South Eastern Europe
SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe

Annual Report **2019**

December 2019

Report prepared by:

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List of Abbreviations

ABD	Area Based Development
APF	Agriculture Policy Forum
BRDN	Balkan Rural Development Network
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy of the European Union
CIHEAM	International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIZ	German International Cooperation
GFFA	Global Forum for Food and Agriculture
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPARD	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRDN	National Rural Development Networks
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SWG	Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South East Europe
SEE	South Eastern Europe
WB	Western Balkans

* *"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."*

Table of Contents

6	**1. Foreword**
9	**2. Summary**
11	**3. Introduction - SWG Strategic Framework and Core Functions**
11	Vision
11	Mission
12	Specific Objectives
12	Functions
13	SWG Member institutions
15	**4. Review by task areas**
15	I. Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue Platforms and Networking
18	II. Evidence-based Policy Recommendations
22	III. Rural Areas and Regional Competitiveness
26	IV. Capacity Building
29	V. Networking
31	VI. Information exchange and access to knowledge
34	**5. SWG Assembly Meetings**
35	**6. SWG Budget in 2019**
37	**Annex 1:** List of SWG projects in 2019
39	**Annex 2:** SWG Head Office/ Secretariat Personnel
41	**Annex 3:** Agricultural Policy Forum (APF) Ohrid, North Macedonia
45	**Annex 4:** Conclusions of the Ministers and Heads of Delegations from Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development in SEE
49	**Annex 5:** Operational Plan SWG 2019

1. Foreword

2019 was a challenging year for most South East European countries and a preparatory period for many changes coming ahead. This particularly refers to the regional development and EU approximation process. The lack of decision to open accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania in October perhaps represented the most discouraging news regarding EU enlargement in 2019. Consequently, the latter results have caused additional dispiriting in other candidate and potential candidate countries starving towards EU membership. Such actions have once again put the region under test on it strive for going forward with the EU perspectives, as well as, endeavor regional cooperation & ownership.

Anew, the role of the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD) as a regional umbrella network with the main objective "to support SEE countries with the EU integration" comes to a crucial play. As a regional framework, SWG continues to facilitate and support common and mutual interest, which translates into common projects, but most importantly gives countries motivation to work towards the dedicated goal of reforming agriculture and rural development sectors.

SWG aims to promote rural areas of SEE countries, which have been experiencing profound changes over recent decades. As employment in agriculture and other land-based industries has shrunk, so the economic fortunes of rural areas have come to depend upon a much wider range of drivers than the economic fortunes of the primary sector. The transformation of rural economies means that sectoral policies, such as those focusing on supporting agriculture, are increasingly inappropriate and ineffective in stimulating rural development.

With agriculture's relative decline, rural households have increasingly become under pressure to turn to off-farm sources of income, which means that the economic well-being of farming families have become more dependent on the opportunities being offered by the wider local rural economy. This trend has increasingly called into question the appropriateness of sectoral agricultural policies, principally aimed at supporting agricultural production and incomes, as a means of promoting wider rural economic development.

In retrospect, SWG work in the past year mostly focused on three major aspects. First is the increasing focus on evidence-based policy analysis and research on topics that need immediate intention during the reform processes. Modern agricultural policy-making is based on the policy cycle concept, which relies on the evidence-based approach – multi-sectoral nexus and stakeholder participation – to identify priorities and limitations of proposed and adopted policies. Several policy assessments and technical reports have been produced as a guiding tool for future decision-makers on policy development and implementation. The evidence-based policy analysis was backed up by knowledge transfer and capacity-building measures. SWG aims to provide technical advice and guidance through its wide range of technical expertise in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Second is the IPARD-like support to the smallholders via grant scheme mechanism, developed to increase productivity, employment and value-added to agriculture and non-farm activities. The scheme focuses on short value chains with high economic potential such as tourism (improving services and accommodation) and improving food products mainly for the emerg-

ing market of tourism but with a longer-term perspective of reaching markets outside the areas.

And thirdly, we have succeeded to endure knowledge transfer and building capacities for multi-stakeholder participation in decision making for integrated agriculture and rural development management. Meaningful stakeholder participation is essential for securing effective outcomes of decision-making and benefit-sharing around agriculture & rural development management and use. These activities build on a previously developed and successfully implemented methodology for stakeholder engagement in developing governance recommendations for proper policy implementation and management.

In conclusion, SWG stands ready to face any challenges and opportunities that come across the SEE region and jointly walk the path towards resolutions and a better future for all member countries. As every year, we are thankful for the support and trust to have given on behalf of SEE to lead the way towards sustainable economic development by promoting and fostering the agriculture and rural development sectors.

Boban Ilic

Secretary-General

2. Summary

The Annual Report for the year of 2019 represents an overview of the actions taken and outcomes achieved by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE in the field of agriculture and rural development for the region of South-Eastern Europe.

The implementation and execution of set initiatives and thus realized goals in 2019 have been carried out in accordance with the SWG Strategic and Operational Plan (SOP) for the midterm period of 2016-2020.

In conformity with the SWG SOP, the SWG this year has once again successfully promoted and stimulated debates and discussions on policy issues among policymakers, governmental and non-governmental organizations from the agriculture and rural development, water and forestry sectors in SEE, relevant international policy and development institutions, as well as academic institutions. With the intention of providing a technical background for the policymaking process and confront the current challenges and perspectives on sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Due to the strong dedication for reaching the set strategic framework and core functions, the SWG together with its partners within different projects, programs and initiatives have effectively organized a vast number of international and regional forums, conferences, working discussions and meetings with an ensured presence of all stakeholders from the SEE region. The SWG evoked the need for key development and reform of the agri-food sector in line with the EU policies, fetched the focus towards developing rural areas, as well as supported the process of enhancing competitiveness and sustainable use of natural resources facing new challenges like climate change and food safety.

SWG is committed to excellence in everything that it does and promoting excellence will feature prominently in its advocacy, partnership, and capacity-strengthening functions. Other SWG principles involve commitments to the principle of subsidiarity, delivery and accountability and participatory approaches. These principles are reflected in all SWG's functions and the related activities performed in the year 2019.

The Annual report 2019 of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe presents a summary of the most important activities undertaken and accomplished by the SWG in the period January – December 2019.

3. Introduction - SWG Strategic Framework and Core Functions

The "SWG" stands for Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SEE). It is an International Intergovernmental Organization consisted of governmental institutions responsible for agriculture and rural development in respective countries and territories.

It is a platform for networking and regional cooperation among the SEE countries and territories in the field of agriculture and rural development.

It was founded on the basis of a common wish to establish an organization for sustainable rural development in SEE. As an organization the SWG is an international body, acting in a spirit of friendship and good neighborliness and enhances mutual respect and confidence, dialogue and cooperation among the Member Institutions.

The functioning of the SWG is divided between the SWG Assembly and the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat. The SWG Head Office/Secretariat is entrusted to the Secretary-General who oversees the SWG organizational, administrative, coordinative and managerial tasks.

The tasks of the SWG Assembly include planning of initiatives and projects of SEE regional relevance that follow SWG principles and guidelines. The Secretariat's functions are to ensure that SWG's Strategic Objective is achieved with maximum efficiency and effectiveness and implements plans, initiatives, and projects which are approved by the Assembly.

Vision

Innovative and sustainable agriculture and rural development through cohesive regional co-operation for improvement of rural livelihoods in the SEE countries.

Mission

To increase horizontal collaboration among respective countries and territories of SEE, coordinating regional initiatives related to agriculture and rural development and support the process of economic development in rural areas of Southeastern Europe.

General Objective

To facilitate close cooperation among the Ministries of Agriculture and other stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development and to support the EU integration

Specific Objectives

- To improve the common understanding of EU agriculture and rural development policies;
- To assist the improvement of implementation structures and systems for agriculture and rural development in rural areas, with specific emphasis on cross border cooperation;
- To improve the understanding and use of implementation tools for agriculture and rural development;
- To identify and share information and application of good practice in agriculture and rural development to broaden the rural agenda.

Functions

- F1. Networking and enhancing regional cooperation
- F2. Capacity Building
- F3. Advocacy and resource mobilization
- F4. Policy analysis
- F5. Information exchange and access to knowledge

SWG member institutions

SWG Members

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development - Republic of Albania

Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations - Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Republic of Srpska, Bosnia, and Herzegovina

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry - Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy - Republic of Macedonia

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – Montenegro

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – Republic of Serbia

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development – Kosovo*

SWG Observers

Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT) - Republic of Austria

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry - Republic of Bulgaria

Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture - Germany

Ministry of Agriculture – Republic of Hungary

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food – Republic of Slovenia

Ministry of Agriculture - Republic of Croatia

Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture Water Management and Forestry - Autonomous Province of Vojvodina – Republic of Serbia

Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies – Italy

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on the status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

НОЦИЈА
И ЧИСТ МЕД
НКОВЦЕ
2019
BEES
HAVE NO BOUNDARIES
photo@velickovski.com

4. Development by task areas

I. Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue Platforms and Networking

In the reporting period, SWG continued putting in function its policy dialogue structures, serving as a backbone for common policy recommendations and crosscutting networking activities.

I. I Agricultural Policy Forum

Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 "Contribution of Diversification of Economic Activities to Sustainable Rural Development in SEE" was held on 9 – 10 October in Ohrid, North Macedonia. It was attended by 143 participants from 16 countries, representing public authorities, private sector, civil society, international organizations, and academia. 6 keynote speakers gave their address in the plenary session, while 6 additional speakers addressed in the 3 working groups. The brochure of the event, including the program, is provided here: http://apf.seerural.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2.-APF-Brochure-2019.pdf

Among other, the Forum concluded that in order to support the diversification of economic activities in rural areas there was a need for adequate rural development policies aligned with the EU CAP, addressing the challenges of the SEE countries/territories. Consequently, intersectoral cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders on a horizontal and vertical level are essential.

