



Republic of North Macedonia
Ministry of agriculture,
forestry and water economy

Ohrid Agenda

Agricultural Policy Forum 2019:
Contribution of Diversification of Economic
Activities in Rural Areas to Sustainable
Development in SEE

Ohrid, 9 – 10 October 2019

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Participants

- 150 attendees
- 16 countries/territories
- Public institutions, universities and research institutes, private sector, international organizations, farmers, civil society organizations, chambers.



Main topics of the debate

- **IPARD II** in the Western Balkans
- **Diversification** of economic activities in rural areas
- Harmonization of **wine regulations** in the Western Balkans
- **Research capacities** - factor of sustainable development in rural areas



IPARD II in the Western Balkans

- **Financial assistance** for sustainable agriculture and rural development **available** and operational in all IPARD countries
- More progressive approach helping the IPARD countries **improve** their **administrative capacities**
- **Improvements** needed in management systems of **processing of applications**, increasing **human capacity** to achieve better absorption of the IPARD funds.



Diversification of economic activities in rural areas

Situation:

- Rural tourism and production of traditional food or food with geographic indication - new source of income generation in the rural communities
- Poor infrastructure, education and promotion activities, adverse environmental effects
- No proper alignment of the legal framework with the new changes of the EU acquis
- Lack of interest of youth in farming
- Lack of cooperation and organizational structure (intersectoral cooperation, organizational structure in charge of the diversification aspects, cooperation among producers etc.)



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Diversification of economic activities in rural areas

Recommendations:

- **Adequate rural development policies** aligned with the EU CAP including policy monitoring and evaluation system and reliable data
- **Efficient control systems** and control bodies while providing **flexibility and derogations** on the food safety requirements
- **Inter-sectorial cooperation, public-private partnerships** and coordination among various stakeholders on horizontal and vertical level
- **Involvement of rural communities** and farmers into the planning and implementation of policies, considering territorial approach, LEADER/Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and Area-Based Development Approach (ABDA)
- **Strengthened capacities** of the national and local administrations, advisory services, civil society organizations, farmers/producers and service providers in rural areas
- **Efficient educational and management systems** and improved coordination of rural tourism value chains



Harmonization of wine regulations in the Western Balkans

Situation:

- **Different level of importance** of wine sector in WB economies;
- Harmonizing the legislative framework on wine brings with it **new changes** with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan
- Planned **changes in the Common Market Organization Regulation** regarding wine need to be followed
- **High costs** for implementation of EU requirements related to wine sector
- At present - **insufficient capacities** for implementation of the EU requirements for the wine sector in the region



Harmonization of wine regulations in the Western Balkans

Recommendations:

- **Adjust the national legislations** to align with the EU legislation and introduce **electronic systems** in accordance with the EU standards
- **Introduce common standards** related to some regional traditional terms
- **Support regional-wide cooperation** focusing on joint promotion and valorisation of Balkan vine varieties
- **Harmonized regulatory framework** - fundamental precondition for increased trade and export.



Research capacities - factor of sustainable development in rural areas

Situation:

- **Research not a governmental priority**
- **Limited financial resources** (funding, access to research resources and infrastructure)
- **Lack of capacity building and brain-drain**
- **Lack of possibilities for cooperation and networking**
- **Lack of data** (quality/availability of data)



Research capacities - factor of sustainable development in rural areas

Recommendations:

- **Foster** national, regional and international research **cooperation**, networks and partnerships
- **Give** research **higher position** amongst governmental priorities
- Significantly **increase** national **budgets** dedicated to research
- **Enable access** to research resources, research infrastructure, capacity building, transfer of knowledge, and available EU research funds
- **Establish dialogue platform** on research in the Western Balkans to stimulate demand-driven research. SWG should progress this concept.



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Those were the words from the APF 2019

