



**Activities of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat
for the period September- October 2010**

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Cc:

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- 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 September – October 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 September – October 2010:

1.1.1.1 Seventh Regional Fair of Balkan Agro-biodiversity and Rural Heritage held on September 24th, 2010 in Dimitrovgrad, Republic of Serbia

- More than 1000 people from Serbia and SEE countries gathered at the manifestation which main objective was to promote Balkan rural heritage – through the aspect of their economic, scientific and ecological importance for sustainable agriculture and rural development.
- The manifestation, with more than 50 exhibitors, gave particular publicity to local and regional farmers who are directly engaged in conservation of the endangered genetic resources and natural biodiversity and preservation of traditional knowledge through diverse agriculture, handicrafts and tourism related activities.
- The sales exhibition of wool handicrafts was this year's Fair highlight and gave opportunity to the members of associations of rural women producing wool handicrafts from Macedonia and Serbia to discuss possibilities of regional business networking for joint approach to the foreign markets.

1.1.1.2 Technical discussion on honey quality and export requirements combined with regional exhibition of bee products from SEE, October 11th 2010, Pljevlja, Montenegro

- The aim of the technical discussion was to present and discuss the national legislation related to quality of honey and bee products, as well as to discuss the procedures and requirements for export from non EU member states to the European Union.
- The event intended for the representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, representatives of National and local beekeeping associations, producers and traders with honey bee products from Southeastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) gathered more than 80 participants.
- More than forty participating producers and traders, the Regional Exhibition of honey bee products and beekeeping equipment were part of the event. At the same time, the associations of beekeepers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro used the opportunity to establish closer cooperation.
- For the beekeepers and traders from the SEE countries both, the technical discussion and the regional exhibition were a great opportunity for getting more information about the principles of the good beekeeping practices as a precondition for production of safe and high quality products, as well as to promote and sale their products, and strengthen their business cooperation.

1.1.1.3 First Regional Meeting of the wholesale and green markets from the Western Balkan countries, October 18th- 19th 2010, Belgrade, Serbia

- The aim of the working meeting was to strengthen regional networking between the green and wholesale markets from the Western Balkan Countries and to establish a platform for regular exchange of information, experiences and know-how related to relevant national and EU legislation, organizational structures of the markets, food safety systems and standards relevant for the markets, as well as information about the market (prices, demands and offers of agricultural and food products).
- Representatives of National Associations of markets, green and wholesale markets from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia and Serbia discussed the future cooperation models and signed a document entitled: Declaration for networking.

1.1.1.4 Preparations for the forthcoming event are on-going:

1. Conference on CEFTA Agreement and multilateral business-to-business meetings, November 9th, 2010, Skopje, Macedonia

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”

1.1.2.1 Preparations for the Technical Discussion on: “Implementation of a concept for sustainable forest management (SFM) in protective forests of South Eastern European Countries”, 9th – 12th November, 2010 in Andrevlje, Serbia

- The technical discussion jointly organized by SWG, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Serbia in cooperation with FORNET-Serbia will aim at addressing the needs and concerns in the context of forestry and sustainable forest management (SFM) in protective forests across the SEE countries.
- It will identify common challenges for achieving sustainable forest management faced by the candidate and potential candidate SEE countries, particularly in the process of EU integration, where sustainable practices and proper implementation of new legislations are prerequisite.
- The target group are representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Departments of Forestry, representatives from the public enterprises - forestry sector and representatives from the academic institutions.

1.2 Cooperation with the European Commission

1.2.1 Project - Area Based Development: "Facilitating an area-based development approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans" of the selected pilot area Drina-Tara

- The project aims to facilitate local development in the Western Balkans applying the ABD approach in a selected rural cross-border area and to develop a method using the ABD approach for other rural areas in the Western Balkans, where ABD intervention may be appropriate.
- Field visits and meetings with Ministry representatives, local stakeholders performed by the Joint Research Center of the EU (JRC).