Financial assistance for sustainable agriculture and rural development is now available and operational in all IPARD countries. A more progressive approach towards the IPARD program is helping the IPARD countries to improve their administrative capacities.

While rural tourism constitutes a growing source of revenue for the Western Balkan countries/territories, much of that growth has been restricted by poor infrastructure, education and promotion activities, often with adverse environmental effects. Geographical Indication and Traditional Specialties are a useful tool for rural development that includes economic, social and environmental dimensions. To enhance traditional production, national authorities need to establish efficient control systems and control bodies while providing flexibility and derogations on the food safety requirements.

A harmonized regulatory framework for wine is seen as a fundamental precondition for increased trade and export. Harmonization with the structure and measures that characterize the accession process, brings with it new changes with the CAP Strategic Plan, which is compulsory for wine.

Research should achieve a higher position amongst governmental priorities. National budgets dedicated to research need to be significantly increased to improve research funding.

I.II Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Agriculture from South East Europe

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo* and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe hosted the 13th Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from SEE. The meeting took place in Pristina, Kosovo* on 12th November 2019. The overall aim of the meeting was to discuss the regional cooperation and reforms in the sector of agriculture and rural development within the process of EU approximation of the SEE region.

The Annual Meeting of the Ministers reconfirmed the importance of regional cooperation and rural development as a tool for economic growth, sustainability, and fighting rural depopulation and poverty in South Eastern Europe, most importantly, impact regional divides essential for addressing development policies taking into consideration different development path.

CAP and IPARD were elaborated as important policies and tools to support the sectors during the reform processes. Regional cooperation was highlighted as a priority mechanism to strengthen common interests while promoting national objectives through mutual networking and dialogue. It was agreed that SWG should continue its work in the region, serving as a regional umbrella for development in the region, advocating the new concept of the regional building and regional ownership while preserving the national paths for EU integration.

The meeting resulted in "**The Conclusions of the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Heads of Delegations of South Eastern Europe**", the document summaries the discussions to future regional rural development in the face of changing international dynamism that is reshaping our economies, environment, and social conditions. Details on the agreed priority issues can be found in Annex IV.

I.III. Facilitation of exchange through advice on Wine Regulations in all Western Balkan Countries

The SWG in cooperation with GFA Consulting Group GmbH, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMEL), has started with the implementation framework of the 3-year regional project on "Facilitation of exchange through advice on harmonized wine regulations in the Western Balkans" in November 2018.

The project aims to support the alignment of wine regulations in the six Balkan countries/territories amongst each other and to EU standards as well as the requirements of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV). To this end, the project seeks to enhance the understanding of necessary alignment activities and to support precise actions in all six countries. In this context, specific short-term advice and coordinated approach are relevant in order to transfer experiences from one country to another and to create a harmonized regulatory system faster and better.

The first Interim Meeting of the REAWG on Wine of the project took place in Podgorica, Montenegro on 27th – 28th March 2019 and gathered representatives of the relevant authorities on wine from SWG members. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the main findings in the viticulture and wine sector in SWG member countries/territories and the findings of the topics indicated as priorities for the respective countries/territories by the REAWG on Wine. A report in order to better understand the current situation of the wine and viticulture sector in Al-

bania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia and Serbia was produced.

The second Interim meeting of the REAWG on Wine was held in the period 7th – 8th October 2019 in Ohrid, North Macedonia. The purpose of the meeting was to present the assessment and findings of the short-term experts related to harmonization of the legislation in the viticulture and wine sector in the WBs.

Following the second interim meeting, during the Agricultural Policy Forum (APF) 2019, one of the working groups' objective was the discussion related to harmonization of wine regulation in SEE for enhanced competitiveness of the wine sector. The working group gathered the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on Wine along with the national, regional, international experts, representatives of relevant authorities from SEE and producers of wine products from the region to discuss progress related to the alignment of the legislative framework in the WBs. Mainly the discussion focused on:

- Elaboration on the competitiveness of the Western Balkan wine market and development of wine tourism;
- Approach/es towards more coherent regulations and alignment with EU standards;
- Providing recommendation solutions for establishment of a regular and visible exchange mechanism on wine regulations, and their implementation;
- Provision of policy recommendations for harmonization of wine regulation.

The outcome of the working group discussion considered ways to improve the competitiveness of the wine sector in the Western Balkan region. The discussion also resulted that it is recognized that there are varying levels of importance of the wine sector in the WB countries/territories. Taking into consideration the comprehensive EU wine legislation and requirements, it was noted that at present there are insufficient capacities for implementation of the EU requirements for the wine sector in the region. The importance of the wine sector was underlined, and it was recommended to adjust the national legislation in order to align with the EU legislation and introduce electronic systems in accordance with the EU standards. It was further recommended to introduce common standards related to some regional traditional terms. Regional-wide cooperation focusing on joint promotion and valorization of Balkan vine varieties is seen as one of the key priorities. A harmonized regulatory framework is seen as a fundamental precondition for increased trade and export.

International support from IAK/HGU focusses on enabling an effective application of the regulatory framework by national authorities and market participants. During the 2019 year, the two networking journeys to the Western Balkans aiming to get to know and understand the respective sector-related situation and associated challenges were executed. Taking into consideration the regional experts' priorities and where they see the best opportunity to successfully implement activities in their respective context, ideas for a general strategy on country-specific topics for international short-term experts' missions in the Western Balkans were elaborated. For the six territories, each one topic was defined in coordination with the national experts. In a separate document i.e. strategy for the Western Balkans, the individual support measures are described.

II. Evidence-based Policy Recommendations

In the reporting period, SWG contributed towards the development of evidence-based policy papers to address the current situation and to provide policy recommendations with respect to relevant topics for agriculture and rural development, in compliance with the EU policies. This initiative is intended to establish a uniform system of monitoring and evaluation across all spheres of policy-making and sectoral approach for agriculture and rural development. If the implementation of the provided recommendations based on these activities is successful, it will provide huge potential for the improvement of public policy outcomes and impacts in the SEE region.

II.I Economic Diversification through Rural Tourism

SWG in cooperation with GIZ is implementing the project "Regional cooperation for evidence-based and EU compliant policy development for economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe", assessing the potentials for economic diversification via rural tourism in SEE countries. The assessment has been preformed with the establishment of Regional Expert Advisory Working Group.

The objective of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on Economic Diversification through Rural Tourism (ED-RT) is to develop a regional approach for the assessment of the policies for diversification of economic activities in the rural areas of the SEE, with focus on rural tourism development, as well as to propose policy framework for economic diversification through rural tourism in line with EU policies. 6 national experts, 1 regional expert (which also has the role of the national expert for Serbia) and one international expert are part of the REAWG. SWG member institutions also nominated their representatives to be part of the REAWG.

Some of the preliminary findings in the reporting period are:

- Legislation related to agriculture and rural development should be carefully reviewed to ensure realistic transitory periods for smallholders and provide technical assistance for compliance with regulations.
- Regional organizations, such as DMO and LAGs, should contribute to the implementation of standards for tourists' security and safety, management, marketing, and branding of rural tourism in close cooperation with local entrepreneurs, farmers, regional municipalities, and nongovernment organizations.
- The statistical office should organize data collection and analysis on rural tourism, at local, regional and national levels according to international standards.
- The extension service should be more active in raising awareness of farmers and the rural population about economic importance and opportunities from rural tourism development;
- Improvements of the rural infrastructure are needed;
- More focus should be placed on technology use in marketing and promotion;
- Rural tourism should be utilized as an effective rural economy diversification tool and strengthening;
- Agriculture-tourism value chains need to be shortened and greened;
- Improvement of institutional capacities is necessary;
- Improvement of regional (cross-border) cooperation is needed;
- Further improvement of education in rural tourism business is necessary, as well as more

efficient and effective cooperation among relevant institutions in the area of rural tourism;

- Raising public awareness through further promotion of rural heritage and cultural identity of the villages and lifestyle among locals and urban residents and more intensive promotion of rural holiday or daily excursions opportunities in the country;
- The taxation policy should encourage rural tourism.

II.II Quality Policy

The project "Regional cooperation for evidence-based and EU compliant policy development for economic diversification of rural areas in South-east Europe" implemented in cooperation with GIZ supported SEE countries in assessing the quality policy in SEE countries.

The objective of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on Quality Policy is the preparation of overview of requirements and implementation of the EU schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties and of the state of the art in the SEE countries/ territories. 3 regional experts, one senior and one international expert are part of the REAWG. In addition, SWG member institutions nominated their representatives in the REAWG.

The Guidelines on the steps and procedures for registration of quality products with geographical indications and traditional specialties were finalized in the reporting period including feedback from the Quality Policy Unit of DG AGRI. The full assessment conducted by the REAWG was sent for review to all of the WB ministries in the reporting period and will be finalized in the next reporting period.

Shortly, conclusions from the work of the REAWG are:

- Land fragmentation, low average farm size, low productivity, low usage of technology, lack of cooperatives impede competitiveness;
- Opportunity for competitive advantage is in specialty products for niche markets;
- Western Balkan countries are rich in traditional food not protected yet, on the national or EU level;
- Role of governmental institutions is in providing adequate infrastructure in the rural areas, financial and institutional support for the restoration of the facilities, etc;
- Improving the quality of the NRDPs is important, as well as effective programme implementation;
- Implementation and impact of the rural development and food policy should be monitored and evaluated;
- Thereby, all other actors that directly or indirectly influence the agricultural and rural sectors should be involved;
- Implementation of national legislation, especially for small producers in rural areas, is very slow (not introduced food safety requirements, businesses not officially registered) due to:
    - lack of implementing procedures and / or appropriate bodies
    - lack of information, knowledge, and awareness of traditional farmers and their weak interest in the association.

