



**Activities of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat**

**REPORT No. 15  
January-February 2010**

**Prepared by:**

**SWG Head Office/Secretariat**  
"III Makedonska Brigada" bb  
1000 Skopje Macedonia

**Cc:**

- Ministries of Agriculture in SEE Countries (SWG member institutions)
- GTZ HQ Office, Eschborn, Germany
- InWEnt, Germany
- FAO Regional office, Budapest

## **Major activities carried out during the reporting period**

### **Summary**

This report covers the most important activities undertaken by the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat during the period January-February 2010.

The SWG Head Office/Secretariat, on behalf of the SWG-members, conducted a series of activities by supporting and coordinating the activities of the SWG.

### **1. SWG STATUS**

- Starting from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat moved into new premises provided by the Macedonian Government. The working space was adapted according to the provisions of the Agreement on the Status and Activities of the SWG.

### **2. PROJECTS and PROJECT PARTNERSHIP**

**2.1. The SWG-project financed by the GTZ Open Regional Fund (ORF) for SEE on Foreign Trade Promotion is entitled:**

***“Increased competitiveness of companies and associations from South-Eastern Europe in the agro and food sector through implementation of food safety standards, regional networking and increase of volume and value of trade”***

- The project is approved by the German Government - BMZ and will be financed through GTZ Open Regional Fund for Southeastern Europe.
- The administrative procedure for the start-up of the project is completed. The Grant Agreement between SWG Head Office/ Secretariat and GTZ is signed.
- Planning and coordination meeting for the project realization between SWG Head Office/ Secretariat and the GTZ has been performed and a preliminary Operational Plan is drafted.
- Contribution from SWG delegates is expected in terms of proposals of activities and list of export companies from SEE which could be involved in the project realization.

## **2.2 Partnership with FAO- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the SWG and FAO, February 2010**

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the activities in the area of agriculture, rural development, environmental protection and food safety in South-East Europe between SWG and FAO was signed by Mr. Neskovic, President of the SWG Assembly, and Ms Kadlecikova, FAO Deputy Director - General and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia.
- The MoU represents the basis for intensifying and deepening the cooperation between both organizations.
- Concrete discussion was held, focused on four project proposals (presented on the 16<sup>th</sup> SWG meeting in Germany), out of which two and two are to be submitted to FAO by the end of March 2010.

## **2.3 Preparations for the InWEnt Young Professionals Program- Managing and Leading Regional Rural Governance, 2010**

- The first training course will take place from March 18<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 in Germany. The second training course will take place from May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Germany. The training for Young Professionals Program is open for participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.
- Relevant institutions and contact persons to be involved in the programme have been identified. Based on the selection criteria and interviews with the applicants, 25 training participants from SEE were selected.

## **2.4 FAO TCP 3103 Project**

***“Support to capacity building for agriculture and rural development policy analysis and formulation to support EU-integration of the South-Eastern European countries”***

- The FAO TCP 3103 is in the final stage of completion, concluding activities of its implementation are two final workshops for beneficiary groups 1 and 2/3.
- Final workshop for the beneficiary groups 2 and 3 is foreseen for the period between May - June.
- The workshop for the beneficiary group 1 is to be organized within the SWG Meeting.

## **2.5 TEMPUS IV PROJECT: Western Balkan Rural Extension Network through Curriculum Reform**

- Implementation of the TEMPUS IV WBREN project started in January 2010.

- As a TEMPUS partner organization, SWG will begin to execute its activities in the period of March-April 2010.

## **2.6 Offer for participating in the TEMPUS Project: Knowledge Transfer Network in Western Balkans for Regional Rural Development**

- SWG has been offered to join and participate in a new TEMPUS Project-Knowledge Transfer Network in Western Balkans for Regional Rural Development (KTNNetRRD).
- The KTNNetRRD project aims to support the knowledge transfer and the capacity building in the field of Regional Rural Development by developing and enhancing the involvement of the higher education institutions within the wider society.
- The SWG involvement in the project realization, to be discussed during the next SWG meeting.

