

Meeting of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on Natural Resources Management (NRM)



27 – 29 June 2017

Andrevlje, Serbia

I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the LEIWW (Rural Development through Integrated Forest and Water Resources Management in SEE) regional project, jointly implemented by SWG and GIZ, the REAWG on NRM in SEE developed a regional study assessing the current situation and policies on natural resources management in the Western Balkans and providing policy recommendations to improve the situation. The study had its premiere presentation in the meeting, which gathered national, regional and international experts, as well as representatives from the rural development authorities (full list of participants in **Annex 1**). In addition, in the meeting the REAWG came up with a proposal for the group's further activities towards implementation of the recommendations from the regional study (program of the meeting in **Annex 2**). The meeting was financed by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

II. PRESENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STUDY

The study "Natural Resource Management in the SEE countries: Assessment and Recommendations" had its premiere presentation in the meeting, providing the participants the opportunity to give their feedback and make corrections before its final editing and publishing. The presentation of the study is given in **Annex 3**.

The key issues identified with the assessment are the following:

1. Under-development of the forest-based and natural resource sector
2. Uncontrolled land use to be tamed
3. Ecosystem services bear great potential
4. Business environment to be strengthened
5. Private land owners to be activated
6. Resilience is an integral concept to natural resource use
7. Institutional framework needs an integrative and coordinative boost
8. Capacities and education are worth investing

III. FUTURE OF THE REAWG ON NRM

a. Political Support for NRM

In order to plan the future direction of the work of the REAWG on NRM the political support for it was elaborated, through the conclusions of the main events involving policy makers: Agricultural Policy Forum 2016, Ministerial Meeting 2016, and SWG Assemblies in December 2016 and April 2017. The message from all of those events is that there is a political support for improving the management of the natural resources in the Western Balkans (the presentation covering this elaboration is provided in **Annex 4**).

b. Workshop and concept by the international experts

A workshop was organized, as part of the meeting, with the aim to elaborate on the purpose for the future work of the REAWG, define its objectives and plan future activities. The workshop



The working groups

was comprised of 3 sessions in which the participants were divided in 3 working groups.

As a result of the workshop combined with the proposed concept by the international experts, the REAWG agreed to continue working in the areas of:

- Establishing intersectoral coordination & cooperation between sectors that are involved in natural resources management
- Enabling science – policy interface for the transposition of the EU legislation linked to NRM
- Establishing common methodologies for natural resource monitoring