The policy recommendations related to:

- Institutional and political setting;
- Certification control enforcement;
- Flexibilities and derogations of the food safety requirements;
- Supporting the "bottom-up" approach and increasing awareness of producers;
- Supporting products registered as GIs (or po-

tential candidates);

- Training sessions on Geographical Indications (basic quality standard requirement);
- Increasing the visibility of GIs on the regional market and awareness of the consumers;
- Support and promotion of national logos for PDO, PGI and TSG products;
- Improving strong synergies with tourism activities.

The main findings of the Assessment, as well as the Guidelines, were presented and distributed at the APF 2019 and became part of the Ohrid Agenda 2019, which was presented at the Annual Meeting of Ministers 2019.

II.III. Study on the research, innovation, and technology transfer capacities and on the recent agricultural policy developments in the context of the EU approximation process in the pre-accession countries

The project is financed by DG JRC and implemented by SWG. Its overall objective is to collect information on agricultural policy developments in the WBs and Turkey, to conduct comparative cross-country analysis of the agricultural policies and their state of harmonization with the CAP and to assess research, innovation and technology transfer capacities in the agri-food sector in the WBs.

It will result in two studies:

- Agricultural policy developments in the WBs and Turkey and their state of harmonization with the CAP
- Assessment of the research, innovation and technology transfer capacities in the agri-food sector in the WBs

The kick-off meeting was held on 29 November 2019 in Krusevo, North Macedonia, and the final results are expected in October 2020.

II.IV. Study of best practices and potential of participation of the smallholders in the short-value chains in the Western Balkans region and Turkey

The project is financed by DG JRC and implemented by SWG. Its overall objective is to collect relevant information necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of short supply chains among small farmers in the WB and Turkey and their potential impacts on economic aspects as well as their social sustainability. The kick-off meeting was held on 28 November 2019 in Krusevo, North Macedonia, and the final results are expected in October 2020.

II.V. LEADER Approach

Under the project "Regional cooperation for evidence-based and EU compliant policy development for economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe", SWG has been aslo able to continue working on the LEADER appraoch.

The main goal of the REAWG is to follow up on the recommendations by the LEADER Assessment related to the application of LEADER Approach in the Western Balkans in order to provide an action plan on implementation of the LEADER approach in the SEE countries and to facilitate the progress in setting up the required structures and procedures in SEE states related to LEADER.

The kick-off meeting of the REAWG on LEADER was held in Skopje in the period 28th February – 1st March, where ministry representatives, international experts and national experts from each SEE country, as well as other stakeholders, discussed opportunities, challenges, and priorities related to the LEADER approach in the SEE;

The first interim meeting of the REAWG on LEADER took place in Ohrid, North Macedonia on 7th – 8th October 2019 and gathered national, regional and international experts, and repre-

sentatives of the relevant authorities to discuss and agree on the work to be done of the REAWG and future steps.

Some of the recommendations refer to:

- Need for institutional setup improvements in the SWG countries/territories related to LEADER;
- Need for policy improvements;
- Need for capacity development of the authorities responsible for administering the procedures for the LEADER measure;
- Discussion on possible models of networking of various stakeholders (public, civil society, and business);
- Six road maps to be made (one per country/territory) setting out the specific steps to be taken to relaunch the LEADER preparation process and the respective capacity;
- A high-level conference including stakeholders from all SEE countries/territories, regional experts and EU representatives to be organized in March 2021 in one of the WB countries/territories;
- A policy paper synthesizing the proceedings and main outcomes from the high-level conference and measures taken by the national authorities in response to the road maps to be produced;
- REAWG on LEADER could serve as a creation of such a model;
- Need for high-level discussion related to the aim of LEADER and role of EU countries;
- Need for assistance for establishment and management with LAGs;
- Need to mobilize all other actors that directly influence on the implementation of LEADER measure.

II.VI. Dissemination of policy recommendations

In the reporting period, the main events used for dissemination of policy recommendations were the APF 2019 and the Meeting of Ministers.

In addition, the event "Evidence-Based Policy-Making" was jointly organized by SWG and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Serbia. Its aim was the presentation of policy assessments and recommendations in the area of agriculture, natural resources management and rural development in Serbia, given by representatives of the SWG Regional Expert Advisory Working Groups and supported by SWG and GIZ. The event gathered around 50 relevant representatives of the public, private and civil sectors from Serbia and provided an opportunity for feedback on the provided policy recommendations. The full report is provided here: http://seerural.org/news/evidence-based-policy-making-20-march-2019-belgrade-serbia-2/

8th International Symposium on Agricultural Sciences – AgroRes took place on 16 - 18 May in Trebinje, BiH. AgroRes is organized by the Agricultural Faculty, the University of Banja Luka in cooperation with regional and international partners. SWG used the opportunity to disseminate regional policy recommendations produced by the Regional Expert Advisory Working Groups (REAWGs) that work as part of the SWG regional policy dialogue platform.

Dissemination of policy recommendations was also conducted during the 12th international scientific conference for macroeconomists of the region, held in Ohrid on 1 – 2 June 2019 and organized by the Association of Agroeconomists of North Macedonia.

In the reporting period, the main events used for dissemination of policy recommendations were the APF 2019 and the Meeting of Ministers.

Recommendations on quality policy were presented at the Rural Youth Camp, which took place in Vucje, Montenegro, on 29 August 2019. The camp was attended by young farmers and rural development stakeholders from the Western Balkans region.

In addition, participation in the conference "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in terms of the Republic of Serbia Strategic Goals Realization within the Danube Region - science and practice in the service of agriculture" was used for dissemination of policy recommendations. Namely, a summary of some of the policy recommendations was presented in the plenary session of the conference.

III. Rural areas and regional competitiveness

The SEE countries are increasingly transforming their rural development policies from an initial focus on farm structures to a broader framework that includes value chain aspects, environmental issues, diversification of the rural economy and the quality of life in rural areas. Simultaneously, patterns of governance have started to change. This includes integrated actions, new public-private partnerships, and area-based and bottom-up approaches that constitute important ingredients of new local development strategies. Together with a number of regional initiatives, new policies and governance structures are slowly remodeling the social and economic framework of how rural economies work. This demonstrates that past attitudes and knowledge previously established on agriculture and rural development processes are moving forward with a modernized approach to overall economic sustainability.

With its, work SWG aims to develop an integrated framework that goes beyond the mono-disciplinary approaches and assimilates all impacting aspects/dynamics of rural constellations. Most importantly, the goal is to motivate and integrate the smallholders and farmers into the current value chains and markets.

In this context, this role of the SWG is designed to address a dual objective. Primarily, the targeted investment funds are to reach small farmers and businesses, which are in most cases inept for many technical support programs, to become visible and learn how to receive available funding. Secondly, this activity contributes to improving the quality of life in rural areas by increasing the competitiveness of the agro-food s and tourism sectors. The measures under the grant scheme investment support are used as a framework for prioritizing and selecting individual investments. Furthermore, through implementing these investment measures in an IPARD-compliant way, local communities, potential applicants, and rural SMEs will gain awareness on and experiences in the prospective implementation of IPARD measures.

In respect to the grant scheme implementation, SWG in close cooperation with GIZ is implementing the project "Diversification of economic activities in rural areas of Southeast Europe through values chain development", which focuses on developing sustainable business models in structurally weak border regions through the improvement of the production and marketing of agricultural and wild products, local crafts and culinary traditions, sustainable tourism. Support is provided through different capacity-building measures, facilitation of the cooperation and networking processes along the value chains and targeted investment support to relevant key stakeholders.

In the reporting period, the existing grant scheme has been reviewed and completely revised for the purpose of the value chain investment in the cross-border regions. The application packages have been simplified and the business plans have been driven to the basics in order to make them more understandable and user friendly to the rural applicants.

Most importantly an objective for use of digitalization and digital tools has been added to the project criteria. The evaluation criteria have been also adjusted with scoring focusing on digitalization as well.

The grant scheme application processes have been divided into two calls for the 7 cross-border regions (First call opened for Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava and Krsh regions; the Second call opened for Pcinja, Prokletije, Sharra and Prespa regions). The application process applied was a two (2) step approach, the first step was a submission of a Concept Note and short budget and the second step was a submission of a complete application with a detailed budget and supporting documentation. For both submission procedures, Evaluation Committees were organized. Once the Committees have given a positive administrative and eligibility pass on the Concept notes, the applicants had the right to apply and prepare a full project proposal and budget.

In total for the two calls opened for the 7 cross-border regions, there was the submission of 78 concept notes. Total of which 56 have passed the administrative and eligibility criteria and proceeded to the preparation of full application package.

III.I Stakeholder Group Meetings

The Stakeholder Group (SHG) presents a group consisted of representatives from interested parties - local authorities (municipal and county mayors and/or political leaders of other local government bodies), senior management representatives from the business sector and citizens involved in civil society via NGOs or other local initiatives from all participating countries. Regular SHG meetings in the cross-border regions were organized enabling platform for the members and other interested parties to discuss on the regional and local community development process, prepare for the future opportunities such as grant scheme, Calls for Proposal (CfP) and to further facilitate the networking and cooperation process in each of the cross-border regions. The work of the SHG is systematized according to the 'Operational Protocol and rules of procedure of the SHG'.

