



Activities of the Secretariat of SWG

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Prepared by: SWG Secretariat
"Antonije Grubisic" 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 February – April 2007

Summary

The report covers the most important information and activities undertaken by the Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE countries.

The Secretariat on behalf of the members in the reporting period conducted serial of activities supporting and coordinating the activities of the SWG.

Fifth Meeting of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE Countries

The Fifth Meeting of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (RRD SWG) in SEE was held on April, 20th, as a parallel event of the WS: "Rural Development in EU - Accession Countries", organized by FAO, which took place in Prague, the Czech Republic in the period 17-21 April 2007.

The purpose of the Fifth Meeting of the SWG was that SWG members discuss about current and decide about the future activities of the SWG foreseen with the Operational Plan for the period December 2006 - December 2007.

During the meeting the following was concluded:

- The start of the FAO Project: "Support Capacity Building for Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Analysis and Formulation in view of EU-Accession of Western Balkan Countries" foreseen for March 2007, has been postponed. Governments/Ministries, which already expressed interest to be included in the project realization, should submit the notification letter to the FAO Office. The letter will be distributed via the Secretariat of SWG to all SWG members.
- The positive example of the successfully realized cross-border project in the triangle Skopje-Nis-Sofia (Shopska Land), should provide the SWG members with clear vision and impulse to draw down the concepts for the already defined topics for cross-border activities and projects.
- Ministries of Agriculture willing to join the SWG initiative should send the signed Statutes and nomination of Ministry representatives to the Secretariat, latest by May, 15th, 2007.
- The final concept of the study tour: "Best practices in Regional Rural Development" will be prepared by InWEnt as per the conclusions of the meeting.

- For the purpose of organization of the Leipzig Agricultural Policy Forum 2007, the SWG members will be contact persons/partners in correspondence between InWEnt and the Ministries of Agriculture in SEE countries.
- The SWG members will support the organization of “The Regional Sheep Breeding Conference and the Sheep Breeders` Day “, acting as contact persons and local coordinators of the country participating teams.

Membership in the SWG

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development - Romania-sends the letter of interest to the Secretariat of SWG, for further discussions related to procedure to join the SWG initiative;
- Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina both in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Serbska as well as the Canton Brcko were contacted several times, but the Secretariat didn't receive any reply from their side;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia were contacted several times, but the Secretariat didn't receive any reply from their side;

Ministry of Agriculture, Turkey – upon the request of the Turkish Ministry the complete SWG documentation has been sent once again, but the Secretariat didn't receive any reply from their side;

The Web – site of the SWG

The Secretariat is constructing and administrating the Web-site of the SWG (www.seerural.org).

One technical assistant is engaged by the Secretariat to administrate the web – site. It is expected that the members of the SWG will deliver all necessary and other significant material to the Secretariat of SWG, which will be posted on the web.

Documents delivered by:

- Serbia (organization profile, CV of experts)
- Kosovo(organization profile, CV of experts)
- Albania (CV of experts)

The other Ministries still, didn't send the necessary documents.

Meetings with the State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture – Romania

The Secretary of the SWG had a meeting with the State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development in Bucharest. During the meeting, the Romanian State Secretary was introduced with the idea and activities of the SWG and the question of joining of the Romanian Ministry in SWG as a full fledged member was discussed.

It was concluded that relevant representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, will participate on one of the next meetings of SWG, in order to be introduced with the activities of SWG and will decide about the membership in SWG.

Participation on Donor Conference for Rural Development in the Border Region of Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria, February 15th-17th, Dimitrovgrad – Serbia

The project team of the cross border project in the border region of Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria, organized the Donor Conference which aim was to present to the national and the international donors the potentials of the local rural municipalities situated in the EUROREGION Skopje – Nis – Sofia. The title of the conference was: "EUROPE IN THE HEART OF BALKANS".

During the Donor Conference in front of the participants the Secretariat of SWG presented the idea and the concept of the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in SEE (SWG).

Meetings with representatives of diplomatic offices international organizations

The Secretary of the SWG performed a serial of meetings and discussions with the British Embassy in Macedonia and the DEFTRA from Great Britain.

The discussions were focused on the possibilities for support of the SWG in the process of realization of the Operational Plan for 2007, especially the implementation of cross border and regional projects.

Meetings with representatives of the CIHEAM- Institute for Mediterranean Agriculture, Bari (IAMB)

The Secretary of the SWG had a meeting with representative of the CIHEAM-Institute for Mediterranean Agriculture, Bari and discussed the possibility for cooperation especially in organization of a study tour for the members of SWG in the Puglia Region in south Italy.

Official request from the SWG was prepared and sent to IAMB.

Meetings with representative of the PREPARE- Partnership for Rural Europe

The Secretary of the SWG had a meeting with the representative of PREPARE, the Non Governmental Organization working on strengthening of civil society and promotion of multi-national exchange in the rural development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

During the meeting it was concluded that both organization could cooperate and preparation of Memorandum of Understanding was suggested.

Annex: Photos

The Fifth Meeting of the SWG

