



**Activities of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat
for the period May- June 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 May-June 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 were organized in the period May-June 2010:

1.1.1.1. 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 organized in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The organization of the event was also part of the SWG activities within the cooperation with European Commission, Directorate General for Enlargement – TAIEX Unit.

The main conclusions of the Round Table were:

- National legislation related to PDO, PGI, TSG has been developed in the SEE countries; still the emphasis should be given on development of secondary legislation / implementing acts; Future activities should be focused on harmonization of the national legislations with the EU Regulations (for the countries which still has not completed this process);
- Inter-institutional cooperation/communication in some of the participating countries is still weak and should be strengthened in the future;
- All the counties share similar problems, and have to share the experiences as well as, to try and adapt the already implemented positive examples from the other countries in the SEE, especially from the new EU member states;

1.1.2 The SWG-project 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”

- The project proposal officially approved and the project has started in April 2010.
- The planning meeting with relevant stakeholders from the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, scientific institutions from the SEE countries scheduled for July 14th – 15th, 2010 in Macedonia. Meeting objective is to define the project activities and the implementing procedures, as well as the technical issues related to water and forestry management in river basin areas of SEE region.

1.2. Cooperation with the European Commission (EC)

1.2.1 Technical assistance to the South East Europe Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

The overall objective of the project is to facilitate and enhance cooperation of candidate countries and potential candidates in the Western Balkans in the area of agriculture and rural development. This is to be done by assessing capacities of the SWG and assistance in kick-starting a new phase of operation as an international organization.

1.2.2 Project "Facilitating an area-based development approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans"

- Meeting with the representatives from DG Agriculture and DG Enlargement discussing the progress of cooperation among the parties involved, held in May 2010.
- The project will focus on a selected rural area where application of the area based development approach with objective to assess the development satiation and needs, propose the most appropriate interventions trough the participatory approach involving national and local stakeholders from the cross-border region in SEE.
- Based on the conclusions of the 16th SWG meeting the two preliminary selected regions are: the Drina- Tara region (cross border region between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro) and the Shopska Land (cross-border region between Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia).
- Logistic backup for the research to be provided by the SWG member institutions from the involved countries and the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat.

1.2.3 TAIEX

- The SWG training map for Multicounty TAIEX seminars for 2010/ 2011 submitted to the EC- DG Enlargement TAIEX Unit approved;
- The 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) are approved and should be realized in the period June – December 2010.
- Cooperation with TAIEX in organization of regional round table discussions with participation of Ministry representatives and experts from several SEE countries (like the Round Table on PDO, PGI, TSG) evaluated as very useful and should be practiced in the future.

1.2.4.

- Mr. Pascal Herry from the European Commission Directorate-General for Enlargement visited the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat in June 2010.

1.3 Cooperation with FAO

- Two project proposals prepared and submitted to FAO are in the internal FAO procedures for approval:
 - o FAO TCP Project:”Streamlining of agriculture and rural development policies of SEE countries in the process of EU accession”
 - o 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” – is to be completed with final Ws for beneficiary groups 2 and 3.
- The President of the SWG Assembly and the SWG Secretary General participated on the 36th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture and on the 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe in the period 10-14 May, 2010 in Yerevan Armenia hosted by FAO and the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The objective was to address the major problems/ impacts on agriculture and rural development in Europe and Central Asia, as well as, to identify/ disseminate FAO’s support in the region. In the meeting outputs the SWG is described as an International Intergovernmental Organization with considerable policy weight and experience, seizing a sizeable portfolio of projects on agriculture and rural development and the SWG-FAO TCP has been selected as one of the successful projects for FAO and published on their web-site.

1.4 Cooperation with InWEnt

1.3.1 Young Professionals Programme "Managing and Leading Regional Rural Governance"

- The Second Training Course was organized in the period of May 31st to June 19th, 2010 in Schwäbisch Hall/Germany. The main topics were on the terminology, best practices in Regional Rural Governance (RRG) and the Process Performance Change (PPC) with an aim to become familiar with the development and the implementation of policies for Regional Rural Governance on the level of the EU, the national and the regional level; to acquire the management skills and the social skills to act as leaders in Regional Rural Governance; and exchange of experience from different institutions and organizations.

1.4.1 "EU Integration of Rural Economic Areas"

- Training sequence on „Energy for Rural Areas - new chances and challenges“ was organized in the period 17th-21th May 2010 in Germany and aimed to strengthen local and regional specialists, executives and decision-makers in their capacities and skills to manage and coordinate sustainable development activities through mobilizing regional potentials and resources.

1.4.2 Training on *"Negotiations- Accession to the European Union in the Field of Agriculture and Rural Development"*

- The training for participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia organized in the period June 6th -11th, 2010 in Serbia aimed the Ministry representatives to learn and understand the development, the process and the structures of European Union Common Agricultural Policy. Special attention was given to the rural development programming and structures, as well as, the EU accession process and negotiations in the chapter of agriculture as a long, complex and multi-dimensional legal, economic and political process.

1.4.3 Preparations for Agriculture Policy Forum 2010, October 27th-31st, 2010 in Germany

- Preparations are on-going and the SWG member institutions should nominate adequate participants from their institution. The regular communication and coordinative meetings between Steering Committee of the involved partners (SWG, InWEnt, GTZ, IAMO) are held regularly.

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

- The first workshops of the training were held in the period of 10-14 May, 2010 in Albania and Macedonia. For the non-formal partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia the first workshops will be held in the period 13-17 September, 2010. The aim is to train the non-formal partners in creating training modules in rural development. The participants of the training of trainers will become the future trainers of the modular based rural development training.

2. EVENTS, MEETINGS

2.1 Events

“Rural Development Seminar”, May 26th 2010, Montenegro

- Based on the invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture of Montenegro, the SWG Head of Operations participated at the Rural Development Seminar which was organized within the framework of the Twinning Project MN 08/IB/AG/01 “Support to establish an IPA Rural Development Programming and Implementation System in Montenegro”, with the main objective to raise the overall awareness about the ongoing process of preparation to IPARD, the roles that different stakeholders take in it, the opportunities and challenges ahead.

ANNEX: Photos



Round table on PDO, PGI, TSG, June 16th -17th, 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Training on communication and negotiations with the EU, June 6th -11th, 2010 in Serbia



InWEnt Young Professional Programme