1.2.2. Project: "Technical assistance to the South East Europe Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group"

- Project objective is to assess the capacities and development needs of the SWG as organisation, propose an organisational design, perform mid-term strategic planning for a 5 year period, set - up a work plan, communication strategy, as well as assist in the organisation of project preparation.
- The selected consultants performed an on-line interviews trough a questioner, as well as a focused group discussions with the SWG delegates during the APF 2010 in Dresden.

1.2.3 TAIEX training measures

- TAIEX applications for 2011 are to be prepared with assistance of the SWG delegates as follows:
 - o Bosnia and Herzegovina - Agricultural Statistics, Analysis, FADN;
 - o Serbia - LEADER Approach - Legal basis, Structure of LAGs, Successful examples, Implementation of policy;
 - o Croatia - Agro-environmental measures.
- TAIEX workshops on Less Favorable Areas (LFA) and Common Market Organization (CMO) are postponed for the first quarter of 2011.

1.3 Cooperation with InWEnt

1.3.1 SWG and InWEnt Joint Program: "Young Professionals Program- Leading and Managing Regional and Rural Governance"

- Young Professionals Program was specially designed program for supporting young professionals in gaining comprehensive competency profiles, improving their specialist knowledge and personal skills.
- The knowledge and skills provided during the training courses are used by the participants in order to elaborate, implement, communicate and transfer the projects in their organization. It will also help their institutions/organizations in introducing and improving the impact of project development and programs on local, national and regional level.

1.3.2 Training workshop: Negotiations- Accession to the European Union in the Field of Agriculture and Rural Development, 19th - 24th September, 2010 Durres, Albania

- The training was specially designed for SWG delegates and relevant Ministry representatives from the SWG member institutions/ countries from Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo (UNSCR 1244). The aim was for the participants 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.

1.3.3 Regional Marketing- Branding of regions and products, September 20th - 25th, 2010, Leipzig, Germany

- The overall goal was to strengthen local and regional specialists, executives and decision-makers in their capacities and skills to manage and coordinate sustainable development activities in rural areas through mobilising regional potentials and resources.
- By using a systems-oriented and process-oriented approach towards Regional Rural Development (RRD), the seminar as a core issue in RRD aimed at promoting an active and innovative marketing approach for structural changes on regional level.
- With its cross-boundary approach, the seminar provided regional and inter-regional exchange of experiences and regional networking.

1.3.4 Euregia International Fair 25th – 27th October 2010, Leipzig, Germany

- The event focused on local and regional development in Europe provided the SWG with an opportunity to establish contacts and discuss the future cooperation with regional structures and international organizations from European countries.

1.4 TEMPUS IV Project: Western Balkan Rural Extension Network through Curriculum Reform

- Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum Development Workshop on Rural Ecology organized at the University of Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period of 13th – 15th September 2010.

- Training of Trainers (ToT) Curriculum Development Workshop on Rural Sociology organized at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia in the period of 15th – 17th September 2010.
- Overall goal of these activities is to train the non-formal partners in creating training modules in rural development. It is expected that the participants of the training of trainers in year one, to become the future trainers of the modular based rural development training (year 2 and 3 and continue indefinitely).

2. EVENTS, MEETINGS

2.1 The Agricultural Policy Forum 2010 on: “Bridging the gap: Agricultural and rural policies in South Eastern Europe facing the challenge of EU compliance”, Regional Conference, October 27th – 30th, 2010, Dresden, Germany

- The 10th Agricultural Policy Forum (APF) held in Dresden from October, 27th to 30th 2010, provided a timely opportunity to take stock of the remarkable success achieved by the APF process over the past decade, while anticipating new challenges and identifying opportunities for the development of agriculture and rural areas in South Eastern Europe (SEE) over the next decade up to 2020.

The main conclusions reached at the Agricultural Policy Forum 2010 in Dresden:

- The trustful policy dialogue among government representatives from SEE countries, involving also academic experts and practitioners from the region and beyond, has in many fields evolved into effective co-operation and promising partnerships. The APF and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) are major assets for the future development of SEE, reaching far beyond the agricultural and rural development arena.
- Despite immediate urgencies, and aware of the need to cope with current obstacles and gaps, co-operation in the SEE region has to be forward looking, guided by a strategic vision and appreciation of the opportunities offered by European integration.
- Regional co-operation and partnerships help SEE countries to identify and overcome gaps, in designing and implementing appropriate development strategies and measures, as well as in establishing effective monitoring and evaluation tools and systems. This co-operation needs to be continued and further intensified.
- Bridging gaps will be even more successful if efforts are not just unilateral. The SEE countries represented at the APF appreciate the strong engagement of German development co-operation, enabling partners to exchange ideas and to join forces. They invite other potential partners and donors to actively engage in the dialogue and in the progressive development of this partnership.

2.2 Forum Synergies: European Rural Sustainability Gathering 2010, 14th – 17th October 2010, Vouneuil sur Vienne, Poitou-Charentes, France

- The gathering was organized by CELAVAR, a French network of regional rural initiatives supporting sustainable development through popular education and FORUM SYNERGIES, a network linking local sustainable practices throughout Europe.
- 65 representatives of civil society organizations from 15 European countries have met in Vouneuil in order to learn from sustainable practices in the region and to gather ideas for the upcoming reform of the European agricultural and rural policies.
- The participants have shared their views on what they have seen in the region reflecting their own work in local and regional projects.

2.3 EastAgri Annual Meeting 2010, 13th -14th ,October 2010, Istanbul, Turkey

- The sixth EastAgri Annual Meeting (AM) was a unique occasion for institutions working in transition countries to find forward-looking options to foster agricultural investment in the region, individually and in partnership with other EastAgri members.
- The 2010 EastAgri annual meeting focused on the following topics:
 - o Investment funds in agriculture- recent experiences and future potential in the EastAgri region
 - o From farm to fork: exploring investment opportunities in Turkey's agriculture
 - o Can agricultural investment co-exist with climate change policies?
 - o Investing across borders: the way forward for agricultural and rural development in the Western Balkans?
 - o Farm mechanization: A new challenge for agriculture

2.3 DREPR Project Serbia: Regional Conference on Experiences of Nutrient Pollution Control Projects in the Danube-Black Sea Basins, 4th -6th, October, 2010, Belgrade, Serbia

- The Conference presented the DREPR Project and some of similar projects experience in the region, and focused on ways forward for development of methodologies to measure results of nutrient pollution control activities.
- The SWG GTZ Project on networking in the water and forestry sector was presented and project based cooperation with other international organizations was discussed.

2.4 The 18th meeting of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE, 15th and 16th of September 2010 in Biograd n/m, Croatia.

- Meeting report available

2.5 PREPARE Annual Gathering, August 30th – September 3rd, 2010, Ohrid, Macedonia

- The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group – SWG as initiative for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in South Eastern Europe was presented on the first plenary session at the PREPARE (Pre-accession Partnership for Rural Europe) annual Gathering 2010.
- Around 120 delegates from South Eastern European and Eastern European EU member states and EU candidate and potential candidate countries gathered to meet, to exchange and to learn from each other with common objective: contribute to integrated development of rural areas.

2.1.2 Preparations for the Annual Ministers Meeting 23rd – 24th November, Zagreb, Croatia

- The Annual Ministers Meeting will be hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of Croatia, H.E Minister Cobankovic;
- The objective of the Annual Working Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture from SEE is to discuss and decide upon the next steps for strengthening regional co-operation in the field of agriculture and rural development;
- Ministry delegations from the SWG member institutions, Germany, Austria, representatives of the SWG partner organizations and the European Commission expected to participate on the meeting.

ANNEX: Photos



Agricultural policy Forum 2010, October 28-30, 2010, Dresden, Germany



Seventh Regional Fair of Balkan Agrobiodiversity and rural heritage, September 24th, 2010, Dimitrovgrad, Republic of Serbia



A technical discussion on: "Quality of honey and bee products and export requirements" took part on October 11th, 2010, in Pljevlja, Montenegro.



First regional working meeting of the National Associations of Markets, green and wholesale markets from the Western Balkan Countries, 18-19 October, 2010, Belgrade, Serbia



Negotiations training, September 19-24, 2010, Durrës, Albania