## **3. EVENTS, MEETINGS**

### **3.1 Events**

#### **3.1.1 Green Week International and Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA), Berlin, January 2010**

- The Standing Working Group (SWG) participated on the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture 2010:"Agriculture and Climate Change – New Concept Proposals from Policymakers and Industry".
- Experiences and concepts related to climate change, climate protection and the adaptation strategies were discussed by the Agriculture Ministers during the Ministers' Panel Discussion and the Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Summit.
- The SWG Assembly President and Secretary General had a brief discussion with the Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food, H.E. Lars Peder Brekk, who expressed an interest about the SWG organization, and requested more information regarding the work and the activities of the SWG.
- The SWG Secretary General held brief discussions with the Serbian Minister of Agriculture, the Slovenian Minister of Agriculture, the Croatian State Secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Minister of Agriculture from Kosovo (UNSCR 1244).
- At the Cooperation Market, the SWG exhibited along with market institutions, universities, companies and agencies of the agricultural and food science.

- During the Green Week International Fair, the SWG delegation visited the national stands of the SWG members exhibiting and promoting products from their countries.

### **3.1.2 Regional Conference “Western Balkans in 2020 – Overcoming the Economic Crisis and Developing Competitive Economies”, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, February 2010**

- The SWG Secretary General participated at the Regional Conference: “Western Balkans in 2020 – Overcoming the Economic Crisis and Developing Competitive Economies”.
- The Conference brought together senior policy officials and key experts from the Western Balkans academia, the European Commission and international financial institutions, to review the impact of the global economic crisis, assess the different policy actions taken, and examine the ways to strengthen the long-term competitiveness of the region’s economies.

### **3.1.3 Third Meeting of the TAIEX-Training Liaison Officers (TLOs) for agricultural, veterinary, phyto-sanitary and food safety policies**

- The SWG Secretary General participated at the Third Meeting organized with the TLOs from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.
- During the Meeting, the TAIEX-training maps 2010 in the fields of agricultural, veterinary, phyto-sanitary and food safety policies were discussed.
- The SWG Head Office/Secretariat will prepare and submit proposals for regional TAIEX workshops on the topics defined during the 16<sup>th</sup> SWG meeting.

## **3.2 Meetings**

### **3.2.1 Meeting with the representatives of the EU Commission in Brussels, January 2010**

The President of the SWG Assembly, Mr. Neskovic, the SWG Secretary General, Mr. Ilic, and Mr. Majdak from the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture had meetings with representatives from the Directorate General for Agriculture (DG AGRI) and Directorate General for Enlargement of the EU Commission in Brussels.

The following topics were discussed:

- Technical cooperation between the SWG and DG AGRI - areas of improvement and needs to be strengthened, methods of collaboration;

- The state of pre-accession of the Western Balkan countries;
- Usefulness of TAIEX instrument in pre-accession work in the agricultural sector of the Western Balkan countries
- Progress in implementation of IPA Component on cross-border cooperation and SWG's role in this context;
- Possibilities of SWG participation in IPA Multi-beneficiary programme;
- EU rural development policy and cooperation with SWG.

The European Commission has demonstrated a good will and positive attitude for cooperation with the SWG. The participation and the support of the European Commission as a partner organization/institution in the SWG will be further defined.

### **3.2.2 Meetings with representatives of the Regional Center of UNDP, Europe and CIS, February 2010**

- The President of the SWG Assembly and the SWG Secretary General had a meeting with Mr. Balazs Horvath, Poverty Reduction Practice, Practice Leader of UNDP, Europe and CIS at the UNDP Regional Center.
- Focus of the discussion was on possibilities for cooperation with the UNDP and for financing SWG projects through the UNDP.

### **3.2.3 Meetings with representatives of Embassy of Croatia and Montenegro in Macedonia**

- The SWG Secretary General had a meeting with Mr. Stepan Glass – Minister Counselor at the Embassy of Croatia in Macedonia and Mr. Franjo Ljuljdjuraj – Consul at the Embassy of Montenegro in Macedonia.
- The discussions were focused on the current activities of the SWG and ideas and proposals for realization of activities with regional relevance.

### **3.2.4 Meeting with representatives of Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Macedonia**

- The SWG Secretary General had a meeting with Mr. Frank Stoessel – Attaché for Economy and Culture and Mr. Vanco Eftimov – Collaborator in the Department for Economy.
- Discussions were focused on the current SWG activities and projects financed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as possibilities for further strengthening of the cooperation with the German Government.

**ANNEX: Photos**



*Signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)  
between the SWG and FAO*



*Forum Green Week International 2010 – Panel discussions*



*SWG stand on Cooperation Market – Forum Green Week International 2010*