In the reporting period one (1) Stakeholder Group meeting was organized in each of the cross-border regions, or seven (7) in total, according to the following timetable:

- 20th SHG meeting for Drina-Tara region held on 20th March 2019;
- 9th SHG meeting for Krsh region held on 22nd March 2019;
- 21st SHG meeting for Drina-Sava region held on 19th March 2019;
- 21st SHG meeting for Prespa region held on 26th March 2019;
- 21st SHG meeting for Sharra region held on 25th March 2019;
- 9th SHG meeting for Pcinja – Kraishte held on 20th March 2019;
- 9th SHG meeting for Prokletije – Bjeshket e Namuna held on 27th March 2019.

A total of 260 stakeholders participated in local networking and partnership initiatives at the meetings on community building and self-governance.

III.II People to People (P2P) Actions

People to People (P2P) is a specific tool developed to strengthen networking, cooperation, promotion of the regions and their cultural, traditional, natural heritage and economic potential. This foresees support to the organization of regional manifestations, events, round table discussions and trade fairs enabling local cross-border stakeholders to present offers from their respective areas both in terms of products and services and serves as an excellent model for the creation of sustainable partnerships for other

open calls in the cross-border regions. This has resulted in an increased sense of joint identity and networking in the cross-border regions. This networking tool served as an excellent exercise model for the creation of sustainable partnerships and business opportunities in the cross-border regions.

In the reporting period from the total approved P-2-P events of the open calls – 1st call (Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava and Krsh region) and 2nd call (Pcinja, Prespa, Prokletije and Sharra region) total of 22 events have been implemented. The remaining events will be contracted and implemented in the course of 2020.

Furthermore, as per the decision during the 44th SWG Assembly, the SWG was entitled to use a portion of the funds dedicated to the additional P2P events. These beneficiaries within these ad hoc actions have not been involved in the application and evaluation process.

For the implemented twenty-six (26) P-2-P events with more than 400 business operators who have participated in the activities supporting the value chains.

The supported events are as follows:

City of Sremska Mitrovica	Agriculture Fair AgroSirm
Tourism Organization of Loznica	LilaLo Festival
Municipality of Lopare	Fair of domestic products and household work
Institute of Agriculture Economics	Conference: "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural development in terms of Serbia strategic goals"
Women's association "Sačuvajmo selo"	Original creativity, preservation, and cultivation of intangible cultural heritage of Lim and Tara
Touristic Organization of Visegrad	Wine & Cheese festival
Association of Citizens Jadovnik	Jadovnik ultra marathon
Sport association kayak club "Serbian paddlers"	Drina-Sava Regatta 2019
NGO Kisele vode	Conference "Slow Food in the Balkans - Perspectives and Opportunities"
Referntna grupa- Capljina	Cultural - Tourist Event "Dani Trebizata"
NGO Morakovo	"Presentation of people skills with degustation of traditional meals from the Krsh region"
Association of Macedonians in orgin from Albania SONCE Skopje	Macedonian Cultural Summer 2019
Resen municipality	Tour de Galicica 2019
Red Sky Logisitcs	Apple Harvest at Spirit of Prespa
Center for Education and Development CED – Tearce	"Beans Day 2019"
Tourism and Agriculture Development Fund / TAD-F	"Regional Gastronomic Fair"
Municipality Rankovce	Together we promote ecologically clean honey with slogan Bees have no boundaries
Association of beekeepers Pcela	Days of honey and bee products
Municipality Bujanovac	Days of honey
City of Uzice	5th International festival of nature and tradition - Zestival
CudeS - the Initiative for the Cultural Decentralisation of Serbia	Nusicijada 2019
NGO Pro Futuro	10th edition of Bedem Fest - Let's Talk
Touristic Organization of Bijelo Polje	Bjelo Polje Bazaar
Keramika Zlakusa Udruzenje - Uzice	24th International Fine Art Colony of Ceramics - Zlakusa Uzice 2019
Association of Agricultural Economists of N.Macedonia (ZAEM)	12th Scientific Conference and meeting of Agri-Economists
Association for development of Agriculture and Environmental protection "LIFE"	Organska trpeza

IV. Capacity Building

For the agriculture and rural development sectors to function, it is necessary for the administrative and the local actors to obtain essential capabilities regarding the short-term and long-term EU reform processes, technical support and funding programmes, implementation of measures and investments. These activities will enable stakeholders to perform more effectively and thus better manage available resources for the intended purpose of improving the quality and quantity of products and services provided. Improved local competences will contribute to better management and strengthening of value chains.

Administrating capacity building initiatives that benefit administrations and local communities, account for the quality of products delivered and establishment of their impact and consistency with both the national orientations and local needs, following strong monitoring, coordination and harmonization. Most capacity building interventions have been delivered in a coordinated manner, supply and demand-driven, reactive and in line with the recipient's needs. Most importantly, the focus was on building local capacities and knowledge exchange that contributed to strengthening the local economies and competitiveness. The rural border regions require a sustainable interacting course, that targets building sustainable and long-lasting relationships and knowledge among stakeholder networks of local authorities, the small business provides, farmers and civil society.

Most of the capacity building measures were implemented under the project "Strengthening capacities for supporting rural development in Southeast Europe" carried out in cooperation with GIZ.

The SWG has facilitated support for the following capacity-building measures:

- **Access to finance on IPARD measures and implementation of LEADER approach**

Managing Authorities and IPARD Paying Agencies from all WB IPARD countries participated in a capacity building workshop on 10-11 of April 2019 in Montenegro to share experiences and find common practical solutions for efficient implementation of IPARD measures**.** A total of 37 stakeholders improved their knowledge and access to information on IPARD measures.

Due to many similar bottlenecks (low quality of applications, insufficient capacities to assess the applications, inefficient evaluation system and etc.) the countries had the opportunity to share experiences and define combined approaches. As regards to bottlenecks and solutions, some countries indicated a test phase of the proposed resolutions in the next calls (identification was made of a number of "quick-fix" solutions). As for "good practices" Turkey was present at the workshop to present and share their experience when dealing with IPARD calls.

Discussions on IPARD III and Financial Instruments gathered all countries and gave very useful signals for the future. This will serve as a basis once preparations for IPARD III will intensify. However, this is still subject to IPA Regulation being adopted and budget for IPA and IPARD being allocated by the EU member states and the European Parliament.

Centralized session on capacity building for extension services on IPARD calls in Belgrade, was organized in close cooperation with CEI and Area Science Park via the KEP Program "`Capacity building program for extension services in the Western Balkans to support participation in IPARD calls". The 4-day training workshop was conducted in Belgrade from September 17 to 20, 2019. The workshop was attended by delegates from Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia Herzegovina to reach the venue.

The workshop focused on the representatives of Managing Authorities and IPARD Agencies describing the state of implementation of the program in each country, sharing lessons learned and advice, highlighting needs, opportunities and best practice for cooperation with extension services and national rural networks for on-the-ground support to final beneficiaries. The training was organized with a very interactive approach, allowing exchanges and debates for mutual enrichment.

Croatia is the latest country joining the EU in the Western Balkans and having very recently gone through pre-accession procedures, including specific provisions related to IPARD and LEADER programs in the agriculture and rural development fields, this expertise was effectively exploited during the workshop to transfer know-how and solutions from a country for many aspects similar to project beneficiary countries.

Most importantly the workshop addressed the technical support gaps and challenges for IPARD measure, elaborating the needed improvement of administrative procedures, as well as access to information to farmers and smallholders in order to use more efficiently the available funding. Every country discussed the challenges and tools to enhance access to finance by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) since experience has shown that IPARD tool is not convenient and attainable for this target group.

The workshop also elaborated "good practice" and field experience from the Croatian LEADER Network represented by expert Bojana Markotic Krstinic on LEADER preparation and implementation in Croatia during pre-accession. A total of 42 representatives from extension services, PA and MA as well as rural networks participated in the workshop.

In the period 27-30 August 2019, SWG supported the Rural network of Montenegro in organizing the Youth Rural Camp. The capacity building workshop was a four (4) day event covering more than 8 countries from the SEE region. The aim was to improve the knowledge and skills of young people from the region in the field of rural development and increase their role in programming, implementation, use, and promotion of local, national and EU policies and instruments with the implementation of LEADER approach.

Rural Youth Camp is a platform for strengthening networking cooperation, promotion of cross-border regions and their cultural, traditional and natural heritage with active participation and focus on rural youth and women.

A total of 21 young people from the region participated at the event, coming from organizations that are dealing with rural and economic development. The participants gained capacity building on LEADER approach, the functionality of LAGs, as well as empowerment of rural economy through production, preservation, and promotion of traditional products.

- **Short value chain development and strengthening.**

The Beekeeping Association Prijepolje organized the traditional Fair of Honey and Beekeeping products "Honey a cure for a long life" in the period 1-3 August 2019 in Prijepolje. In the scope of the event was organized an exhibition of honey and beekeeping products and capacity building for beekeepers and pre-school children. Around 30 beekeepers (58 participants) from WB countries.

Through connecting main actors in the selected value chain and network for connecting and strengthening cooperation, especially on joint projects and through economic activities enables a foundation of increasing awareness on environment care and promote other tourist potentials of both this area and the entire region. Beekeeping has great potential for integrating many similar agricultural and commercial activities. It is also planned to provide joint ventures on bigger markets and to cooperate with other

associations in the region in order to see the examples of good practice and to work intensively on protecting local honey with geographic origin brand.

During the event 2 lecturers for beekeepers were engaged who provided lectures for 90 preschool children in Duga and Kolovrat facility of Kindergarden institution Misa Cvijovic.

- **Business plan development on the application of funding opportunities and technical support programs.**

Training sessions were organized in all seven cross-border regions on business plan development for the ABDA grant scheme. The 1-to-2-day trainings covered general aspects of completing a business plan and understating the concept of requested investment information (capital, assets and etc.).

The trainings introduced a pragmatic and process-based approach to developing a business framework when implementing the project and creating a proposal. It offered participants the tools to transform ideas into strategic goals and to outline the operational and financial strategies needed to achieve these goals. From the beginning, participants found themselves engaged in identifying their costs and gains within the business format and calculating the end results after utilization of the foreseen project idea.

The trainings followed a two-step approach. Primary sessions were a workshop approach where the participants and potential beneficiaries for the grants were introduced with the general picture of the simplified business plan framework. The participants also had the chance to elaborate and discuss their project ideas and foreseen business plans with the expert. The second step was one-on-one coaching where the beneficiaries had the opportunities in details to discuss and clarify issues regarding their businesses and how the project should be financially structured before sending the final application packages for evaluation.

The trainings were implemented as follows:

- Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava and Krsh region: 14-18 October 2019
- Pcinja: 28-29 November 2019
- Prespa: 3 December 2019
- Sharra and Prokeltije: 4 December 2019

After the general trainings the potential beneficiaries were offered the opportunity of one-to-one coaching which focused on consultation and improvement of completed business plans. The sessions were as follows:

- Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava and Krsh region: 28-31 October 2019
- Pcinja: 14 & 16 December 2019
- Prespa: 23 December 2019
- Sharra and Prokeltije: 17-20 December 2019

A total of 77 beneficiaries participated at the general training sessions and one-to-one coaching activities.

V. Networking

SWG as a regional cross-border structure works in many cases with long-term development strategies including economic as well as socio-cultural priorities. The latter ones have proved to be an indispensable and equally relevant element determining the success of cross-border development.

The SWG has been strongly supportive in ensuring the wide participation of public and private members of the civil society in order to strengthen civil society organizations/institutions to fulfill their role through joint actions. In 2019, the SWG has been once again actively involved in regional networking events, encouraging effective intercultural exchanges and ensuring regional cooperation in the rural areas of the SEE countries.

Encouraging an intensive exchange of information is also done through international and regional trade participation. Fair participation represents the best opportunity for a successful presentation.

SWG and its members participated in the **11th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA)** organized within the International Green Week Fair in Berlin. In 2019, GFFA thus once again offered one of the most important international platforms for dialogue on the topics of agriculture, food security and nutrition and, being the biggest meeting of the Ministers of agriculture in the world, it also remains the most significant driver of the international agricultural agenda. Under the title "Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently", approximately 2,300 visitors gathered at the GFFA in Berlin, including 69 agriculture ministers.

The SWG once again in 2019 participated at the Cooperation Market. The Cooperation Market and the Business Lounge offer a unique platform for networking during the GFFA. In 2019, associations, universities and non-governmental organizations once again seized this opportunity and presented their projects at the Cooperation Market. SWG was presented with a small stand and promotional materials establishing connections and networking with many international organizations and institutions.

SWG participated on the "**HNV-Link Final Conference: Innovation to sustain High Nature Value farming: Who needs to do what?"** on 31st of January 2019 in Montpellier, France with CIHEAM-IAMM as the WP Lead beneficiary. The objective of the conference was to raise awareness on the importance of HNV farming to society (environmentally, socially and economically) and of the role of innovation in sustaining it, as well as fostering the exchange of ideas between stakeholders on ways to enhance the sustainability of HNV farming systems and territories and safeguard the goods and services they provide, through participatory governance and innovation at all levels and scales. Some of the essential outcomes were:

- Evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, practitioners and agricultural advisers to boost innovation and enhance the viability and resilience of HNV farming systems;
- Improved understanding of the innovation dynamics in HNV farming systems and territories (i.e. grassroots processes in different contexts) and of the drivers of and barriers to HNV farming sustainability;
- Raised awareness of HNV farming within Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) and the R&I community;
- Strengthened networking at the EU level among HNV farming actors.

As a regional member of the SEE 2020 Strategy framework, SWG was part of the **Coordination Board of the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) South East Europe's growth Strategy (SEE 2020),** whose goal was to reflect on the implementation results, identify potential action synergies for further cooperation as well

as post-2020 regional priorities and strategic framework.

In addition to this, the Coordination Board heard about the state of play of the MAP REA simultaneously being implemented in the region, building up on the original SEE 2020 goals. The meeting gathered the SEE 2020's Regional Dimension Coordinators (RDCs), structures supporting the SEE 2020 implementation in their respective fields, as well as all other organizations active in the region.

As part of the project "Facilitation of exchange through advice on Wine Regulations in all Western Balkan Countries" SWG participated on the **Pro-Wein trade fair** in the period of 17-19 March 2019 in Dusseldorf, Germany. Pro-Wein is the world's leading trade fair for wines and spirits, the largest industry meeting for professionals from viticulture, production, trade, and gastronomy. Every year Pro-Wein provides three days of concentrated business and a highly promising ancillary programme. All partners and stakeholders involved in the project were present at the fair, which provided a great opportunity to share and exchange the project implementation achievements and steps to follow. Nonetheless, wine companies from the WB region had the opportunity to also meet partners from EU and negotiate potential business ventures with different companies on their placement and export to the EU and international market.

Representing the WB agro-food sector SWG was part of the **4th INNOVAGO Steering Committee Meeting** on 28th of September 2019 in Puglia, Italy as part of the Interrag Project: "Development of an innovative network for the promotion of extroversion of agro-food companies in Adriatic - Ionian Area". The meeting was hosted at CIA Puglia headquarters, the aim was to take stock of the progress of the project, which envisages creation of an innovative system of promotion of farms at an international level through entrustment of platform support for entry into the international market. CIA Puglia, once again, focuses on excellence as a showcase and driving of agro-food and rural entrepreneurship in Puglia, enhancing the realities capable of integration with the environment and social well-being.

When referring to the rural agenda on EU level, SWG was present at the **Donau Soja Networking Symposium** in Vienna, Austria on the 15th of October 2019. The topic of the event was "Soya from Europe – a real and climate saving alternative", covering essential topics in relation to GMO-free production and environmental preservation in the current age. SWG had the opportunity to discuss with the present members and stakeholders of the Donau Soja platform on the market trends and opportunities for the non-GM soymeal of WB countries and feed sourcing standards. Danube Soja is highly active in the WB region and good networking grounds with the Ministries of Agriculture are more than crucial.

On the other level, representation of the rural communities is also a vital part of a healthy economic system. As such, SWG as part of its experience working on a local level, was part of the regional workshop on **Integrated Community Development** organized in the period 23-24 October 2019 in Budapest, Hungary. The workshop was organized on behalf of FAO and covered the following objectives:

- Elaboration of different approaches to local rural development relevant for Europe and Central Asia;
- Dissemination of practical experiences and lessons learned among the participating countries;
- Reflections on the successes and areas for improvement of the experiences showcased;
- Contribution to the establishment of new partnerships between governments, international organizations, donors, civil society, academia and the private sector with interest in local rural development;
- Outlook on policy options for supporting the development of rural communities in the region.

The 4th **European Rural Parliament (ERP)** took place in Asturias in Spain in the period 06 – 09 November 2019. The host for the 4th ERP was READER the Asturian Rural Development Network and their partners, in association with ERP Partner REDR, the Spanish Rural Development Network. The special theme for this ERP was the rural-urban interface, which is an increasingly key topic for rural development.

The 4th ERP Gathered approximately 335 participants from 38 countries included rural people, representatives of civil society organisations, researchers, national governments and European Union institutions in order to raise the voice of rural people, villages and communities. The final versions of the ERP main documents are the rural Manifesto which is a policy paper and the Declaration. The dominating urban and growth agendas combined with the disconnection between local people and decision-makers as a threat to rural life were addressed. A real rural agenda combined with inclusive cooperation and partnerships at all levels is needed to ensure rural Europe to thrive.

On the future of agriculture, SWG was also present at the **annual EU Agricultural Outlook conference** in the period 10-11 December 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. The event involved high-level panelists and focused on Sustainability from farm to fork. Speakers shared science developments and initiatives already in place to improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of production, consumption, and trade. In addition, a discussion took place on the impact of increasing societal demands on food prices. This followed by a debate on the outlook for EU agricultural markets (crops, biofuels, specialized crops, meat, and dairy).

VI. Information exchange and access to knowledge

Information exchange and access to knowledge have been also a priority to the SWG. Information exchange facilitates collusion by enabling successful learning and implementation of various actions. SWG is serving as a regional network and communication channel that focuses on cross-border information exchange for agriculture and rural development in the SEE region. For achieving better coherence and consolidation in the area of information exchange, SWG has been actively endowing into its networking/communication instruments for enabling smooth flow of information and knowledge among its stakeholders.

Communication transparency among the SWG Member Institutions, SWG Head Office/Secretariat and Partner Organizations is set as a priority of the SWG.

VI.I. WEBSITES:

The existing websites of the Secretariat and Regional offices were regularly updated with information on implementing initiatives. A news feed from social media was included in the new design as well as links to important sites and social media channels were added for promotional purposes and ease of access to information. Audiovisual content, short promo video, and slideshows were added to the website. All-important announcements regarding SWG initiatives such as events, calls, and publications are daily updated on the website(s).

Websites:

- Secretariat: http://swg.seerural.org/
- ABDA: http://abda.seerural.org/

For the purpose of the Agricultural Policy Forum (APF), SWG had dedicated a separate webpage http://apf.seerural.org/ The webpage is used for informational purposes on the content and logistics for the organization of the Forum.

VI.II. SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook:

Through the established communication channels, the SWG Secretariat and PMU's disseminated relevant information important for stakeholders and for the visibility of supported and organized activities.

https://www.facebook.com/swgkrsh/;

https://www.facebook.com/swgdrinasava/;

https://www.facebook.com/swgdrinatara/;

https://www.facebook.com/swgprespa/;

https://www.facebook.com/swgsharra/;

https://www.facebook.com/swgpcinjakrajishte/;

The Facebook pages are used as information dissemination tools, as well as platforms for the stakeholders to obtain and share important information. Due to an increased number of activities on the Facebook pages, posting on project activities and information sharing on other initiatives taken in the region, the page visits have increased accordingly.

The page administrators have been contacted by various groups of people (foreigners, tourists, possible investors) requesting more information on the region and running activities.

Twitter:

SWG Twitter account (@SWGRRD) was created at the beginning of 2018 and in the period of the project duration, the page managed to get followers and page visits from regional stakeholders and international organizations. From the beginning of its establishment till the end of 2019 the twitter account was managed to increase the profile visits for 74%. Target visits and followers are mostly local and regional stakeholders, as well as, representatives from public institutions (Ministries) and international organizations.

The SWG staff is engaged to post twits on results, outputs and achievements from daily SWG activities, as well as, to repost various new information and announcements related to the work in agriculture and rural development sector done on behalf of the national governments and international organizations.

LinkedIn:

The LinkedIn account was created at the beginning of 2018 and managed to get 280 followers. The followers are mostly regional and international stakeholders, academics, representatives from public institutions and international bodies.

Linkedin profile and page: SWG RRD

Youtube channel:

This platform is used by updating the current YouTube channel with audio-visual materials collected from all events as they happen linked to the implementing initiatives in order to increase visibility and engage the audience with SWG RRD. Short promo videos developed on behalf of SWG are posted on the channel.

YouTube Channel: SWG Secretariat

5. SWG Assembly Sessions

During the SWG Assembly Sessions organized as follows:

- The 44th SWG Assembly Session was held in the period 8 – 9 of April in Becici, Montenegro.
  The purpose of the meeting was to present accomplishments in the period December 2018 – April 2019, upcoming major SWG events (Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 and Annual Meeting of the Ministers from SEE 2019), cooperation with other international organizations and institutions.
- The 45th SWG Assembly Session was held in the period 10-13 September 2019 in Jahorina, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. The main aim of the session was to discuss the realized activities in the period April 2019 – September 2019, discussion of the SWG major features Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 and Annual Meeting of the Ministers from SEE 2019, cooperation with other international organizations and institutions and discussion on the internal topics.
- The 46th Assembly Session of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-Eastern Europe was held in the period 17 – 20 December 2019 in Kopaonik, Serbia.
  During the 46th SWG Assembly session, the realized activities in the period September - December 2019, annual planning of the regional activities and initiatives in the period of 2020 were discussed as well as the cooperation with SWG partner institutions.

The aim of the SWG Assembly Sessions was to discuss and decide about internal SWG procedures, the realization of SWG activities for the year 2019, the exchange of experiences about the EU accession process and the benefits of it, as well as to decide on future initiatives, projects, and cooperation.

6. SWG Budget in 2019

	Notes	The period from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019	The period from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
-EC		121,560	512,269
-GIZ		939,372	308,550
-FAO		6,293	3,011
-GFA Consulting		52,923	-
-CEI		2,909	4,000
Sources of Funds- Projects	4	**1,123,057**	**827,830**
-SWG Own and Liquidity account		54,914	121,814
-SWG General account	5	125,000	155,000
-Other Contributions		35,706	45,239
Total sources of funds		1,338,677	1,149,883
Foreign exchange translation gains		758	286
Total funds received		1,339,435	1,150,169
USES OF FUNDS BY ACTIVITIES			
-EC		219,412	333,799
-GIZ		359,433	837,095
-FAO		6,892	28
-CEI		6,909	-
-GFA Consulting		32,408	-
Uses of funds- projects	4	**625,054**	**1,170,922**
-SWG Own and Liquidity account use	6	10,432	12,724
-SWG General account	6	190,945	134,582
-Other uses/ transfers		89,126	-
Total financed operating funds		**915,557**	**1,318,228**
Foreign exchange translation losses		135	73
Total financed through fund providers		**915,692**	**1,318,301**
Funds at the beginning of the period		**1,209,372**	**1,377,504**
Funds at the end of the period		**1,633,115**	**1,209,372**

The Independent Audit's Report Statement:
"Reviews the financial statements are prepared in all material respects in accordance with the donors' requirements and accounting policies and principles".

Mersida Idrizović
Bijelo Polje

Vehbija Abazović
Bar

Annex 1: List of SWG projects in 2019

Running Projects:

Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

- "Support to the economic diversification of rural areas in SEE" (SEDRA)

  (September 2018 – June 2021)

- "Diversification of economic activities in rural areas of Southeast Europe: Value chain investment support and capacity building"

  (December 2019 – September 2020)

Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL, jointly implemented by GFA Consulting Group GmbH, SWG and IAK

- "Facilitation of exchange through advice on harmonized wine regulations in all Western Balkans"

  (November 2018 – October 2021)

European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC-Seville)

- "Study on the research, innovation, and technology transfer capacities and on the recent agricultural policy developments in the context of the EU approximation process in the pre-accession countries"

  (October 2019 – October .2020)

- "Study of best practices and potential of participation of the smallholders in the short-value chains in the Western Balkans region and Turkey"

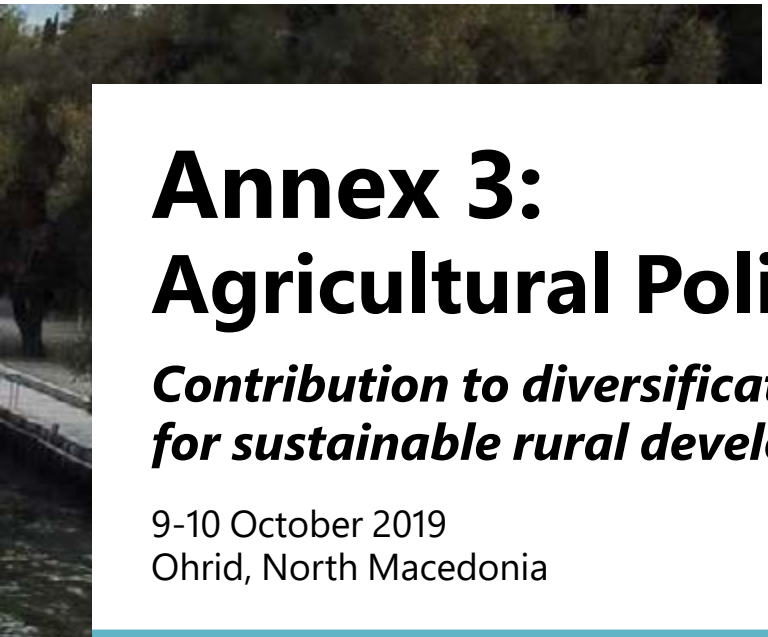
  (October.2019 – October.2020)

Annex 2: SWG Head Office/ Secretariat Personnel

Status 2019

Name/Surname	Position
SWG Head Office employees	
Boban Ilic	Secretary-General
Katerina Kolemishevska	Head of Operations
Bogdanka Leveska – Gjorsoska	Project Manager
Dori Pavloska – Gjorgjeska	Project Manager
Maja Kostovska	Technical Secretary
Andrej Josifov	Finance Manager
Elena Matevska	Finance Officer
Oliver Pop-Arsov	Project Assistant
Danijela Stojmanovska	Financial Assistant
Bojan Petrovski	Logistics Assistant

Name/Surname	Position
SWG staff in the Regional Offices	
Darko Buzarovski	Regional Manager for "Sharra" and "Prespa" cross-border regions
Aleksandar Damnjanovic	Regional Manager for "Drina-Sava", "Krsh" and "Drina-Tara" cross-border regions
Predrag Markovic	Regional Manager for "Prokletije-Bjeshket e Nemuna" and "Pcinja-Krajishte" cross-border regions
Ivan Tasev	Regional Coordinator for "Prokletije-Bjeshket e Nemuna" and "Pcinja-Krajishte" cross-border regions
Etleva Thimo	Regional Coordinator for "Prespa", "Sharra" and "Prokletije-Bjeshket e Nemuna" cross-border regions
Andja Vukcevic Zoic	Regional Coordinator for "Krsh" cross-border region
Danica Nesevic	Regional Coordinator for "Drina-Tara" and "Drina-Sava" cross-border region



Annex 3:
Agricultural Policy Forum 2019:

Contribution to diversification of economic activities for sustainable rural development in Southeast Europe

9-10 October 2019
Ohrid, North Macedonia

Ohrid Agenda 2019

The Agricultural Policy Forum (APF), hereafter referred to as the "Forum", is a comprehensive regional platform enabling all stakeholders - from academics and policy makers to farmers and civil society - to get together and address key concerns about the future of agriculture and rural development, and their role in the prosperity of the South Eastern European region. The current and future state of agriculture and rural development in relation to the dynamics of the European Union (EU) integration process is the central topic of the APF.

The 19th Agricultural Policy Forum, "Contribution to diversification of economic activities for sustainable rural development in South Eastern Europe (SEE)", was held in Ohrid, North Macedonia on 9th – 10th of October 2019. It addressed the prospects for meeting the sustainable development goals, which depend heavily on collective efforts of countries/territories in the SEE region to face their common developmental challenges. The Forum emphasized the interrelationship between the socio-economic ambitions and the need for a multi-stakeholder partnership approach to harness such synergies. The Forum highlighted that in order for multi-stakeholder partnerships to flourish in SEE countries/territories, cooperation should encompass regional and national aspects.

The plenary session of the Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 focused on policy prospective reform measures, with the aim of smoother EU accession through mutual harmonization of policies. The Ohrid Agenda 2019 summarizes the main outcomes from the plenary session as follows:

1. Financial assistance for sustainable agriculture and rural development is now available and operational in all IPARD countries. A more progressive approach towards the IPARD program is helping the IPARD countries to improve their administrative capacities from improving management systems of processing of applications, to increasing the human capacity for know-how and helping to achieve better absorption of the IPARD funds.

2. As EU policies are supporting diversified economic approaches, rural tourism becomes one of the new sources of sustainable development and income generation in the rural communities. While rural tourism constitutes a growing source of revenue for the Western Balkan countries/territories, much of that growth has been restricted by poor infrastructure, education and promotion activities, often with adverse environmental effects. To support economic diversification, the tourism sector requires efficient educational and management systems and improved coordination of rural tourism value chains. Furthermore, to bring together rural development and tourism policies the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are available.

3. Harmonizing the legislative framework on wine, with the structure and measures that characterize the accession process, brings with it new changes with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan which is compulsory for wine. Planned changes in the Common Market Organization (CMO) Regulation regarding wine are 'technical' to cope with new economic, environmental and climatic challenges and need to be followed for the future reform processes of SEE countries/territories.

4. Geographical Indications (PDO and PGI) and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) - Quality policy is a useful tool for rural development that includes economic, social and environmental dimensions. To improve traditional production, national authorities need to establish efficient control systems and control bodies while providing flexibility and derogations on the food safety requirements, as it is foreseen by the EU regulations. This will encourage greater involvement of small-scale producers and traditional agricultural households in national and regional markets.

5. Proper agriculture and rural development policy reform and implementation requires transparent and active cooperation of all relevant stakeholders. Following the Lithuanian example entitled "Gate of Innovation", the SEE countries/territories could establish a "knowledge transfer system" as an interactive structure for cooperation between farmers, advisors and academia to provide data and information to the policy makers for proper policy making and implementation.

The Forum concentrated on three selected topics in separate focus groups and recommends the following:

Focus group 1:

In order to support the diversification of economic activities in rural areas there is a need for adequate rural development policies aligned with the EU CAP addressing the challenges of the SEE countries/territories. Consequently, creation and support of public-private partnerships, inter-sectorial cooperation and coordina-

tion among various stakeholders on horizontal and vertical level is essential. Therefore, timely 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) are strongly recommended. Additionally, it is advisable to strengthen the capacities of the national and local administrations, advisory services, civil society organizations, farmers/producers and service providers in rural areas. It is important to produce reliable data so as to monitor and evaluate the impact of rural development policies.

Focus group 2:

The Forum considered ways to improve the competitiveness of the wine sector in the Western Balkan region. The Forum recognized that there are varying levels of importance of the wine sector in the WB countries/territories. Taking into consideration the comprehensive EU wine legislation and requirements, it was noted that at present there are insufficient capacities for implementation of the EU requirements for the wine sector in the region. The importance of the wine sector was underlined, and it was recommended to adjust the national legislations in order to align with the EU legislation and introduce electronic systems in accordance with the EU standards. It was recommended to introduce common standards related to some regional traditional terms. Regional-wide cooperation focusing on joint promotion and valorisation of Balkan vine varieties is seen as one of the key priorities. A harmonized regulatory framework is seen as a fundamental precondition for increased trade and export.

Focus group 3:

Continuous fostering of national, regional and international research cooperation and strengthening of networks and partnerships is strongly recommended. Research should achieve a higher position amongst governmental priorities. National budgets dedicated to research need to be significantly increased to improve research funding. Access to research resources, research infrastructure, capacity building and transfer of knowledge are also important. In addition, SEE countries/territories need better support to access available EU research funds. A dialogue platform on research in the Western Balkans should be established to stimulate demand-driven research. SWG should progress this concept.

The Forum agreed that:

• This Ohrid Agenda will be presented and discussed at the 13th Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South Eastern Europe on the 12th of November 2019 in Pristina, Kosovo *;

• This Agenda will be conveyed to the EU institutions, UN agencies and other relevant national and international institutions and organizations;

• The 20th Agricultural Policy Forum will take place in the autumn of 2020 in Kosovo*, which will hold the SWG Presidency for 2020.

The Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 in Ohrid was held under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe.

The participants of the Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 highly appreciated the support provided by the convening institutions and organizations: European Commission (DG Agriculture and Rural Development) and the German International Cooperation (GIZ).

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* *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*

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Annex 4:

Conclusions of the Ministers and Heads of Delegations from Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development in SEE

13th Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Heads of Delegations of South Eastern Europe

Introduction

At the Annual Meeting of the Ministers held in Pristina, Kosovo* in November 2019, Ministers and Heads of Delegations adopted a set competitiveness and development objectives to be achieved in line with the regional economic integration benchmarks of the European Union.

The Conclusions of the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Heads of Delegations of South Eastern Europe summaries the discussions to future regional rural development in the face of changing international dynamisms that are reshaping our economies, environment and social conditions.

The Annual Meeting of the Ministers reconfirmed the importance of regional cooperation

and rural development as a tool for economic growth, sustainability, and fighting rural depopulation and poverty in South Eastern Europe, most importantly, impact regional divides essential for addressing development policies taking into consideration different development paths.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE ANNUAL WORKING MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

12th November 2019

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations from South East European countries, having met at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Ministers in Pristina, Kosovo* from 11th – 13th November 2019, covering topics of a regional character**:**

discussed priority issues of a joint matter for agriculture and rural development in the SEE region.

Reaffirm our dedication towards EU membership and commitment to the EU enlargement project, which will allow SEE countries to seize their stability, democracy and economic permanence over the region. Conversely, the SEE countries are disappointed and losing patience if the process prolongs and the EU does not open formal accession proceedings with all the countries from the region.

Appel for the need of closer cooperation with European Commission and new dynamism with responsible institutions for regional cooperation, agriculture and rural development. The need to address the priorities and areas of joint reinforced cooperation, addressing the specific challenges the SEE countries face, in particular the need for fundamental reforms and aligning of policies towards the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) model and respective measures that contribute towards economic adjustments and increased competitiveness.

Remain devoted to the restructuring and setting up national institutions for proper programming, implementation and monitoring of the IPA tool for agriculture and rural development (IPARD II). We are keen on the developmental steps for IPARD III and anticipative to provide our input on indispensable changes and improvements, making the tool adoptive to the actual needs of the SEE region.

Recommend inclusion of all potential and candidate countries from SEE region for the application of the IPARD programmee. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* will support EU efforts for proper implementation of reforms and national structures on accessibility of IPARD funds and technical aid. Availability of such tool will contribute significantly to the competitiveness of farming and the food sector in these two countries.

Welcome the Agricultural Policy Forum (APF) endorsements and the Ohrid Agenda 2019, held on 9th -10th October 2019 in Ohrid, North Macedonia under the theme: "Contribution to Diversification of Economic Activities for Sustainable Rural Development".

We hereby reviewed and positively assessed the following recommendations:

1. A more progressive approach towards the IPARD program is helping the IPARD countries to improve their administrative capacities from improving management systems of processing of applications, to increasing the human capacity for know-how and helping to achieve better absorption of the IPARD funds;
2. Geographical Indications (PDO and PGI) and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) - Quality policy is a useful tool for rural development that includes economic, social and environmental dimensions. To improve traditional production, national authorities need

to establish efficient control systems and control bodies while providing flexibility and derogations on the food safety requirements, as it is foreseen by the EU regulations;

3. Timely 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) are strongly recommended. It is advisable to strengthen the capacities of the national and local administrations, advisory services, civil society organizations, farmers/producers and service providers in rural areas;
4. Improvement of the competitiveness of the wine sector in the Western Balkan region is needed. It was recommended to introduce common standards related to some regional traditional terms. Regional-wide cooperation focusing on joint promotion and valorisation of Balkan vine varieties is seen as one of the key priorities. A harmonized regulatory framework is seen as a fundamental precondition for increased trade and export.
5. Research, advisory services and education should achieve a higher position amongst governmental priorities. National budgets dedicated to research need to be significantly increased to improve research funding. A dialogue platform on research in the Western Balkans should be established to stimulate demand-driven research. SWG should progress this concept.

Acknowledge the report of the Secretary General on the results of the SWG work for the year of 2019 and the achievements made under its operational framework. We congratulate the fortitude of this regional body in upholding regional ownership and its efforts of introducing new paradigms for cooperation towards joint EU enlargement path. We reconfirm our dedication to regional cooperation under the SWG umbrella and continues exchange among members, observers and international organizations on innovative approaches and best practices to be executed using the SWG structures.

Congratulate the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of Republic of North Macedonia for successfully holding the Presidency of the SWG RRD Assembly during the year 2018. The SWG RRD Presidency and the duties for the year of 2020 have been handed over from the current Presidency the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of Republic of North Macedonia to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo*.

Appreciate the support provided by all participating Governments, members and observers of the SWG RRD. We value the positive contribution by partner organizations and institutions in their work to promote healthy, diverse and productive environment in SEE, in particularly: the line Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, the European Commission, the German Federal Government (BMZ and BMEL) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Express our gratitude for the warm hospitality provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo*. We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the set objectives in this document and oblige on taking concrete steps for ensuring the above stated matters have been address in a proper manner. The results will be assessed on the next scheduled Annual working meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture in 2020.

Present representatives of institutions during the meeting

SWG MEMBERS INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Republic of Albania

Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development, Kosovo *

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Republic of North Macedonia

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro

SWG OBSERVER INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Bulgaria

Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia

Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary

Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Federal Republic of Germany

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

European Commission (EC)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)

Teagasc, Agriculture and Food Development Authority

* *"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."*

Annex 5: Operational Plan SWG 2019

Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in SEE (SWG)
Draft Operational Plan January - December 2019

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
1	**General SWG /Head Office Activities**															
1.1	Steering and facilitation of political/policy discussions regarding SWG	Ministries of Agriculture in SEE	N/A	Throughout the year												
1.2	Fund raising and contacts with donors/partners	Donor community, implementing agencies, governments and EC	N/A	Throughout the year												
1.3	Preparation of new SWG regional project proposals	SWG Member Institutions/ countries	SWG Head Office	Throughout the year												
1.4	Support to the intersectoral/ interinstitutional coordination processes at regional level between the responsible institutions and relevant organisations and structures	Responsible institutions and relevant organisations and structures		Throughout the year												
1.5	Participation and contribution to the SEE 2020 Strategy coordination activities	International organizations, donors, etc	Sarajevo, BiH, other locations	Throughout the year												
1.6	Participation and contribution at regional and international conferences and events		N/A	Throughout the year												
1.7	Promotion of the work of the SWG RRD on meetings and events to raise the interest of donors (EU DG NEAR, EU DG AGRI, FAO, UNDP, SIDA, GDC etc.);	EU DG NEAR, EU DG AGRI, FAO, UNDP, SIDA, GDC etc.		Throughout the year												
1.8	Development of SWG RRD Strategy for the period 2020 – 2025	SWG	Headoffice	mid-Feb - Dec												

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
2	**Core Activities (Assembly meetings, policy and political forums, working groups)**															
2.1	44th SWG Assembly session (assessments of achievements, replanning of activities)	SWG assembly and partner institutions	Becici, Montenegro	8 - 9 April												
2.2	45th SWG Assembly Session (assessments of achievements, replanning of activities)	SWG assembly and partner institutions	BiH, Banja Luka	11 - 13 September												
2.3	46th SWG Assembly session (annual reporting, financial reporting and SWG Assembly decisions)	SWG assembly and partner institutions	Kopaonik, Serbia	3 - 5 December												
2.4	Agricultural Policy Forum 2019	SEE ministry representatives, academics, private, civil sector, EC, int'l organizations and other stakeholders	Macedonia	7-10 October												
2.5	13th Annual meeting of Ministers of Agriculture from SEE	Ministers of Agriculture from SEE, EC and supporting governments	Kosovo*, Pristina	12-Nov												
3	**Regional Expert Advisory Working Group Meetings**															
3.1	Workshop for IPARD Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies	Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania (Kosovo* and BiH guests); 6 persons from country/ territory (3 MA + 3 PA)	Montenegro, Becici	10 - 12 April												
3.2	Kick-off meeting of SEE REAWG on LEADER	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Skopje, Macedonia	28 February - 1 March												
3.3	First interim meeting of SEE REAWG on LEADER	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Kosovo*	First week of June												
3.4	Second interim meeting of SEE REAWG on LEADER	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Macedonia	8 - 9 Oct (APF)												
3.5	Kick-off meeting of SEE REAWG on PDO PGI TSG	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Macedonia, Skopje	28 - 30 January												
3.6	Interim meeting SEE REAWG on PDO PGI TSG	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Albania	15 - 17 April												
3.7	Final meeting SEE REAWG on PDO PGI TSG	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Andrevlje, Serbia	2 - 4 July												
3.8	Kick-off meeting of SEE REAWG on economic diversification through rural tourism	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Macedonia, Skopje	23 - 25 January												
3.9	First Interim Meeting SEE REAWG on economic diversification through rural tourism	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Albania, Voskopoja	18 - 20 June												

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
3.10	Second Interim Meeting SEE REAWG on economic diversification through rural tourism	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Serbia, Zlatibor (or Tara)	29 - 31 Oct												
3.12	First Interim Meeting SEE REAWG on Wine	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Kosovo*, Orahovac or BiH, Trebinje	Last week of March												
3.13	Second Interim Meeting SEE REAWG on Wine	Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)	Macedonia	8 - 9 Oct (APF)												
3.14	Organisation of policy recommendation dissemination events on national and regional level	National and regional experts, ministries' staff, private and civil sector and other stakeholders	Serbia (Ministry, IAE Conference), BiH (AgroRes), Mmontenegro (Rural Youth Camp)	May												
4 SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS																
4.1	Performance of detailed baseline assessment of the selected value chains	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	mid of February												
4.2	Mapping of relevant stakeholders along the targeted value chains	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	mid of February												
4.3	Assessment of the local capacities of the stakeholders on business planning, investments, business cooperation within value chains, management, feasibility within the selected value chains for adjustments of the regulatory framework	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	mid of April												
4.4	Detailed planning of value chain development with the relevant stakeholders for identification of gaps, shortcomings and defining the envisaged objectives and interventions	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	mid of April												
4.5	Definition of Code of Practice for selected value chains	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	end of February												
4.6	Organization of capacity building measures (trainings) for value chain operators/ stakeholders on topics identified within capacity assessment	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste	May - October												

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
4.7	Organization of SHG meetings	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste Prokletije Sharra Prespa	18 March DS 19 March Pcinja 20 March DT 21 March Prokletije 22 March Krsh 25 March Sharra 26 March Prespa *2nd SHG meeting beginning of November												
4.8	Provision of financial support (grants) for the development and strengthening of the targeted value chains	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste Prokletije Sharra Prespa	May-December												
4.9	Organisation of regional and local events for networking, establishment of business contacts, promotion of value chain products/ service and exchange of experiences / P2P activities/participation and promotion of the products/ services on trade fairs (regional)	food producers/processors tourism operators beekeepers	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste Prokletije Sharra Prespa	March-December												
5 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COMMUNITY-LED AND AREA-BASED DEVELOPMENT																
5.1	Organization of networking events, exposure visits, on-job training etc.			Throughout the year												
5.2	Organization of capacity building measures (trainings/ coaching/ counselling) of actors and networks (Local Action Groups (LAGs), rural development networks (RDNs), Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) and institutions/ administrations on planning, management, implementation of regional and local development strategies	Local Action Groups (LAGs), rural development networks (RDNs), Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) and institutions/ administrations	Drina-Sava Drina-Tara Krsh Pchinja-Krajiste Prokletije Sharra Prespa	Throughout the year												
5.3	Capacity building of managers and board members of LAGs on managemnt of LAGs	Managers and board members of LAGs		Throughout the year												
5.4	Preparation of educational material (brochures, compendiums etc.)			Throughout the year												

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
5.5	Identification and description of good practice in inclusive community-led local development in SEE, taking into account the particular needs of rural women and young people by appropriate capacity development measures in view of their full and equal participation in all decision-making structures and levels.	Rural women and young people		mid of April												
5.6	Organization of capacity building measures for stakeholders on access to finance (preparation of applications for IPARD II, CBC, IPARD II, national agriculture and rural development programmes)	Managing autirities and paying agencies	Montenegro, Becici	10 - 12 April												
5.7	Organization of capacity building measures on improvement of digital skills in light of being able applying for the programmes	Rural stakeholders from target regions		Throughout the year												
5.8	Facilitation of networking of partners and advisory support for drafting large scale project proposals			Throughout the year												
5.9	Publicity for IPARD II, trans-national, national agriculture and rural development programmes	Rural stakeholders		Throughout the year												
5.10	Multilevel capacity building for extension services program definition	All ministries and rural networks		01/03/2019 - 31/05/2019												
		All ministries and rural networks		01/04/2019 - 30/04/2019												
		All ministries and rural networks		01/05/2019 - 31/05/2019												
5.11	Promotion and communication - capacity building for extension services	Ministries of agriculture and rural networks in non-beneficiary countries, research and innovation agencies and institutions working in the fields of agriculture and rural development, national and EU-level relevant institutions (e.g. ministries or innovation, research, economic development; DG Agri of the EC).		01/03/2019 - 30/04/2020												
		Second-stage extension services		01/05/2019 - 31/10/2019												
		Prospective applicants		01/05/2019 - 30/04/2020												

	9/4/2019				Time Frame											
	Activity	**Beneficiary/Target group**	**Location of implementation**	**Date of execution**	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
5.12	Multilevel capacity building program for extension services implementation	All ministries and rural networks	Serbia, Belgrade	16-20.09.2019												
		All ministries and rural networks	Belgrade, Serbia, Banja Luka and Sarajevo, BIH, Skopje, Macedonia, Tirana, Albania	National trainings sessions on IPARD applications and calls: Belgrade & Banja Luka October 28– November 1 National trainings sessions on IPARD applications and calls: Tirana & Skopje November 25 – 29 National trainings sessions on IPARD applications and calls: Sarajevo & Podgorica local sessions December 16-20													
6 Other Activities																
6.1	Ad Hoc Ministerial Meeting 2019 GFFA	Ministers of Agriculture from SEE, EC and German Government	Berlin, Germany	20-Jan-19												
6.2	Global Forum for food and agriculture 2019 - trade and global food security	SWG Member Institutions/ countries	Berlin, Germany	17 - 19 January												
	TOTAL BUDGET															

Explanation of the different colors

Preparation period

Execution period

Time for follow up activities after the execution

Completed

On-going

Canceled

December 2019

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