



Meeting
Regional Expert Advisory Group on Agrobiodiversity in South-East Europe
June 27th -28th, 2018
Leunovo, National Park Mavrovo, Macedonia

Meeting Report

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1. Objectives of the meeting

Following the conclusions of the previous meeting of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on Agrobiodiversity and the expressed interest for continuation of the activities in the field of agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use, Meeting of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity was organized in the period June 27th- 28th, 2018 in Leunovo, National Park Mavrovo, Macedonia.

The meeting aimed at discussions and planning of the way forward of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity, as well as activities related to agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

The meeting was executed according to the programme enclosed as *Annex 1*.

2. Minutes of the meeting

2.1 Participants

Invitations for participation were delivered to nominated Ministry representatives and contracted academic experts.

In total 15 participants representing the scientific and research institutions, Ministries of Agriculture from South-East European countries, SWG and GIZ attended the event.

The list of participants is enclosed as an *Annex 2* of this report.

2.2 Minutes from the meeting

The meeting started with the welcome addresses by Mr. Benjamin Mohr, GIZ LEIWW Team Leader.

Ms. Irena Djimrevska presented the status of the agrobiodiversity assessment and opened the discussion on the way forward. The presentation is enclosed as *Annex 3*.

Based on the plenary discussions for continuation of the work of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity it was concluded that it is necessary to establish cooperation with FAO in respect to:

- Participation in preparation of the Report for Biodiversity for food and agriculture;
- Explore the possibilities for implementation of TCP project in the WB countries related to conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity. The main aspects would be adjustment of the existing legislative, strategic, policy and institutional frameworks, as well as implementation of activities related to conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture.

Mr. Boban Ilic on behalf of SWG expressed readiness to approach FAO to explore possibilities for future cooperation between FAO and SWG REAWG Agrobiodiversity.

The meeting continued with plenary discussion related to possible funding opportunities for the activities of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity.

One option is to explore possibilities to integrate agrobiodiversity in the future GIZ SWG project SEDRA on diversification of economic activities in rural areas in respect to the:

- Value chain development and implementation of LEADER approach in rural areas.

The second option is to explore possibilities for inclusion of agrobiodiversity within the future actions of the second phase of the GIZ Open Regional Fund for South East Europe -Biodiversity which is under development.

Mr. Benjamin Mohr took the responsibility to obtain more detailed information on this issue.

As per the dissemination of the results of the assessment of agrobiodiversity in the South-East countries, it was previously agreed to be done both on national and regional level.

On regional level, presentation of the results will be done on plenary session during the Agricultural Policy Forum in October 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The discussion on agrobiodiversity issues is foreseen within the working groups, as well, particularly the working group on diversification of economic activities in rural areas and the working group on agro-environmental measures.

On national level the dissemination of the results of the assessment is foreseen during working meetings and round table discussions in the South-East European countries, considering specificities of each country/ entity, and more details are presented in the table below:

Country/ entity	Foreseen events& participants	Tentative timing	Responsible
Albania	Round table at the Ministry of agriculture: (with participation of representatives of various Ministry departments) and district Directorates, representatives of Ministry of Environment, Agriculture University of Tirana	October 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in the REAWG Agrobiodiversity
	Donor meeting: GIZ, FAO, GEF, UNDP	Autumn 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
	Conference on agrobiodiversity: scientific community	Autumn 2018	Academic experts
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Federation of B&H	TBD	TBD	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in the REAWG Agrobiodiversity
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republika Srpska	Round Table at Governmental Building with participation of Ministry of agriculture (various departments) and representatives of Ministry of Science, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Extension Agency, MSc and PhD students, Council for Agriculture, Repro Centers, Slow Food, Fund for Environment Protection etc.	Autumn 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
	First International Conference "Nature in Southern and Eastern Europe – Diversity, State and Governance" – info enclosed	September 2018	

Kosovo*	Round table at the Ministry of Agriculture with representatives of various departments, representatives of Ministry of Environment, Agriculture Faculty, students and other stakeholders	End of September – beginning of October 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
Macedonia	Round Table at the Ministry of Agriculture (participation of representatives of various departments) and representatives of Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Paying Agency, Extension Agency	Autumn 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
	Workshop with producers	Autumn 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
Montenegro	Organization of agrobiodiversity day – all stakeholders, farmers, students, Ministry representatives, NGOs	End of October, beginning of November 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity
Serbia	Internal dissemination and discussions within the Rural Development Department	Autumn 2018	Academic experts in cooperation with assigned Ministry representatives in REAWG Agrobiodiversity

*Kosovo * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence*

The discussion continued with planning of the future activities of the REAWG agrobiodiversity.

Beside the already discussed and elaborated future overall activities of the Regional Expert Advisory Group on Agrobiodiversity in South-East Europe in a form of Regional Western Balkans Agrobiodiversity Repository/ Network (*Annex 4*), and the proposed case studies for conservation and promotion of agrobiodiversity, the participants exchanged ideas for future short term activities, applicable both for plant and animal genetic resources.

The future short term activities related to conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture in South-East European countries will focus on:

1. Creation of data bases for autochthonous species and varieties, as well as their products which are recognized by consumers as traditional products, unique and important to be conserved/ protected;
2. Identification of (potential) producers/ breeders;
3. Facilitation and capacity building of producers on networking, cooperation and business development;
4. Capacity building on improvement of production and processing technology, food safety, hygiene standards and traditional production processes, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), organic standards;
5. Policy discussions on derogations related to food safety/ phyto-sanitary requirements in traditional production processes, seeds and seedling material;
6. Research on nutritional and sensory value of traditional products;
7. Marketing of traditional and autochthonic products: packaging, labeling, market placement and promotion;
8. Procedures for protection of products with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Specialty (TSG).

The identified short term activities, as well as already developed project proposal are integrated in the previously developed document on the way forward of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity which is enclosed in the *Annex 5*.

In order to emphasize the importance of the agrobiodiversity for overall biodiversity conservation, it was proposed to celebrate Day of agrobiodiversity within the World Biodiversity Day on May 22nd. The celebration could be accompanied with promotional events of autochthonous species and varieties and their traditional products.

The next occasion for meeting of the REAWG Agrobiodiversity is the Agricultural Policy Forum 2018 in October 2018, where informal gathering of the group will be organized, as a side event of the Forum.