the SWG**

As decided, the SWG will have an independent web domain as also planned in the running costs calculations.

The secretariat of the SWG will prepare a web site of the SWG and will promote it during the EuRegia fair and the conference in Leipzig.

#### **5. Proposals for follow-up activities**

- ***WS on RD-Policy, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia***

The SWG secretariat had a meeting with the State secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia (Mr. Franc But) and discussed the possibility of Slovenia to join the SWG as a full fledged member and to support SWG-activities in exchanging experiences in respect to the EU-approximation process and the preparation and implementation of the RD-policy in Slovenia.

The proposed topics for the WS are the following:

- Slovenian Rural Development Policy, concrete measures and interventions during the pre-accession period,
- Process of the establishment of a Payment Agency, Departments, Relation Payment Agency – Ministry of Agriculture,
- EU Rural Development Strategy, 2007-2013
- Elaborated recommendations for SEE-countries

The second part of the WS should be dedicated to field visits of positive examples of RD-policy implementation including different measures (agro-ecology, organic agriculture, rural tourism, rural infrastructure etc.)

The secretariat of the SWG will be informed about the official answer from the Slovenian Ministry and will coordinate the activities for the WS-preparation and participation of SWG members.

- ***Contacts with Irish RD-expert and establishment of co-operation with the Irish Ministry of Agriculture***

The Secretariat of the SWG had a meeting with Mr. Michael Hegarty, Rural Development Consultant from Ireland, who was introduced to the ideas and activities of the SWG. It was concluded that Ireland is a good example of RD-policy implementation and it was proposed that the SWG establishes contacts with the Irish Ministry of Agriculture in order to present the activities of SWG and to discuss the possibilities for future co-operation.