



**Activities of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat  
for the period November-December 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 November-December 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 November-December 2010:

**Conference: “Implementation of CEFTA – Free movement and barriers on trade of agricultural goods“ and multilateral business meeting, November 9<sup>th</sup> in Skopje, Macedonia**

The conference aimed for the participants to receive an update and discuss the CEFTA Agreement and realization of the provisions of the Agreement related to the agriculture and food sector, to understand the meaning of CEFTA, the objectives of CEFTA, the benefits of membership in CEFTA and the impact, as well as the opportunities for the trade in agriculture and food sector between the countries in the region of South-Eastern Europe.

This business-to-business meeting was an opportunity for approximately 25 companies from Macedonia, Slovenia and Croatia to establish and strengthen the business relations. Also to increase the regional trade and to exchange the experience about problems and opinions on issues they are facing in their day-to-day operations.

### **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”**

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

The technical discussion was jointly organized by SWG, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Serbia in cooperation with FORNET- Serbia and aimed at addressing the needs and concerns in the context of forestry and sustainable forest management (SFM) in protective forests across the SEE countries.

Representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Departments of Forestry, public enterprises - forestry sector, academic institutions, forestry associations and National Parks participated at the gathering.

Conclusions were made that it is necessary to establish appropriate cooperation between forestry and other sectors such as water, environment, agriculture and other interest-related sectors through possible reorganization of the Ministries, establishing cross-sector working groups and meetings with the private sector. Regular and supplementary ecological education of foresters is also essential, with the aim of improving the current subordinate status of the forest sector.

## **1.2 Cooperation with the European Commission (EC)**

### **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 second meeting of the Advisory Board of the project aimed to the presentation of the working version of the assessment findings, selection of priority interventions based on critical needs, and proposal of the main outcomes, objectives and outputs of the ABD programme.

The Donor Conference for development measures of the Drina – Tara region is scheduled for the period May 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia.

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

The consultants selected by the EC, prepared a strategic outline of the SWG. The plan was discussed on the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SWG Assembly and proposals from the meeting participants were given during the brain-storming discussions and group work.

### **1.2.3 TAIEX training measures**

- TAIEX applications for 2011 were prepared and submitted to the EC – TAIEX unit as follows:
  - o Agricultural Statistics, Analysis, FADN;
  - o LEADER Approach - Legal basis, Structure of LAGs, Successful examples, Implementation of policy;
  - o Agro-environmental measures.

The TAIEX workshops on Less Favorable Areas (LFA) and Common Market Organization (CMO) were postponed for the first quarter of 2011 and are in a preparatory stage.

## **1.3 Cooperation with InWEnt- capacity Building International**

### **1.3.1 SWG and InWEnt Joint Program: "Young Professionals Program- Leading and Managing Regional and Rural Governance" First Conference of Young Leaders of South-Eastern Europe, 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010, Tinjan, Croatia**

The conference mainly focused on discussions on the topic „*How to install effective and efficient Public – private partnership in rural areas*“, as well as how future cooperation between young leaders of the Western Balkan countries is possible.

It was concluded that young leaders shall communicate with the SWG Secretariat on regular basis and whenever an opportunity raises their willingness for assistance will step up.

The Alumni Conference has been set up as a continuation of the previous one and place and date proposed for the conference is Belgrade, Serbia in the period 23<sup>rd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

## **2. EVENTS, MEETINGS**

### **2.1 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South-Eastern Europe (SEE), 23–24 November, 2010, Zagreb, Republic of Croatia**

Ministers for Agriculture, their deputies and chiefs of cabinets from 11 countries from the region of South Eastern Europe participated at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Ministers' meeting held on November 23<sup>rd</sup> in Zagreb, Croatia.

The aim of the meeting, held under the auspices of the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture and then SWG, was to discuss and agree on the next steps for strengthening of the regional cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In the direct aftermath of the established Annual Ministerial Meetings of the Ministers of Agriculture, as well as Agricultural Policy Forums of the South Eastern Europe Countries, the Ministers had an open discussion about the interests of the countries in the SEE region in order to identify common and to reconcile differing interests and views. The concrete conclusions are related to the following topics:

- Reforms of the agricultural and rural development policy of the SEE Countries and its achievements in accordance with the EU CAP
- Regional Cooperation in the framework of the SWG
- Regional Trade
- Donor Community

### **2.2 Seminar in Establishment and Development of National Rural Development Networks in the candidate countries, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Brussels, Belgium**

The seminar aimed towards exchange of experiences related to the structure, role of the national rural development networks in the implementation of rural development programmes.

The seminar gave the opportunity to SWG to discuss the future cooperation with the European Rural Development Network and the National networks both from EU candidate countries and EU member countries.

### **2.3 The 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE, December 7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> , 2010 in Bansko, Bulgaria**

The goal of the SWG meeting was to plan of the SWG activities for 2011. A strategic planning for the mid-term period of 5 years on the preformance of the SWG was also done on behalf of the SWG Assembly.

The meeting report is available.

**ANNEX: Photos**



*4<sup>th</sup> Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from SEE*



*CEFTA Conference*



*B2B meetings*



*The technical discussion on Forestry*

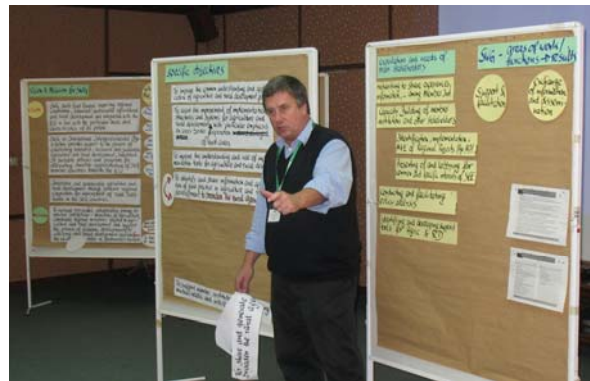




*The technical discussion on Forestry*



*The young leaders conference*



19<sup>th</sup> SWG meeting, Bansko Bulgaria