



**Activities of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat
for the period March-April 2010**

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Cc:

- Ministries of Agriculture in SEE Countries (SWG member institutions)
- GTZ HQ Office, Eschborn, Germany
- InWEnt, Germany
- FAO Regional office, Budapest
- European Commission – Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development

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 March-April 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. PROJECTS and PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

1.1. Cooperation with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

1.1.1. The SWG-project financed by the GTZ Open Regional Fund (ORF) for SEE on Foreign Trade Promotion 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”

- Within the project, the following activities will be organized in the period May-July 2010:
 - o Round table on products with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographic Indication (PGI), Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG), June 16th-17th, 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - o Safety in slaughterhouses and business meeting between importers-exporters of lamb, Sheep breeding Day 2010, 9th-10th, July, 2010, Macedonia
- 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.

1.1.2 The SWG-project to be financed by the GTZ Study and Experts Fund: *“Strengthening of the regional cooperation/networking in the forestry and water management sector and sustainable development in the river basins of the South-Eastern Europe countries”*

- Project proposal prepared and submitted to the GTZ; official approval expected mid of May 2010.

1.2. Cooperation with the European Commission (EC)

- The EU Commissioner for Agriculture – Mr. Dacian Ciolos acknowledges the congratulation letter from the SWG for his appointment and recognizes the SWG as an important partner of the EC in the South Eastern Europe.

“SWG serves as an effective channel for communication with all candidate and potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans, will remain an important partner for the European Commission in the region. Against this backdrop, please be assured of our continued support to the SWG’s mission and activities in a region to which the EU attaches particular importance”.

- Based on the meeting conclusions of the SWG and the representatives of the EU Commission - DG Agriculture and DG Enlargement the position of the EC related to the SWG-EC cooperation is the following:
- The cooperation and support from the EC side should be project oriented and should be implemented in a step by step approach:
 - o *Step 1:* Technical assistance / Study by one or two external consultants
 - o *Step 2:* Programme and project development to be performed directly by SWG on the basis of the work produced by the consultants
 - o *Step 3:* Coordination of projects or parts/components of projects by SWG

1.2.1 TAIEX

- The SWG training map for Multicounty TAIEX seminars for 2010/ 2011 prepared and submitted to the EC- DG Enlargement TAIEX Unit;
- Applications for 1 Multicounty WS on Less Favorable Areas (LFA) and 3 Experts Missions (PDO, PGI, TSG, Food safety in slaughterhouses and Common Market Organizations-CMO) for the period June – December 2010 submitted to TAIEX for further procedure.

1.2.2 Area based development approach

- Discussions about the two potential regions for implementation of an area based development approach Drina-Tara (B&H,SRB,MNE) and Shopska Land (MK,BG,SRB) are in process with the DG Agri;
- Joint Research Center (JRC) – Institute in Seville together with the EC prepared a Terms of Reference for the research which should be done in the potential regions;
- It is decided that logistic backup for the research to be provided by the SWG member institutions from the involved countries and the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat.

1.3 Cooperation with FAO

- Strategic Framework for Cooperation between SWG and FAO for the period 2010-2015 jointly prepared by the SWG Head Office/Secretariat and FAO;
- Two project proposals prepared and submitted to FAO:
 1. FAO TCP Project: "Streamlining of agriculture and rural development policies of SEE countries in the process of EU accession"
 2. FAO TCP Facility: "Support for establishment of rural development networks in SEE countries"
- SWG/ FAO TCP 3101 Project: "Support to capacity building for agriculture and rural development policy analysis and formulation to support EU-integration of the South-Eastern European countries" – final WS for the beneficiary group 1 realized within the 17th SWG meeting. The project to be completed with final Ws for beneficiary groups 2 and 3 scheduled for September 2010.

1.4 Cooperation with InWEnt

- 21 Young Professionals (from Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Albania and Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Bosnia and Herzegovina) delegated by their institutions/organizations working in the field of design and implementation of strategies and policies for rural and regional development participated at the first part of the training session "Managing and Leading Regional Rural Governance" which took place in Germany from 18th of March to 31st 2010; (remark: low interest for participation by trainees from Montenegro);
- "EU Integration of Rural Economic Areas" – training sequence on „Energy for Rural Areas - new chances and challenges“ is to be organized in the period 17th-21th May 2010 in Germany;
- Training on communication and negotiations with the EU, for participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia will be organized in the period June 6th -11th, 2010 in Serbia and for the participants from Albania, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) and Macedonia in the period September 19th-24th, 2010 in Albania;
- Preparations for Agriculture Policy Forum 2010 and the Ministers' Meeting which will be held in the period October 27th-31st, 2010 in Germany started with a coordinative meeting between Steering Committee of the involved partners (SWG, InWEnt, GTZ, IAMO);

- The participation of SWG on the Euregia International fair on local and regional development in Europe, 25th-27th, October 2010, Leipzig, Germany should be further decided by SWG and InWEnt.

1.5 TEMPUS IV PROJECT: Western Balkan Rural Extension Network through Curriculum Reform

- Meeting of the TEMPUS University partner organizations has been held end of April, for elaboration of the execution approach of the up-coming activities. Mr. Zeljko Vasko- SWG delegate from Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina represented the SWG on the meeting, as well;
- The representatives of the SWG from the involved countries (Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia) will be involved in a training sessions – train the trainers and in the up-coming period should work in the development of training modules on rural development issues.
SWG tries to include Montenegro and Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) in the project.

2. EVENTS, MEETINGS

2.1 Events

2.1.1. 2nd Economic Counselors Meeting - EU Coordination under Spanish Presidency, Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia, April 8th, 2010

- The SWG initiative and the activities presented during the 2nd Economic Counselors Meeting. The presentation followed by the representatives of the Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany H.E. Ulrike Maria Knotz, as well as representatives of the economic departments of the Embassies of the EU member states in Macedonia.

2.1.2. Multi-Country Seminar on Establishment of the IPARD operating structures, Albania, April 28th-29th, 2010

- The first training sequence of the multi-country TAIEX seminars focused on IPARD operating structures presented the representatives of the Ministries of agriculture from the potential candidate countries experiences and lessons learned regarding the IPA structure, bodies and authorities for implementing the IPARD programme.

2.1.3 Seventeenth Meeting of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) of SEE Countries, Macedonia, April 26th-27th, 2010

The representatives of eight out of thirteen SWG member institutions, participated on the meeting, discussed and have taken the decisions during the 17th SWG meeting.

Detailed meeting report prepared and the major conclusions are as follows:

- The updated SWG Operation Manuals on Contracting and Procurement procedures and the Financial Management accepted;
- Preparations about the Agricultural Policy Forum 2010 in Dresden, Germany will continue; major tasks, detail preparation and responsibilities will fall on the SWG Secretariat; The 2010 Ministers' meeting will be held either in Germany or Croatia;
- The SWG project activities will be realized as plan in the Project Operational Plan;
- It should be decided who takes over the SWG Presidency in 2012;
- The 18th SWG meeting will be held in Biograd, Croatia middle of September (13th – 18th , week 37);

3.SWG STATUS

3.1 Membership fee for 2009

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Croatia; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Macedonia; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Serbia have regulated the membership fee of 15,000 Euro for 2009. The rest of the SWG member institutions, still have an open balance.
- Based on the decision from November 2008, the membership fee for 2010 is 20,000 and the documents for payment of the SWG membership fee will be delivered in May 2010.

ANNEX: Photos



Seventeenth SWG meeting, April, 2010



2nd Economic Counselors Meeting - EU Coordination under Spanish Presidency, Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia

