Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Background to the Western Balkans events</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>The purpose and shape of the events</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Rural reality check in Serbia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Rural reality check in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Rural reality check in Montenegro</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Experience in four countries</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Challenge – the present state of relations between stakeholders</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Opportunity – the road to empowerment of stakeholders</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and to partnership between stakeholders and governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexe 1</td>
<td>Programmes of the Western Balkan events</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexe 2</td>
<td>List of participants</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexe 3</td>
<td>Acronyms and links</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowering rural stakeholders and communities is the only way forward

When it comes to rural development, engaging rural stakeholders and communities is a prerequisite for any genuine progress. Real advancement in the processes of rural development can be achieved only if everyone is on board. This means local mobilisation; community initiatives, but also building honest partnerships between stakeholders and governments. It has to come from the communities themselves, but it has to be supported by decision-makers and policies. It is a two-way process that requires not only a lot of effort, but also the right tools to make it possible.

From my personal experience, coming from a new member state, looking back at how things evolved in my country, I know that empowering communities on matters such as rural development is an imperative, not an exception. It is a difficult task, because rural regions are more exposed to economic constraints, migration, weak infrastructure or poor public services. I know how challenging and demanding this can be, but I also believe that this is the only way forward.

We need to find better mechanisms to allow for better participation. With its travelling workshops through countries in the Western Balkans, this project is not only about getting these countries closer to Europe, but also about understanding their needs, and assessing relationships between governments and stakeholders. You will find all these in this report and it is valuable information for Europe and for the countries concerned. However, for me, its value resides also in finding and testing new methods of societal engagement, ways to put together stakeholders and political leaders. Its importance goes beyond the EU enlargement process as its conclusions and the recommendations could be extrapolated to any policy initiative applicable at the EU level.

When it comes to designing EU policies - and rural development is one of them - we need new methods, new ideas, and new tools to empower citizens, stakeholders and governments, to create a climate of trust. Farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, village communities need to be involved, to participate, allowing decision-makers to have a clear view of realities and needs on the ground. For this to happen, we must find better ways to listen, we need to be more inclusive in our dialogue with society. This is particularly important in rural areas where people are still insufficiently connected to these processes, and this is the reason why I followed this project with great attention.

The recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy represented a new direction for the policy itself, but I would like to think it did more than that. That we also introduced a change of method in policy design at EU level. We listened more, we had a better dialogue with the society, we communicated more with farming and non-farming stakeholders, with communities, with NGOs. Nevertheless, I am convinced that more can be done. This is why this report is valuable - not only for its conclusions and recommendations, but also for describing ways to empower rural stakeholders and communities.

To the initiators of this project - the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in South Eastern Europe (SWG) and PREPARE - and to all those involved, from public administrations to civil society and citizens, a hearty thank you for your participation and your hard work. I know that this project was also built on valuable personal experiences, and I believe that this is where everything starts: Europe grows with connecting people.

Dacian Cioloș,
European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

The beauty of the European Project

The beauty of the European project emerges where people meet, from very different cultures and professional horizons, where they listen to each other, share ideas, and discover what they have in common. This project of six traveling workshops through the three countries of the Western Balkans—“Empowering rural stakeholders”—was such a revelation, creating common ground between local actors, administrations, national governments and European institutions, all involved in rural development.

It takes some courage and persistence to agree upon, organise and carry out such an adventure. It requires trust between all partners involved, public institutions, private enterprise and civil society, that it is worth investing energy and time in what we called a common “rural reality check.” Looking for solutions to the broad range of real problems we identified in rural areas, we have worked from the bottom-up, involving local people and their initiatives as well as their National Rural Networks, and we worked from the top-down, including the broad expertise of national ministries and the services of the European Commission. With our conclusions from this encouraging European event we met somewhere in the middle. We agreed that we must together encourage and empower rural people from the bottom-up and from the top-down, so that they can take their own destiny into their hands.

As initiators of this European event, the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in South Eastern Europe (SWG) and PREPARE – promoting civil society partnership for rural Europe – express their warm thanks to all partners involved in the event. Without the hard work and know-how of our colleagues in the national networks and the local projects, the strong support from national ministries and administrations and the extraordinary engagement of the Commission services from TAIEX and DG Agriculture and Rural Development, this project would not have been possible.

We very much hope that the recommendations from this report will be helpful for day to day work of all involved and an encouragement to further cooperation.

Boban Ilic,
Secretary General, SWG

and

Hannes Lorenzen,
Chair of Organising Group

PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe
Summary

The events (chapters 1 and 2)

This report, and the events recorded in it, focus upon seven countries which are at various stages of active or potential candidacy to join the European Union. Six of the countries are in the Western Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The seventh country is Turkey.

These countries are reforming their governmental systems to align them with the standards and policies of the European Union. To help in this process, the EU offers support through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). Part of that instrument is focused on rural development, including the potential to use the LEADER approach, which operates successfully throughout the EU.

The central concept behind the events described here is that effective rural development will depend upon action by both governments and rural stakeholders. It is vital that the two sides work closely together; that governments involve rural stakeholders in shaping and implementing policy; and that rural stakeholders are empowered to take initiatives which benefit rural communities.

In order to stimulate the thinking of governments and rural stakeholders, the events had an unusual format – a simultaneous series of six traveling workshops in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, followed by national conferences in the three countries and a concluding conference in Brussels.

Taking part in these events were Ministers, Government officials and rural stakeholders from the seven countries, plus EU experts and representatives of the four organisations which co-initiated the events – the European Commission’s Directorates for Agriculture and Rural Development and for Enlargement, the Standing Working Group for Rural Development in the Western Balkans (representing the Governments in the region), and the PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe.

The traveling workshops were designed to provide a ‘reality check’ for the participants, by bringing them face-to-face with each other and with farmers, entrepreneurs, local authorities, Local Action Groups (LAG) and others on their own ground. The participants had time for discussion and reflection on the realities as seen by rural people and by the governments who serve them.

Serbia (chapter 3)

More than half of Serbia’s population lives in rural areas: one-fifth of its workforce is in agriculture. It has 450,000 farm holdings of less than 5 ha. So, the government has focused much effort on support to farmers. Now it is drafting new policies for rural development, aiming to diversify the rural economy and to support sub-regional partnerships based on the LEADER approach. It has consulted stakeholders; encouraged the creation of many potential Local Action Groups; and supported the creation of 16 regional associations. These associations co-founded the Network for Rural Development of Serbia, which is promoting action by rural stakeholders.

The two traveling workshop groups in Serbia were impressed by a number of key themes – the severe difficulties faced by small farmers; the value of cooperatives and associations in enabling farmers and others to work together; the presence of many dynamic entrepreneurs; commercial enterprises created by women; the active role of municipalities in rural development; the potential for leadership at local level; and the low profile of national government.

The visiting groups concluded that the Government needs to become more visible and more effective, to establish a policy-related climate in which enterprise can flourish, to involve NGOs and businesses more fully in shaping strategies and programmes; to strengthen frontline advisory services; to link national rural development programmes more clearly to the work of municipalities; to launch soon a network of properly-funded Local Action Groups; to support the formation of cooperatives and associations; and to sustain the activity of the Network for Rural Development. Municipalities should be more consistently active in rural development; involve stakeholders in shaping and implementing policies; and encourage initiative at village level. Rural stakeholders should respond to the growing openness of government, and should take initiative in meeting the collective needs of their sectors or their rural communities.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (chapter 4)

Half of the population of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia lives in rural areas. Agriculture produces about 10% of its national GDP. Of its 190,000 farms, about 80% are small family farms of average size of 1.7 ha. The government has pursued a nationalist strategy for agriculture and rural development; has applied most of the funding in direct payments to farmers; but intends to focus more in future on environment, land management and diversifying the rural economy. Since 2009, the country has benefited from EU funds under the IPARD measure. Substantial leadership in the field of rural development is being provided by the Rural Development Network, which aims to mobilise rural communities as agents of local development and as participants in rural policy. It has 58 NGOs in membership, works closely with about 1,500 rural leaders, and has done much to lay the foundations for LEADER-type activity.

The two traveling workshop groups in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were impressed by a number of key themes – the potential for leadership by municipalities; and for LEADER-type activity; the flexible use by entrepreneurs of many different sources of funds; and the very low take-up of IPA Rural Development (IPARD) funds.

The visiting groups concluded that there is a strong need for integrated rural development policies, in order to address the vicious circle of weak rural economies, unemployment, out-migration, inadequate rural services and infrastructure. There must be clear linkage and complementarity between the policies of central government and of municipalities. The time is ripe for launching a full LEADER programme: Cooperation and networking among rural stakeholders should be supported by Government, municipalities and Local Action Groups. Access to credit and finance should be improved. The Government and the European Commission, when shaping the IPARD 2 programme, should analyse the reasons for low take-up of IPARD 1 and make changes accordingly. There is widespread need for advisory services, training and other aspects of capacity-building. Leadership in this field should come from the Government, the Rural Development Network, municipalities and Local Action Groups.

Montenegro (chapter 5)

Of Montenegro’s population, 40% lives in rural areas. Agriculture produces about 10% of its national GDP. Its farming structure is dominated by over 50,000 small family farms of average size of 5 ha. The national economy is dominated by the service sector, and tourism is considered the backbone of future economic growth. The government sees the need for urgent strengthening of the farming and food sectors, in order to increase their competitiveness. Last year, the Ministry organised wide public consultation about rural policies, but was disappointed by the low response: it supports the establishment of NGOs, many dynamic entrepreneurs in producing; the Rural Development Network of Montenegro, set up in 2012, aims to promote rural development through exchange of information, ideas and best practice: it has 18 NGOs in formal membership, and links to many municipalities.

The two traveling workshop groups in Montenegro were impressed by a number of key themes – the role of dynamic entrepreneurs; the value of cooperatives and associations; the active use by farmers of information, advice and financial support from the government; the potential offered by tourism in diversifying the rural economy; the need to focus more widely on strengthening rural economies, and on sustaining rural services and infrastructure; the potential role in local development of municipalities, which however appear to be now severely constrained by the lack of finance; and the need to strengthen institutional capacities at many levels.
The visiting groups concluded that Montenegro has already achieved significant things in rural development, notably in promoting competitiveness in agriculture and the food industry. But the Government and the people realise that it must continue urgently the process of developing the full institutional basis for a comprehensive approach to rural development, including a closer and fuller partnership between government and rural stakeholders. Major elements in that institutional framework may be an updated Strategy for rural and rural development, supported by an IPARD 2 programme; a phased programme for introduction of the LEADER approach; the production, by municipalities or Local Action Groups, of local development strategies; and the process of developing the full institutional basis for the LEADER approach. The LEADER approach is a coordination team, with specialist sub-groups, including a LEADER sub-group which includes 9 Local Action Groups.

This complex institutional setup is constraining the country’s progress towards accession to the EU, and therefore its access to IPARD funds. However, organisations with links to rural stakeholders, and in strengthening trust and cooperation between different NGOs and between them and government.

Albania
In recent years, Albania’s labour market has seen a dramatic shift away from agriculture and towards industry, tourism and other services. Less than half of its population now lives in rural areas. But agriculture is still a major sector, providing half of total employment and about 20% of national GDP. The government’s policy for agriculture and rural development is focused on stimulating farmers to create effective businesses and to contribute to economic growth. When preparing this policy, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration consulted producer groups and other stakeholders.

Anatolia Guarantee Facility provides credit of over €900 million toward SMEs in developing regions. The draft National Rural Development Strategy provides a general framework for rural development activities. In 2008, a national IPARD 1 programme was approved by the European Commission, with a total budget of €685 million. The programme focuses on the EU’s agricultural sector, and the number of projects submitted for IPARD support has been growing rapidly. The government is now preparing application for IPARD 2 funds. It is promoting the LEADER approach, with the help from leading NGOs. A number of NGOs and foundations are active in different fields related to rural development in Turkey. Some of the NGOs belong to the non-institutional network KKG. National or regional conferences or training sessions have been organised by other foundations, with help from PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe. Much remains to be done in capacity-building among rural stakeholders, and in strengthening trust and cooperation between different NGOs and between them and government.

Turkey
20 million people, more than a quarter of Turkey’s population, live in rural regions, and a large proportion of them depend on agriculture or other locally-based industries. These industries are subject to shocks through significant government policies that shape the definition of some of which are co-funded by the EU. For example the Greater Anadolu Guarantee Facility provides credit of over €900 million toward SMEs in developing regions. The draft National Rural Development Strategy provides a general framework for rural development activities.

In 2008, a national IPARD 1 programme was approved by the European Commission, with a total budget of €685 million. This is now being implemented in 42 of the 81 provinces, and the number of projects submitted for IPARD support has been growing rapidly. The government is now preparing an application for IPARD 2 funds. It is promoting the LEADER approach, with the help from leading NGOs. A number of NGOs and foundations are active in different fields related to rural development in Turkey. Some of the NGOs belong to the non-institutional network KKG. National or regional conferences or training sessions have been organised by other foundations, with help from PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe. Much remains to be done in capacity-building among rural stakeholders, and in strengthening trust and cooperation between different NGOs and between them and government.

Challenge (chapter 7)
What have we learnt about the present state of relations between stakeholders and governments in the seven countries?
The most salient conclusions seem to be the following:

- Rural development is recognised as being both top-down and bottom-up. Action by governments is essential in order to provide infrastructure and services, to ensure fair play and cohesion, and to create and pursue strategies for development. But much of the action at local level lies with farmers, entrepreneurs, village communities and NGOs.
- It is accepted that governments and stakeholders must be connected. Government policies must reflect the true realities of rural resources and needs. Rural actors must understand the help they can gain from government and be enabled to seek that help in workable ways. The aim must be to achieve true participation of stakeholders, and partnership between them and government. Such partnership is not easy, because of the imbalance of power between people and government and that is why the rural stakeholders must be empowered.
- Action by stakeholders already provides many growth points for future development. The rural regions in these countries contain many lively initiatives, active and successful entrepreneurs, both men and women, often people who have risked, experienced and returned. Some of them have been elected to municipalities, thus forming a personal connection between top-down and bottom-up. These are crucial growth points in the emerging rural development campaign.
- However, the broader mass of rural people are still disconnected to development processes. Many rural regions in the seven countries have narrowly based rural economies, low average income, unemployment, out-migration of youth and an old, weak infrastructure or gaps in social services. Crucially, there are hundreds of thousands of small farms, disadvantaged in many ways, and often feeling powerless. We must find ways to strengthen and diversify economies of these areas before they are opened to the full shock of EU competition.
- The concerns of stakeholders relate to a wide scope of development. The future viability of many of Turkey’s agricultural and rural economies depends not only on the measures contained in rural development policies, but also on a wider range of elements, such as roads, water supplies, schools and higher education. So a fully rural focus is important. The future needs of rural areas is needed. All relevant policies and programmes may need to be ‘rural-proofed’, i.e. subjected to assessment of their potential impact on the well-being of rural communities.
- Policies and practices of rural development are still being shaped. Some governments have had policies for rural development in place for some years, usually with a strong focus on direct support to farmers. All the governments are now preparing or updating their policies, with a wider focus. Five of the countries are expected to submit IPARD 2 programmes. So, opportunities are opening up for a more rounded approach to rural development, with commensurate need for fuller working relationships between governments and stakeholders.
- The role of different levels of government is not fully clear. In the Western Balkan countries, government is effectively at two levels, national and municipal. Each of these levels can act in the field of rural development. This two-tier structure has great potential value, in that public action and funding can be flexed by municipalities to the specific needs of their populations; and that municipalities are closer to the people whose needs they must serve thus making them a focal point of this family; widening of the government’s extension strategies; progressive strengthening of the family of rural NGOs, and of the national Rural Development Network as the focal point of this family; widening of the government’s extension services and effective information systems; a structured basis for links between government and organisations representing rural stakeholders; and a programme of education, training and capacity building, made available to all key sectors.

Experience in four countries (chapter 6)
Taking part in the traveling workshops in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro were officials and NGO representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey. Ministers or their representatives from these countries attended the concluding conference in Brussels.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
About 60% of the population of BiH live in rural areas: agriculture accounts for 10% of national GDP. Most of the farm holdings are small family farms, many operating at a subsistence level. The complex structure of governance means that responsibilities for agriculture and rural development are divided between the central government, the two autonomous entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska), the 10 cantons (7 in the Federation and 12 in the Canton of Sarajevo) and 142 municipalities. Linking the action of all these bodies is a coordination team, with specialist sub-groups, including a LEADER sub-group which includes 9 Local Action Groups.

This complex institutional setup is constraining the country’s progress towards accession to the EU, and therefore its access to IPARD funds. However, organisations with links to rural stakeholders, and in strengthening trust and cooperation between different NGOs and between them and government.

Kosovo
Of Kosovo’s population, over 60% live in rural areas. Political uncertainty about the territory’s status has delayed progress towards its accession to the EU, but it has received EU assistance under a sequence of programmes. Through its Rural Grant Scheme, the government has supported the modernisation of three agricultural sectors – dairy, meat and fruit and vegetable processing. The Ministry of Agriculture is preparing a rural development programme for 2014-20, focused on growth, competitiveness, food safety and environmental protection. Prepared this programme included seminars with stakeholders to define priorities. A national conference in late 2012, with 180 stakeholder representatives, identified four main priorities – competitiveness in production of livestock and crops, agriculture and environment, vocational training, and the LEADER approach. Two further national conferences with stakeholders have been held, and the Ministry of Agriculture believes that this sequence of intensive discussions has done much to empower stakeholders.

The director of the NGO ‘Initiative for Agriculture Development’ commented that the Ministry has assisted the creation of a culture of consensus about priorities for rural development. Local authorities in Albania are not yet experienced in local development, and LAGs could press these authorities to be active, responsive and participative.
The groundwork for partnership being laid in some of the countries, significant steps have been taken towards introducing concepts of partnership and the LEADER approach. A few countries already have networks of sub-regional partnerships, or Potential Local Action Groups. So, the groundwork exists for the phased introduction of LEADER as a significant element in future rural development programmes, and as one leading mechanism for cooperation between government and stakeholders.

Voluble networks have been created. A crucial asset for the forward march into effective local development in the Western Balkans is a family of Rural Development Networks in at least four of the countries. These networks, independent from but recognised by governments, provide crucial points of contact and collaboration between municipalities and NGOs; can relate directly to stakeholders; can encourage the creation of producer groups, cooperatives and associations; and can promote action at village level. They are a vital part of the ‘architecture’ of future development structures in these countries.

Opportunity (chapter 8)

What do these findings imply for the future relations between government and stakeholders in these countries?

If we are truly to empower rural stakeholders, and to build genuine partnership between government and people in the processes of rural development, we need to develop tools which enable government to stretch outward and downward among the stake- holders, and the stakeholders to stretch outwards and upward towards government.

This is a two-way process, demanding deliberate ef- fort from both sides.

What tools do we need? Our discussions suggest the following main elements:

- Clarity about the role of different levels of governance. Citizens should be able to find out easily which arm of government is doing what in the field of regional or local development, and at what level – central, municipal or local. This is a straightforward issue, to be addressed by government information services, working closely with municipalities and their Associations.
- Integrated approaches to development. When finalising the new generation of strategies and programmes for agriculture and rural development, governments should review the scope of their intended action in the field of ‘narrow’ rural development; ensure that this scope addresses both the needs of farmers and the development of rural economies and the strengthening of rural services; and ensure that there are effective links between these programmes and those which are deployed by other ministries or agencies in the fields of transport, water supply, electricity and other services which are essential to rural enterprises and communities. An integrated approach should also apply to the rural development activity of municipalities and (as they come on stream) of local partnerships and LEADER groups.
- Support to marginal areas and small-farming communities. These countries have many marginal areas and small farming communities, which deserve urgent government attention. They are still home to hundreds of thousands of people. If a spiral of decline is allowed to continue, the quality of their lives will deteriorate. These areas contribute food, timber and other resources to the national economies; they contain ecosystems, landscapes and cultural heritage which need effective stewardship. So, governments should focus their efforts in an integrated way in guiding the necessary change in farming structures in these areas, diversifying their economies in order to replace the loss of agricultural jobs, and sustaining the vitality of the communities. This implies a package of measures of the kind that is pursued within the European Union, supported by good accessible systems of information, advice and extension services, delivered with a human face in order to build trust between stakeholders and government.
- Clear and open processes of information, consultation and participation. Governments at central and municipal level should focus on improving public consultation related to their activities in local development. They should then move progressively beyond consultation and encourage participation of stakeholders in the shaping, implementing and monitoring of policies and programmes. They should encourage the formation of associations and NGOs, the creation and strengthening of village-level democracy, and the formation and activity of regional and national network such as already exist in some of the Western Balkan countries.
- Review of systems and programmes where necessary. Processes of consultation and participation should be real, not notional. Both sides – governments and stakeholders – should be genuinely listening and seeking to reconcile differences and to find practical solutions to problems which emerge. When necessary, systems and programmes should be reviewed. One major programme which clearly merits review is IPARD, taking account of the low uptake of IPARD support in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Versatile extension services. Extension services are a crucial intermediary between governments and stakeholders. They will have a key place in the collective process of modernising and adapting the agricultural and rural economies of the Western Balkans and Turkey. They will themselves need to keep pace with changes in markets, supply chains, regulations and the like, and to extend their scope progressively to embrace other forms of economic activity and innovation.
- Collective action by stakeholders. On their side, rural stakeholders should not stand back and expect government to take the whole lead in connecting with them. They should be assertive, willing to work with each other, ready to cooperate with others, for example in producer groups, machinery syndicates, associations and other ways to work together. There is need to nurture the courage of stakeholders, and to build trust among them and between them and public agencies at all levels.
- Village leadership. The traveling workshops revealed two striking examples of village leaders who have taken initiative, and have marked the collective energy and action of villagers in ways which transformed the quality of life and the social and economic opportunities of the village communities. These countries could benefit enormously from further initiatives of this kind. Governments and municipalities should consider how they can stimulate the emergence of village leaders and village-level initiatives.
- Expansion of the LEADER approach. LEADER can be a powerful tool linking different sectors of sub-regional level, and for creating active partnership between the sectors. It can achieve an integrated and inclusive approach to local development, and build the capacity of stakeholders to contribute to this approach. Governments should allocate resources for the creation of the LEADER-type partnerships in rural sub-regions, building upon the work that has already been done. This support should be handled in a way that allows partnerships and local development strategies to emerge and evolve from the bottom-up, with true equality between the public, private and civil sectors.

- Continued and strengthened networking at all levels. The traveling workshops were themselves exercises in networking. They showed that we are all learners; we are all teachers; traveling workshops were themselves exercises in networking. We can help each other. Networking is a crucial means of empowering rural stakeholders, and creating partnership between them and public agencies. It is needed at all levels, both between and within countries. It is needed between governments, in order to exchange experience and development processes. It can strengthen different groups or categories of rural stakeholders. It can enable economic sectors to share expertise and to increase their collective influence; municipalities to enhance their ability to play a leading role in local development; village communities to share experience of practical local action and to raise the rural voice; LEADER Groups and other sub-regional partnerships to exchange experience and exercise their collective influence on the whole development process; and NGOs to raise their profile and enhance the capacity of civil society in social and environmental fields.
- Rural Development Networks. Governments should recognize the high value of the national Rural Development Networks, which as independent non-government organisations act as expert and objective intermediaries between government and all stakeholders. These networks already play a significant role in promoting partnership-based local development in four of the seven countries, and are likely to have growing importance in stimulating awareness, networking and active participation among all categories of stakeholder. Governments in the other three countries may wish to encourage the creation of similar Networks.

- National Rural Networks. There is provision in the IPARD measures for the creation by governments of formal Rural Development Networks (NRNs). This concept is new to the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. It may prove, in due course, to have value in these countries. But experience in the EU suggests that NRNs are of greatest value where there is a well-established pattern of stakeholder organisations and a substantial degree of trust between these organisations and government. So, governments in these countries may wish to place priority on building workable relationship between themselves and a wide range of stakeholders, with help from the Rural Development Networks, before considering the creation of formal NRNs.

- Capacity-building. Rural development is about necessary change. The changes may be in economic activity, in social structures, in government systems, and in methods of stakeholder involvement, etc. Change demands personal adaptation for all those who are involved in it. Adaptation is not easy: it demands new attitudes, new skills, new resources. So, the empowerment of rural stakeholders depends not only on necessary changes in systems but also on strengthening the capacity of people and organisations to react to change. The need for capacity-building applies equally to stakeholders, public officials at central and municipal level, and those who link associations, networks and action groups.
- Time, and persistence. The creation of close working relationships between stakeholders and governments cannot be achieved overnight. It will take time, patience and persistence to create workable systems, to build trust, to develop personal contacts and working relationships. We should see this as a continuing process, to be pursued over the coming years.

The Western Balkan events should be seen as the beginning of a process of empowerment of rural stake- holders, and the strengthening of the partnership between them and governments. The action lies with the people of these remarkable countries, the main groups and sectors of stakeholders, the village lead- ers and local authorities, the non-governmental or- ganisations, and the national governments. Continued leadership will be needed from the national Rural Development Networks, the Standing Working Group, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe, the Govern- ments and the European institutions.
chapter 1

Background to the Western Balkans events

The challenge of enlargement

The context for the events described in this report is the process of potential enlargement of the European Union to embrace the countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey, which are at various stages of active or potential candidature to join the Union. This enlargement presents a major challenge for the Union and for the applicant countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. If completed, it would bring into the Union over 18 million people in the Western Balkans and a further 75 million in Turkey. About 30 million of these people live in rural areas.

We wish to join the European Union, not because of the funds they can bring to us, but because we wish to thrive, we want our farmers to survive, we want the rule of law and economic growth. To achieve these things, we need to be self-focused, even selfish: we need to take the responsibility. Boban Ilic, Secretary General, Standing Working Group

Pre-accession assistance

The candidate countries are committed to reforms in their govern- mental and other systems which will progressively align them with the standards and policies of the European Union. To help them in this process, the European Union offers support through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). This includes measures related to reform in many areas of public policy and administration. Of most relevance to the present purpose is IPARD, the part of IPA which provides support in the field of Rural Development. IPARD is being applied progressively in the seven countries. Its first phase, IPARD 1 introduced in 2007, was available to Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (and also to Croatia, which in 2013 joined the EU and is outside the scope of this report). The second phase, IPARD 2 introduced in 2014, is available in principle to all seven countries, stand alongside these other programmes; and are managed directly by the national governments, who must invest in adequate systems of implementation, management and control. This decentralised mode of management was chosen by the EU because it suits the process of supporting large numbers of relatively small projects, which are expected from small and medium-sized farm holdings and small and micro-sized businesses.

The role in and ownership of the process of drafting and implementing IPARD programmes by all parties concerned is of utmost importance. In fact, no programme will be successful in contributing to improvements in efficiency and competitiveness of agriculture and growth in rural areas without careful consideration of the needs, and capacities, of local actors. Besides the specific support for farmers, the development of the wider rural economies plays a significant role in preparing rural populations for opportunities to shape their own future. Especially, the empowerment of rural people to participate in designing rural development policies and projects through Local Action Groups is vital for innovation and for integration of the various sectors and stakeholders, without which a long-term sustainable growth in rural areas may not be achieved.

LEADER

The appetite of rural stakeholders for participation is quite good, and LEADER can stimulate that participation. Anlo Vendresha, Executive Director of the NGO Quadeer, Albania

A significant element in the EU’s approach to rural development, which has already attracted interest among governments and rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans and Turkey, is the LEADER approach. It focuses upon the creation of sub-regional partnerships between public, and private and civil sectors and the production and implementation by those partnerships of local development strategies, and is an integral part of the IPARD offer to governments in the region. Within the EU, LEADER has done much to mobilise cooperation between rural stakeholders on a sub-regional level and to build good relations between them and governments. It could achieve the same purposes in the Western Balkans and Turkey: already in some of these countries, there are Local Action Groups which act, or hope to act, as LEADER-type partnerships.

PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe

Parallel to the evolution of thinking and policy related to rural development among governments has been a similar evolution in civil society and non-government organisations. One leader in this movement has been the PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe, created in 2000, following a multi-national travelling workshop in Estonia and Sweden provoked by a group of NGOs and supported by the European Parliament. PREPARE’s stated aim is to strengthen civil society in rural areas, to encourage dialogue with governments and European Institutions and to promote international exchange in rural development. It started with a partnership between two European NGOs – Forum Synergies and ECOVAST – and developed further into a growing number of National Rural Networks of NGOs. Four of these networks – in Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Hungary – were co-founders of PREPARE in 2000. Since then, PREPARE has worked to encourage the emergence of National Rural Networks in countries moving towards accession to the EU. Until 2007, its effort was focused on the countries which are now EU members – Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, all of which now have National Rural Networks which have joined the PREPARE Partnership, plus Bulgaria and Romania, which do not yet have such networks.

PREPARE in South Eastern Europe

From 2007 onwards, PREPARE turned its attention to South Eastern Europe, including the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. It made contact with NGOs in all those countries; supported meetings there, with the aim of strengthening civil society, and invited both civil and governmental people from those countries to its annual Gatherings and travelling workshops, which in recent years have been held (each time in a different country) in south eastern Europe. This activity brought PREPARE into contact with SWG, and in 2007 the two groups signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, as a basis for working together. SWG and PREPARE have given active encouragement to the creation and work of National Rural Networks in the Western Balkan countries; and these networks have played a major role in the organisation of the events described in this report.

PREPARE is building bridges between governments and civil society. It is a long process of improving communication and building trust. We offer both a sense of place in a community or network to which people belong, and a sense of the common space we share as citizens of Europe in which we can give and receive mutual support. Hannes Lorenzen, Chair of PREPARE Organizing Group
The purpose and shape of the events

Conception

In mid-2013, PREPARE proposed to SWG that the time might be ripe for a multi-national event in the Western Balkans, focused upon the empowerment of rural stakeholders and the building of closer working relations between rural stakeholders and government officials. The central concept was that effective rural development, in countries such as the Western Balkans and Turkey, depends on action by both governments and rural actors. Governments provide a crucial framework of policy, financial and other support, and investment in public infrastructure and services; yet, on their side, stakeholders take the lead in many aspects of economic, social and cultural development. Rural actors - such as farmers, businesses, cooperatives, local communities, non-government organisations and the like - have their roots in the rural areas, and an intimate collective understanding of the needs and resources of those areas. So, it is vital that the two sides work closely together; that governments involve rural stakeholders in shaping and implementing policy; and that rural actors are encouraged and empowered to take initiatives which meet the needs, and add value to the resources of their rural areas.

Title and aims

The partners agreed on the following title and aims for the events:

Title - "Empowering rural stakeholders and the LEADER approach: mainstreaming participation of stakeholders in the development and implementation of agriculture and rural development policies in the Western Balkans and Turkey".

Aims - To raise awareness among rural stakeholders, particularly Local Action Groups, of the means for their involvement and cooperation in policy and decision-making at national level; and to draw the attention of national administrations and decision-makers to the importance of having structured means for involving stakeholders, and in particular local actors in rural areas, in designing and implementing agricultural and rural development policies.

To throw light on policy issues, I use ad hoc committees, with participants involved. I see these as rather like "black belt judo teams", able to tackle issues effectively. If you only work top down, you can miss tricks. Edmond Panariti, Albanian Minister for Agriculture Rural Development and Water Administration

Partnership to launch the event

The Standing Working Group embraced this concept. PREPARE and SWG then approached the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Ciolos. He supported the proposal, and agreed with Stefan Fule, Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, that the Commissioner’s Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAEX) team be asked to organise the event, working closely with SWG and PREPARE. PREPARE proposed that the event should take the form of multi-national traveling workshops in three separate Balkan countries, followed by a combined conference to bring together the conclusions from all the workshops. It was decided that the workshops will be held in Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The national rural networks, and the relevant Ministries, in these countries were invited to join the organising team.

The participants

In order to gain the full benefits of a multi-national event, participants in the traveling workshops were drawn from each host country and from the other Western Balkan countries, Turkey and the European Commission. In total, there were 90 participants - 15 from each of the three host countries; three from each of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey; and the rest from PREPARE, SWG, the European Commission, plus EU experts acting as rapporteurs. Participants from each country included an equal number of government officials and of rural stakeholders. The mixture led to lively exchange of experience between different countries and different sectors.

It is one thing to sit in an office in a capital city and write policies. It is another thing to get your boots on and see the realities. We should be ready to go to the lowest level to connect with farmers and to find the village leaders. Darko Korytev, Ministry of Agriculture, Montenegro

Format of the traveling workshops

The total of 90 participants was divided into six traveling workshop groups, two in each of the three host countries. Each workshop group travelled in a different rural region for two days, 31 March and 1 April 2014, with pre-arranged visits to different rural enterprises, communities or Local Action Groups. The participants had time in each place for discussion with the local stakeholders, and at the end of each day to gather their thoughts about what they had seen.

National conferences

On the day after the traveling workshops, 2 April 2014, a national conference was held in each host country. Taking part were members of the two traveling workshop groups, plus representatives of government, local authorities and rural stakeholders. The conference received reports from the traveling workshops in that country, followed by general debate on the challenge of partnership between governments and rural stakeholders. There was detailed discussion on the role of stakeholders, and the mechanisms which can enable them to take part in shaping and implementing policy. This was illuminated by success stories from EU Member States. Government and stakeholders were able to commit themselves to the creation and strengthening of working relationships. The outcome of the event in each host country is summarised in Part I of this report.

Multi-national Conference

The final element in the events was a Concluding Conference held in Brussels on 8 April 2014, with the participation of Commissioner Dacian Ciolos; Director-General of DG Enlargement Christian Danielsson; Ministers or their representatives from the seven participating countries; many of the participants in the preceding traveling workshops and national conferences; and invited experts and officials. The conference received and discussed reports from the events in the three host countries, presentations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey, and success stories from EU Member States, focused on rural networks and local partnerships. There was general debate on the challenge of partnership between governments and rural stakeholders in drafting and implementing rural development programmes. The European Commission, governments in the IPA countries and leading stakeholder groups made commitments to the creation and strengthening of working relationships. The Conference conclusions form the basis of Part 2 of this report.

Lists of participants in, and the programmes for, the traveling workshops, national conferences and concluding conference can be found in the Annexes to this report.
Rural reality check in Serbia

The country

Serbia is still a mainly rural country: 65% of its national territory is in farmland, a further 30% in forestry. Of its 7.2 million people, 58% live in rural areas, and about two thirds of these rely wholly or partly on agriculture or forestry for their livelihood. These industries produce about 10% of the nation’s GDP, and 23% of total Serbian exports, and employ 21% of the national labour force (as compared with the average of 5% in the EU).

So, it is not surprising that Serbia, with its GDP per capita lower than any country in the EU and an unemployment rate of 23%, places high priority on sustaining and modernising its agriculture.

Farming structure

Modernisation is not easy. Of the 631,000 farm holdings, nearly half are less than 2ha in size, and a further 27% are between 2ha and 5ha. These are essentially family farms, mainly located in the hills and mountains of central and southern Serbia. A government report on ‘small rural households’ notes that the smaller farms are ‘extremely vulnerable ... nearly 50% of the households see their future outside of agriculture and in off-farm activities ... (but) households are often unable to recognize the opportunities for the engagement of their members in other activities in the household or the community’.

A high proportion of small farms are managed by older people, and many of the younger generation are leaving the land. The farm labour force, and especially the farm owners, tend to have low levels of training, many having acquired their knowledge of agriculture only on the farm. Less than 5% of managers (except in Vojvodina) have completed secondary agricultural school, higher agricultural education or agricultural college.

Support for farming and rural development

In this context, most of Government expenditure on agriculture and rural development since 2004 has been on payments to farmers to promote competitiveness, now running at 90% of the total. Every year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection announces measures for support to all farmers who are in the National Register of Agriculture Holdings. Most of the support goes to direct payments in the field of market development and direct support to producers. But competitiveness and market development is only one aspect of the economic challenge. Spending on rural development by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection has varied during that period, and is currently only 3% of the total, about 8.2 million euros per year. Of this, the larger part goes to support for competitiveness of agricultural production, but some support is also given to agro-environment measures, diversification of rural economy and (in the last year) LEADER-like activities. All these measures are in line with EAFRD principles, as part of the process of EU integration.

Strategy

The Ministry has finalised its new Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, which is soon to be adopted by the Parliament. The Strategy will be implemented through new national and EU IPARD 2 Programmes for Agriculture and for Rural Development for the period 2015-24. The submission of IPARD 2 programme for adoption is expected this year.

The Ministry has recently changed its name to Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, and is reorganising its structure, and recruiting and training additional staff for the management and implementation of programmes. It recognises the need for regional and local development strategies, and for the building of cooperation between stakeholders.

Involvement of stakeholders

Speaking to the concluding Conference, the State Secretary Danilo Golubović accepted the need to involve all stakeholders in facing the challenges and threats affecting the rural areas. The Ministry has established five working groups, including stakeholders, to address policy issues. One of these is the National Council for Rural Development, which will be the predecessor for the IPARD Monitoring Committee and which includes NGO representatives. The process of preparation of the new Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development included a conference attended by 200 people, who expressed enthusiasm and optimism about the strategy. Public consultation produced over 1000 written comments. As current Chairman of the Ministerial Assembly of the Standing Working Group, Mr Golubović recognises that Ministries must cooperate with stakeholders in their countries and promised to promote this principle. He expressed strong support for the SWG’s programme of Area-Based Development.

Preparation for LEADER

The Serbian government recognised some years ago that LEADER is a powerful tool for rural development. In 2007, the Ministry informed municipalities about the LEADER approach, and encouraged them to create LEADER-like partnerships. From 2008, with UNDP support, the Ministry pursued a project for strengthening of rural social capital and networks, including promotion of the LEADER approach. In 2011, with EU support, it launched the Technical Assistance Project “LEADER Initiative in Serbia”. Now, there are 24 Potential Local Action Groups (PLAGs), based in different sub-regions of northern and central Serbia, covering in total 15% of the national territory and 8% of Serbia’s population.

Network for Rural Development

www.ruralinfoserbia.rs

An informal Network for Supporting Rural Development of Serbia was set up in 2007, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply. In 2007, the Ministry issued a call for proposals from NGOs to set up regional associations of local organisations active in rural development. The outcome was the creation of 16 regional associations. In 2010, these associations founded the Network for Rural Development of Serbia, as non-profit and non-governmental association, which had initial financial support from the government. The members of the Network are the 16 regional associations, which together cover the whole of rural Serbia with 161 municipalities involved. The Network has gradually become stronger, despite the withdrawal of government funds in 2011. That year, it was officially registered as an Association of Civil Society Associations.

The Network’s mission is to promote an evenly developed Serbia, in which rural areas are a desirable place to live, where people work to conserve and improve the values of rural life. Its early activity included a Ruralnet project for capacity-building of rural organisations, funded by the EU. It seeks to improve information services for rural stakeholders, and is actively involved in planning and implementation of rural development measures.

Its member associations work with government agencies, advisory services, municipalities, farmers, entrepreneurs and other rural stakeholders, and have contributed to many of the initiatives described in this chapter. The Network is a member of the Balkan Network for Rural Development and of PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe.

Regional development agencies (RDA) can act as mediators in communication between the central (national) and local levels. They can directly encourage and enhance creation of development mechanisms in rural areas, such as LAOs, associations of agricultural producers, cooperatives, associations of women, youth etc, because they are active in networking within the territories. They cover RDA employees are skilled and trained for project writing and applying to EU funds, and thus can help rural people to absorb pre-acquisition funds for rural development.

Local authorities

The basic units of local government in Serbia are the 24 cities, most of which have populations over 100,000, and 150 municipalities, which vary in population between 2,500 and 64,000. The territory of each city or municipality includes a city or town (from which it gets its name) and surrounding villages. The local authority is headed by the President, who in cities is called the Mayor. Executive power is held by the Municipal Council, and legislative power by the Municipal Assembly, which is elected every 4 years through local elections. The President and the Council are elected by the Assembly. The authorities have their own property (including public service companies) and budget. They can choose to spend money on rural...
development through special programmes which are approved by the Ministry of Agriculture. There is no nation-wide system of local authorities at village or parish level, but the Serbian tradition permits the creation and activity of local councils representing the views of the community.

Traveling workshops

The two traveling workshop groups in Serbia visited the two cities of Užice and Kraljevo, and the four municipalities of Lištica, Arilje, Ivanjica and Nova Varos, all in the southwest of the country. They visited small farms; companies which were processing raspberries, strawberries and other fruit; an association of cattle breeders and cheesemakers; a beekeepers’ association; three women entrepreneurs; enterprises based on crafts, culture and rural tourism; two non-profit initiatives; and one multi-faceted village initiative.

Key themes

The following key themes emerged during the traveling workshops and were elaborated at the national conference:

a. The severe difficulties faced by small farmers
b. The value of cooperatives and associations
c. The role of dynamic entrepreneurs
d. Commercial enterprises led by women

These themes are described below.

The severe difficulties faced by small farmers

The rural regions of Serbia are becoming depleted; they have suffered loss of population over the last 50 years. The rural economy is very narrowly based, and could be destroyed by accession to the European Union unless we first strengthen the economy. We must use precious time to get things going. Aleksandar Bogunovic, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Serbia

The farm households visited by the groups confirmed the sense of vulnerability among small farmers described in the government report on ‘Small rural households’. In livestock regions, a farm of between 2 and 5 hectares can support only a handful of milking cows or beef animals, and the volume of kajmak or hard cheese produced from the milk may not justify expensive equipment or distant marketing. The family may lack the capital to diversify their enterprise. If they act alone, small farmers can be at grave disadvantage in selling their products. Many farmers do not easily cooperate with their fellow farmers. Many farms have three or four generations living at home, so that adult children may be obliged to work for low reward or to seek work nearby in narrowly-based local economies. However, if the younger farmers are well-educated, and allowed by their parents to play an active role, they can begin to transform the business.

Ivan Pavlović runs a 10 ha farm in Obrova village, with 5 milking cows. He draws his living from the sale of milk, kajmak and hard cheese made by his wife, meat and vegetables. He expressed deep frustration because of the small size of his enterprise, the low prices secured by his milk despite its high quality (hygiene rules prevent him selling milk to restaurants), and the high cost of credit needed to improve his facilities. He receives no subsidy and had to spend €10,000 of his own money creating the modest dairy.

Voja Tezovic is a well-educated young farmer working a 5-hectare farm with his parents, wife and children. He has 0.5 ha of greenhouse producing vegetables and seedlings for local sale.

The family also produces fruit and vegetables from the remaining 4.5 ha. They have three cows and gain income in winter through sale of kajmak. Voja would like to expand the greenhouse, but there is little land for sale and he has problems with cash flow and high interest rates on loans. He is working with other farmers on plans for a producer group. His wife is keen to enter further education to gain skills to help with the family business.

We want small farmers to have their ‘own place in the sun’. We will not allow them to die. Dragom Raganovic, Director, Rural Development Network of Serbia

The value of cooperatives and associations

In some parts of the rural economy, small enterprises are gaining the advantage of working together. Cooperatives and associations can offer greater strength in the market than individual producers can have, and are better placed to exercise influence on the policies of municipalities or of the government.

Association Moba brings together over 700 farm households across 17 municipalities in the south of Belgrade. It was set up in 2000 by seven young and educated farmers concerned for their future and that of their fellow producers. Each member pays a subscription of about €3 a year. The Association helps members to complete the annual farm records required by Government, and provides guidance on applications for government grant. Recently, it opened a ‘Welcome Centre’ to offer a point of sale and online database for food, crafts and agri-tourism products offered by members. 100 members use this service.

To formally become a recognised supplier of goods or services in Serbia, a ‘producer’ must formally register as a ‘legal entity’ with at least one employee. This in turn requires a monthly payment of about €200 as the minimum employee tax. There is one exemption for the dairy ‘producers’ which allows the individual to trade to an agreed level before the regular payment regime takes effect. Association Moba is actively lobbying for the same approach to be applied to all products and services.
The role of dynamic entrepreneurs
Serbia offers impressive examples of entrepreneurs who have the courage and ability to launch an enterprise, using the human and natural resources available in the rural areas. Some of them have gained skills, experience and ideas from working abroad, and have returned to Serbia in order to launch their enterprises. They can add significantly to the value of products; strengthen the sense of local identity; create precious jobs in the countryside; bring together groups of small producers and offer them contracts which bring stability within the rural economy.

Fruit processing. The Arilje region is famous for raspberries, and has a well-developed chain of production, processing and marketing, led by dynamic entrepreneurs. For example, Drenovac Fruit Processing Company is a modern company, processing at high technical standards, with annual turnover of €1.5 million and 17 full-time employees. It has ‘sole supply’ contracts with 80 producers, to whom it provides all necessary fertilisers and pesticides plus training in their use to comply with the company’s standards. It started as a ‘cooling facility’, producing Frozen Raspberry for export. Recently the owner, Slabodan Obradovic, built a ‘freeze drying’ facility, the first in Serbia: he wants to invest further, but is impeded by the high cost of borrowing and marketing to the right markets. He would welcome access to government grants.

Jeskanov Puric runs on 85 ha family farm in Nova Varos municipality. This area has a very long tradition of producing buckwheat and spelt barley. With encouragement from the municipality’s farm advisor, Mr Puric decided to move into organic production of buckwheat, with support from State funds. He is the first farmer to achieve Organic Standards in this region of 100 producers. He and the advisor, from whom he gains regular help, believe that the organic production of Buckwheat, which is gluten-free with other positive properties, is the future. The move into organic production cut the volume produced by 30%: moreover, the market for organic products is small in Serbia, so he gets the same price for his organic product as he did before. However he is determined to continue, is strongly committed to the value of organic products, and hopes that in time they will attract premium prices and sustain the viability of his farm. He aims to invest in improved equipment for sowing, harvesting, seed separation, bagging and storage, and will welcome support for this from public funds.

Commercial enterprises led by women
Enterprises created and run by women can bring particular value through employing, or providing a market for the products of, other women.

Vorosanka Ltd is a food-producing company based in Nova Varos municipality and completely owned, managed and operated by women. The owners are sisters, a daughter has joined the management team; and they have 15 employees. The company was set up in 1990 to process and pack wild mushrooms, but was recently forced to diversify because the yield of wild mushrooms was heavily reduced by dry weather following climate change. So, the owners switched to making high-quality, traditional products using vegetables, fruit and nuts from the region or imported. They can produce up to 32,000 jars per month, but are challenged in finding markets. They aim to invest in new jarring machines and to find new points-of-sale.

Zdrava hrana (= Healthy Food) is a company set up in 2009 in the village of Vitkova by Verica Gunjic, a lively woman who was made redundant from her previous job as company accountant. She decided to use the skills learnt in that job and to add value to fruit and other local products in her native area. She could not get public support in starting the enterprise, because “everybody was afraid of the risk”. She now has 2 year-round and 7 seasonal workers to make and package jam and other preserves, and buys the fruit from trusted local pickers.

She had support from the employment agency to take on unemployed people as seasonal workers, and to buy equipment, and from the Aida agency to take the products to fairs in Belgrade and elsewhere. She belongs to the Association of Producers of Food and Vegetables, which took her products to fairs in Frankfurt and Ljubljana. She sells products through Sipska Magoz and recently opened a village shop as an outlet for her produce and as a service to the village.

Mrs Milasiejov decided in 2003 to extend her home in Lapotnica village to create a guesthouse. No advisory service was available, so she sought ideas by visiting guesthouses in Bavaria. She received a small municipal subsidy in 2008, but applied without success to the Ministry for Agriculture for subsidy and loan. She now has 10 guest beds, and achieves over 50 % occupancy during the long summer season. She has her own website for marketing; is a member of the local tourist association; and is helped in marketing with the aim of supporting the development of the region. One direct beneficiary of help from Arilje municipality is Molomir Stojic, a fourth-generation producer of raspberries on a 5 ha farm. He has recently boosted his yield of raspberries to 30,000 kg per hectare by investing in hail protection and irrigation systems, with funding from the Municipality, which grants up to 50% funding for some new varieties of Raspberry, notably ‘Polka’ which is suited to the fresh raspberry market and ripens late in the season.

Zoran Radovancevic is part of the third-generation in a family business, Flavia Ltd, focused on commercial production of berry seeds and plants for sale to growers in Ivancica Municipality, which is an area heavily dependent on agriculture (more than 80% of the workforce), mainly production of soft fruit. He is a Councillor in the Municipality and Head of its Agriculture Development Unit. In that capacity, he has animated local projects, such as development of greenhouses for 20 small local fruit growers, with funding from the Turkish Development Agency. He had to lobby the Mayor for a long time to authorise this project. His ambitions for the area include diversifying the local economy and adding value to local berries in the ‘fresh fruit’ and ‘organic’ markets. The Municipality has initiated a Potential Local Action Group, which has drafted a Local Development Strategy.

The role of cities and municipalities
Cities and municipalities appear to be increasingly willing to take leadership in local – including rural – development. They are in charge of agricultural extension, i.e. advisory services to farmers, which provide a very significant point of contact between government and stakeholders. Many municipalities already have, or are preparing, rural development strategies, which are subject to the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. Stimulus for action by municipalities has come from the commercial entrepreneurs described earlier, some of whom have joined the municipal councils and become mayor or cabinet members responsible for development. In this work, they can apply their commercial skills and their knowledge of the support which enterprises generally need from the public sector, for example investment in infrastructure or credit subsidies.

Milan Stevanovic, Deputy Mayor of Arilje Municipality, is a young man. He studied economics abroad with the support of scholarships; has returned to his home region to help run the family distillery, and has entered politics with the aim of supporting the development of the region. One direct beneficiary of help from Arilje municipality is Milanor Stoja, a fourth-generation producer of raspberries on a 5 ha farm. He has recently boosted his yield of raspberries to 30,000 kg per hectare by investing in hail protection and irrigation systems, with financing from the Municipality, which grants up to 50% funding for some new varieties of ‘Raspberry, notably ‘Polka’ which is suited to the fresh raspberry market and ripens late in the season.

Zoran Radovancevic is part of the third-generation in a family business, Flavia Ltd, focused on commercial production of berry seeds and plants for sale to growers in Ivancica Municipality, which is an area heavily dependent on agriculture (more than 80% of the workforce), mainly production of soft fruit. He is a Councillor in the Municipality and Head of its Agriculture Development Unit. In that capacity, he has animated local projects, such as development of greenhouses for 20 small local fruit growers, with funding from the Turkish Development Agency. He had to lobby the Mayor for a long time to authorise this project. His ambitions for the area include diversifying the local economy and adding value to local berries in the ‘fresh fruit’ and ‘organic’ markets. The Municipality has initiated a Potential Local Action Group, which has drafted a Local Development Strategy.

Dimitrije Pamlonvic was elected in 2012 as Mayor of Novi Varos Municipality. This is a region with more than 28% unemployment, following what the Mayor describes as the ‘diabolical’ sale-off of local small and furniture manufacturing businesses and associated tourism spas to speculators who were interested only in the resale values of the property. With the loss of these industries, the area is now highly dependent on agriculture, mainly livestock production. The Mayor is focused on improving the local economy. The Municipality has taken temporary ownership of one large vacant hotel, in an effort to re-energise tourism. It has taken over the assets of a failed Cooperative, with a view to supporting use of these assets by small businesses. It is putting pressure on speculators to use the industrial land which they purchased or to sell to others who will do so. To drive forward this effort, the Mayor set up a Local Economic Development Unit, led by Milenko Daljovic, a native of the area who left ten years ago to gain a degree in Food Production and commercial experience in a multi-national food company in Belgrade. The Unit is focused on developing local manufacturing business, tourism and artisan food production. In July 2013, it organised a major weekend festival celebrating local food, spa-based tourism, crafts and culture, attracting 50,000 people.

Kraljevo city runs a rural development programme, through which it can help enterprises by giving grants or credit subsidies, to the effects of giving grants, a payment group who bring together experts, local associations and representatives of farmers and manufacturers, there will be general public consultation. It intends to support the development of infrastructure, investment in processing, and development by cooperatives and associations (for example irrigation schemes). It expects that village councils will be involved in the setting of tenders for projects, subject to rules set by the municipality. It gives subsidies to farmers, for example 1500 dinars per in-sown cultivated oat, support for development of orchards, vegetable plots and beekeeping. It subsidises credits for farmers, so that the former only pays 2% interest on a loan. Councillor Gorgovic, head of the Agriculture Department, said that the city is ready to consider supporting the creation of a cooperative of small farmers, with 51% control by the municipality for a transitional period, but that the initiative must come from the farmers themselves and the necessary law on cooperatives is still awaited.
Leadership at village level

The traveling groups did not find much evidence of widespread social initiative at village level, of the kind that is found (for example) in some Baltic countries. However, national law enables the creation by village communities of their own local councils, which can stimulate action at village level. The creation of such local councils appears to depend upon an initiative by social entrepreneurs or other lively people. A striking example of such an initiative is provided by the village of Zlakusa, in Užice city’s rural hinterland.

Zlakusa is an attractive village set in a valley among steep hills. It has three crucial assets. The first is a long-established local tradition of using local clay and ground silica to make earthenware pottery; now pursued by 17 families and providing jobs for about 70 people. The second asset is a unique limestone schoolhouse, a library of local history and other features. Based in the valley of Popovac, already visited by about 6,000 people a year, from which emerges a river which feeds the main asset is Sasa Dragić, a local man who returned to the village after working elsewhere as a professional engineer. His first action after returning was to create an Ethno Park ‘Terzica Avlija’, where another as a professional engineer. His first action after returning was to create an Ethno Park ‘Terzica Avlija’, where returning was to create an Ethno Park ‘Terzica Avlija’, where

The main initiative in the economic side of agricultural development appears now to come from entrepreneurs, small and large, who are making good new things happen with quite limited support from government. The skill and risk-taking initiative of these entrepreneurs is a powerful asset for Serbia, and is having a ripple effect to the benefit of the rural economy and communities. It points to a high potential for a vibrant civil society in Serbia, which would be fully capable of acting as partners of government and which can fairly expect the government to establish a financial, fiscal, regulatory and policy-related climate which is fully geared to the needs of rural communities. There is need for consistent support to help existing initiatives to become stronger and to gain financial stability, and to support the emergence of new enterprises and civic organisations.

Conclusions

Rural development is a process, a life, not simply a bundle of measures. We must support the process over time, otherwise it may fail.

Entrepreneurs. The main initiative in the economic side of rural development appears now to come from entrepreneurs, small and large, who are making good new things happen with quite limited support from government. The skill and risk-taking initiative of these entrepreneurs is a powerful asset for Serbia, and is having a ripple effect to the benefit of the rural economy and communities. It points to a high potential for a vibrant civil society in Serbia, which would be fully capable of acting as partners of government and which can fairly expect the government to establish a financial, fiscal, regulatory and policy-related climate which is fully geared to the needs of rural communities. There is need for consistent support to help existing initiatives to become stronger and to gain financial stability, and to support the emergence of new enterprises and civic organisations.

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

At present, rural stakeholders in the regions that were visited appear to gain little benefit from the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, beyond basic support to farmers and use of extension services. Among processing and manufacturing firms, and village communities, there appear to be no current expectations of help from national rural development programmes or from IPARD. There were complaints about the complexity of government paperwork, lack of sensitivity to the special needs of small farmers and small enterprises, and lack of cooperation between different government departments. The Ministry needs to consider how it can become more visible and more effective.

The traveling workshop was very useful for the future work and programming of IPARD. The conclusions will be presented in the IPARD application as part of communication process, since it gave good insight into the situation in the field and showed possibilities for the rural development programmes. Alexander Baguncic, Serbia Ministry of Agriculture

Municipalities. By contrast, both entrepreneurs and village communities were aware of, and often seeking to use, the support offered by municipalities, some of which may indeed be on behalf of central government. Geographic proximity, and personal contact between enterprises and the municipality, will determine how aware, and use of municipal support. However, municipalities appear to vary in the degree of priority that they give to rural development, and in their sensitivity to the needs of village communities. Some municipalities are so large that some villages or stakeholders cannot readily relate to the centre.

Contact with stakeholders. The connection, and complementarity, between the national rural development programme and the rural development activity of the municipalities is not clear to stakeholders, although it is clearly defined in the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development support measures. Consultation and co-operation with stakeholders in the formulation of strategies and programmes, both at central and municipal level, appears to be essentially limited to organised groups, and to fall far short of giving stakeholders a sense of co-ownership of policy or of partnership with government in the process of development. There is a clear need to involve civil society organisations and businesses more fully in the development of strategies and programmes, including detailed issues, such as defining criteria and principles of support. This involvement will gradually increase trust between public authorities and stakeholders.

I think that we need much stronger Rural Network at national level, which will act as an umbrella for local rural stakeholders and amplify their voices in Belgrade. On the other hand, I think that civil society working in Ministry of Agriculture and in Government should have similar travelling workshop in EU countries and notice how in those countries local people participate in policy making. Aleksandar Damjanovic, Serbia Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, when it peacefully seceded from Yugoslavia. In 2005, the EU recognized it as a Candidate country. Formal negotiations for the country's accession to the Union were recommended by the European Commission every year since 2009, but have been delayed by Greek objections to the country's name and other issues. However, the process of preparing governmental systems to meet the acquis communautaire continues, and the European Commission's progress report for the country records continuing progress with measures related to agriculture, food safety and veterinary standards.

Farming structure
Of the country's population of just over 2 million, more than 50% live in rural areas. The rural economy is dominated by agriculture. Agriculture produces about 10% of the national GDP. Agri-food and fishery products total about €450 million per year, about 15% of the country's exports, the main exported products being tobacco, wine, lamb, and dried or fresh vegetables. Many parts of the country have fertile soils which, coupled with a warm climate, are capable of high value production and a wide variety of products. The country has 510,000 ha of cultivated land. Of the 190,000 farms, about 80% are small family farms with average farm size of 1.7 ha: working on these family farms are about 150,000 seasonal workers, about 440,000 household members and 141,000 seasonal workers. Of the total value of production in the country, 73% is presented by arable crops and horticulture, the other 27% - by livestock production, plus lesser figures for forestry, veterinary action and other issues, including funding for rural development, which stood at €6.8 million in 2009. The government's intention for the future is to focus more on improving the environment, land management and diversifying the rural economy.

IPARD
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one of only three countries which benefited from the use of IPARD 1 (the others being Turkey and Croatia). Its national IPARD 1 Programme for 2007-2013 was approved by the European Commission in 2007, with a total indicative budget of €87.55 million, on the basis of decentralised management by the national government. In 2009, funding was authorised for three measures:

- Investments in agricultural holdings to restructure and to upgrade to Community standards,
- Investments in the processing and marketing of agriculture and fishery products to restructure those activities and to upgrade them to Community standards,
- Diversification and development of rural economic activities.

Since 2009, the government has issued nine public calls for applications to use IPARD funds. The uptake has been slow, with the result that part of the total funds were de-committed and allocated to rural infrastructure projects in a different part of the IPA programme. To date, about 18% of the remaining IPARD 1 budget has been committed to fund about 500 projects. A tenth public call for IPARD funds is now in operation, but at April 2014 a large part of IPARD 1 funds remained to be spent. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management is currently preparing its application for IPARD 2 funds 2014 to 2020, which will have the same scope as IPARD 1, plus forestry and advisory services.
Fragility among rural communities, services and infrastructure

Many rural communities in the country appear to be caught in a vicious cycle, which may be expressed as weak or narrowly based economies, lack of job opportunities, high levels of unemployment, outmigration of young people, falling population, non-viability of rural services, reduced quality of life; further outmigration ...

For example, Krusevo municipality reported 34% unemployment, and the continuing out-migration of young people (including many with high levels of education) because of lack of jobs. In the village of Logovardi (Bitola municipality), the village school now has only five or six new pupils each year, compared with 30 or 40 in the 1990s. Many villages lack essential services: for example, the village of Timjanik (Negotino municipality) has no kindergarten to serve the population of 500 households, which makes it difficult for young mothers to seek work. The infrastructure of roads, water supply, sewerage and electricity is also seriously inadequate in many areas. These weaknesses have a damaging knock-on effect upon farms and rural enterprises.

One exception from this bleak situation is that most rural areas have good broadband services, to a greater extent than is found in many other rural areas in Europe. This is an important asset of rural areas.

Challenges faced by the farming community

The small family farms in the country face the same difficulties that small farms face in many parts of Europe – lack of land, lack of capital, weak bargaining position in the food chain, low incomes. Many of the smallest farms do not have registered status, and are therefore not eligible for some measures of support from national or EU funds. Many middle-sized, and even some larger, farms are constrained by inability to gain further land (partly because of uncertainty with the land registry), lack of capital, the cost of credit, poor infrastructure and other factors. Some are adversely affected by climate change, with increased temperature and reduced rainfall. This poses a challenge for irrigation and development of new cropping strategies. Some farmers are obliged to move away from tobacco monoculture. For these and other reasons, there is a widespread need among farmers to diversify their products, and where possible to add value to them in order to get a fair income and gain competitiveness through cooperation.

Two farms in the village of Reznovice Village, in Kumanovo Municipality illustrate the challenges faced by small or middle-sized farms. The first is an unregistered farm family of 4 ha, part owned and part leased. Most of the land is used to produce feed for 2 cows and pigs, and the milk is used to produce cheese and yogurt, which is the only source of income for the family. They lack machinery, and are unable to secure extra land for leasing and irrigation. They do not cooperate with others, nor belong to associations. They receive limited state subsidies, plus advice from the extension service. They have not sought support from IPARD.

The second farm has 30 ha, of which 20 ha is leased from the state, and grows mainly cereals and forage. It has difficulty in securing prices for crops ahead of production, because market information is hard to get and prices hard to forecast. Transport costs are high, as is investment in machinery. Like the other farm, it receives state subsidies, and advice from the extension service. It has not sought support from IPARD, because of excessive documentation and retrospective payments, which (according to the farmer) “can take 2 years as opposed to the national programme which takes 2 months”.

A large family farm in Stara Nagoricane municipality illustrates the attitude of farmers. It is a dairy farm, with 140 milking cows and 150 ha of land rented from private owners for production of fodder and corn. The farmer has two sons who hope to continue in farming; for this, he needs to double the size of his farm, but no land is currently available. He has no plans for diversification or adding value to his dairy products, but he needs to invest in more modern equipment, including improvement of hygiene standards. His farm’s profitability depends on subsidies, but he expressed lack of trust in the government and has no communication with it apart from the subsidies. He sees no need for cooperation with the other farmers.

The role of entrepreneurs

As in Serbia, there are impressive examples of entrepreneurs who have the courage and ability to launch an enterprise, using the human and natural resources available in the rural areas. By adding value to local products, they create precious jobs in the countryside, offer contracts to local producers and thus act as driving wheels for the local economies.

Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans
The potential for cooperation in farming and in the food chain

There is clearly scope for further enterprises of the kind described above, and for more widespread patterns of cooperation among producers and within food chains. Some of the difficulties experienced by small farmers can be addressed by cooperation between them, and by the creation of effective links within the ‘food chain’ of producers, processors and distributors. The government is exploring the establishment of new forms of cooperation, in those industries which contribute to the country’s exports of food products.

Villa Dihovo Guesthouse, in Dihovo Village (Bitola Municipality) is a successful 6-year-old family business, run by an individualistic entrepreneur (also a teacher) as “a home away from home”. It comprises a 4-room guesthouse and back-packer accommodation, with home-grown, home-cooked, pick-your-own organic food and drink, and outdoor activities in the adjoining national park. Additional accommodation is sourced in the village when needed. The facilities are self-built, rustic and constantly being improved and extended. The owner seeks to “think as the visitor does, welcome everyone with a smile and make things clear, simple and practical”. The system is based on no set prices, rules or regulations. He has not sought public subsidies or grants, and never will do so. He attracts visitors from all over the world. The guesthouse is a member of the Slow Food movement, which supports local producers and organics; and has worked with other guesthouse is a member of the Slow Food movement, which supports local producers and organics; and has worked with other guesthouses in the area to set up a LEADER-type LAG. There is good cooperation between the four municipalities and other stakeholders, and the group is actively supported by the Rural Development Network and the Centre for Development of the South-East Planning Region, which is based in Strumica. The group is in the process of producing a local development strategy. These workshops have so far been held with local stakeholders to discuss the strategic document for setting up the LAG and to raise awareness among a wider group of local actors. A number of local NGOs are involved, for example ECO MORT and Slow Food, which includes women and young people.

This south-eastern region has been losing young people through out-migration. It includes areas of intensive agriculture, but much of the cultivated land is divided into small plots, thus making the farms non-viable. Production has been focused on a limited range of crops, such as peppers, cabbage and tomatoes: these are now at risk because of climate change and loss of traditional markets, so crop diversification is needed. A recent climate change project showed the need for applied research, and for training of farmers in order to diversify crops and keep up with new developments. There is a need also to improve the quality and packaging of products: this might be linked to an application for RDP status. Benefits could come from cooperation between the farmers and with other enterprises in the region, such as food processors and tourism firms. There is a need for investment in infrastructure, such as electricity, water supply and roads.

Funding, and the reaction to IPARD

The active stakeholders who were encountered by the travelling workshop groups included some who had depended wholly on their own resources, but also many who had made use of funding from many different sources. The sources included bank loans, bilateral donors such as USAID and the Swedish International Development Agency, foundations based in Turkey and elsewhere, the municipalities, national rural development funds through the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management and other government sources such as the Ministry of Culture. Cross-border co-operation projects had been used (without EU funding), and were seen as useful in developing approaches, technology and markets.

Looking ahead, stakeholders offered a variety of views about the future financial climate – increased opportunities for export, but also increased competition from abroad, the likely gradual withdrawal of bilateral donors and foundations; the need to reduce the cost of credit, the need for increased government expenditure on infrastructure and rural services, the need for easy access to government support on realistic terms. The last of these points is well illustrated by the comments of stakeholders about IPARD. None of them had used this fund, because they did not consider it to be useful, or because of an unacceptable level of bureaucracy, retrospective payments taking significant time to access, limitations on match-funding, and difficulty in the application process.

Conclusions

Integrated rural development. Described earlier was the
The LEADER measure is part of the national programme for rural development and IPARD funding schemes in the period 2014-2020. There was progress in developing the necessary regulation, but there is a need for a greater pro-activeness by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy in making the LEADER measure operational. As soon as the accreditation and administrative procedures will be fulfilled, the Rural Development Network in cooperation with the Ministry should bring people together to exchange experience and knowledge, inform and promote LEADER approach actions.

Pëtr Gjeorgjewski, Rural Development Network, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Co-operation and networking. The strengthening of rural economies could be much assisted by a greater degree of cooperation and networking between enterprises than now exists. Such cooperation could strengthen the bargaining power of farmers and other enterprises, assist the process of adding value to rural products; provide the resources for effective marketing campaigns; and raise the voice of rural enterprises in dealings with government. Some leading entrepreneurs have well understood these benefits, and are actively promoting cooperation. But among the wider sector of farmers and enterprises there appears to be a strong measure of individualism and distrust of working with others. This has a historical legacy, but also is a barrier to development under a market system. Some projects of co-operation have been provoked by external donors, but failed when their support ended.

A more long-lasting stimulus may be needed in order to address the cultural inhibitions and to gain the benefits of cooperation and networking. The stimulus could be provided by government incentives, such as support for the creation and work of producer groups; by advisory systems; and by publicity and support offered by municipalities and Local Action Groups. In a broader sense, a greater degree of networking is needed between all rural stakeholders in order to gain the benefit of exchange of information and good practice and to empower stakeholders as primary actors in rural development and as partners of government. The Rural Development Network is providing most valuable stimulus to such networking, and deserves the support of all rural stakeholders and of the government.

Capacity building. For reasons which have been described earlier, a high proportion of rural stakeholders in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are already facing, or may in future expect to face, the challenge of change. This challenge may come from climate change, modern technology, hygiene regulations, the search for new markets, the need to diversify crops, the demanding process of preparing and implementing local development strategies, and many other causes. The handling of change often demands courage and new skills. It is clear that there will be widespread need for advisory services, training and other aspects of capacity building. Leadership in this field should come from the government, the Rural Development Network, municipalities and Local Action Groups.
Montenegro became independent in 2006. It applied in 2008 for EU membership, and was granted candidate status in 2010. Negotiations over accession started in June 2012. The process of harmonizing national systems with the EU acquis communautaire is ongoing.

Population and economy

Montenegro is a predominantly rural country, but with a mainly urban population. Of the total population of about 620,000, a quarter live in the capital Podgorica. There are two levels of government - national and municipal. There are 22 municipalities, each centred on a town in the rural regions, varying in population size between 5,000 and 60,000. The national economy is dominated by the service sector, which accounts for 72.4 % of GDP. Industry, which is focused mainly on aluminium and steel production and food processing, accounts for 17.6 %.

Rural reality check in Montenegro

The following are some key points:

The future of agriculture

Looking ahead, the government sees the need for urgent strengthening of the agricultural sector in order to increase its viability and competitiveness and its ability to absorb the opportunities, which EU membership can provide. The aim is to be able to enter the EU without an ‘earthquake’ in the farming sector - the so-called ‘soft landing’. There is a need to build on the strengths in the farming sector, which include available land, competitive prices for some products, good conditions for organic farming, and potential to add value to traditional products; and to exploit opportunities for increased export of wine, fruit, vegetables, lamb meat and other products and for strengthening the links between the farming and food industries and the tourism industry.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Prof. Dr. Petrov Vranković, speaking at the Concluding Conference, saw the need for a change in the mindset of farmers towards agribusiness, to be more responsible for their own prosperity and their contribution to society. “Farmers need to move towards new ideas. The government will offer seminars and roundtables for rural families in the younger generation. Government support will be targeted towards farms which can be competitive. We cannot help everybody. Farmers should work hard and be better organised. They should recognise that ‘we can do it, even if we are very small.’"

National policies

In 2009, the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development was approved, and the government launched the National Programme of Food Production and Rural Development 2009 to 2013. This programme has been focused on sustainable resource management, achieving a stable food supply, providing adequate standard of living for the rural population, and raising the competitiveness of food products. The measures are based on the structure of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, and are being progressively introduced. With help from the World Bank, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development ran the MDA’s programme of support to farms and food enterprises. It has created a Rural Development Department, which will act as the Managing Authority for the Rural Development Policy, and a Paying Agency which should be accredited by the end of 2014. It is recruiting and training further staff to these teams, and is preparing its Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for 2014-20.

IPARD

As a candidate country, Montenegro is eligible for assistance through IPARD. Work on the IPARD programme started in 2010, and a draft programme for IPARD 1 was submitted to the European Commission in 2012. However, the national implementing structures and potential beneficiaries were not then ready to implement IPARD 1. The government is currently preparing its application for IPARD 2, alongside the national Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy. The IPARD Programme is expected to focus on measures related to investments in agricultural holdings; investments in processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products; and diversification and development of the rural economy.

Government’s contact with stakeholders

Speaking at the Concluding Conference, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development expressed support for the bottom-up principle. He said that 1600 agricultural producers had taken part in the consultation on the new budget for agricultural support. The government is keen to work with associations: it uses money from gaming taxes to support the establishment of NGOs, including associations of producers. The government expects that local NGOs should be funded partly from their members’ fees and partly by support from municipalities. It is not clear whether municipalities take the same view.

Rural Development Network

The Rural Development Network of Montenegro plays an important role in mobilising rural civil society and promoting the concept of rural development. It was set up in 2012, with the aim to promote rural development through exchange of information, ideas, and best practice; and to promote partnership between, and strengthen the capacity of, all its members. Its vision is that rural people will actively participate in the social, economic and cultural development, and in the preservation and protection of heritage, of the areas in which they live. At present, the Network has 18 NGOs in formal membership, each based in an individual town, plus a number of expert advisers who provide contact with several further towns. Most of the member NGOs are interested mainly in environmental protection, promotion of the cultural and historical heritage, education and social issues. The Network is seeking to expand its NGO membership step by step, with a view to aiming at full geographic coverage of rural areas in the country and being able in due course to claim that it can speak for a large part of the rural population. It is planning a workshop on transfer of knowledge on rural development techniques gained by Local Action Groups; and a conference on family farms.

The Network co-organised in 2012 the first international conference on ‘The role of civil society and rural development in the Western Balkans’, attended by 40 people from six countries in the region. In 2013, the Network secured two significant agreements which strengthen its hand. First, it agreed with the Rural Development Networks in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to form the Balkan Rural Development Network, which is supported by the Standing Working Group. Second, it signed a protocol of cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development: this provides for mutual support and cooperation, while respecting the autonomy of the Network. In addition, many of the member NGOs of the network have good links with municipalities, key members of some of the NGOs work as staff or consultants to the municipalities. The Network has launched the first comprehensive Web portal in the field of agriculture and rural development – www.ruralportal.me.

Traveling workshops

The two traveling workshop groups both visited Podgorica and then each went to a further three municipalities - Danilovgrad, Nikšić and Virpazar (Municipality of Bar), which are relatively
near the capital, and Cetinje, Kolašin and Tomaševace (municipality of Bijelo Polje), more distant from Podgorica. This difference appears to be significant in terms of the ease or difficulty of selling farm products to the urban population. In total, the groups met 14 enterprises, all connected with production of different types of food, including beef, milk, cheese, apples, cornel-berries, mushrooms, herbs, wine, vegetables and honey.

Key themes
The following key themes emerged during the traveling workshops and were elaborated at the national conference:

a. The role of dynamic entrepreneurs
b. The value of cooperatives and associations
c. The value of support from government
d. The potential offered by tourism
e. The wider scope of rural development
f. The role of municipalities
g. The need to strengthen institutional capacities.

These themes are described below.

The role of dynamic entrepreneurs
The traveling groups were impressed by many of the entrepreneurs whom they met, most of them running family-based enterprises with a strong “we can do it” spirit, using the human and natural resources available in the rural areas. Some of them focused on traditional products, some on innovation, but all in different ways were building viable enterprises, finding markets, creating rural jobs, and in some cases bringing together groups of small producers and offering them contracts which bring stability within the rural economy.

Dragica Mirjačič runs a small innovative enterprise, based in the village of Bršno near Nikšić. She and her husband have an orchard of plum, apple and pear trees, from the fruit of which he makes a variety of spirits (slivović), mainly for personal use. She has set up a lively business making juice, liquor and jam from the berries of the cornel tree (drenjina; Latin name, cornus mas). She is marketing this successfully in and beyond Montenegro.

JSC Plantaze. On a very different scale is the wine company ‘JSC Plantaze’ in Danilovgrad municipality. This is a family company, with seven full-time employees, using milk supplied on contract by 40 local producers. The company belongs to a cluster of cheese producers in South Montenegro who have formed a cooperative marketing group. Mr. Vukotić has benefited from attendance at seminars and information meetings organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, and is kept well informed by the Ministry and the Chamber of Trade. He would like to be able to draw on a wider supply of good-quality milk, and to see the dairy farmers organised into a cooperative.

Vlado Vukotić runs a cheese factory ‘Cevo Katunjanka’ in Danilovgrad municipality. This is a family company, with seven full-time employees, using milk supplied on contract by 40 local producers. The company belongs to a cluster of cheese producers in South Montenegro who have formed a cooperative marketing group. Mr. Vukotić has benefited from attendance at seminars and information meetings organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, and is kept well informed by the Ministry and the Chamber of Trade. He would like to be able to draw on a wider supply of good-quality milk, and to see the dairy farmers organised into an association.

Marjan Plantak, pioneer in organic honey production

The value of cooperatives and associations
In some parts of the rural economy, small enterprises are gaining the advantage of working together. Cooperatives and associations can offer greater strength in the market than individual producers can have, and are better placed to exercise influence on the policies of municipalities or of the government. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development said that he is bringing forward the new law on cooperatives. He stressed the role of associations in helping their members to understand how the market works: the government would support associations in doing this.

The value of support from the government
Many of the entrepreneurs expressed appreciation of the information, advice and financial support provided by the Ministry and the extension services. The government has supported the creation of associations, such as ‘Organic Montenegro’, which is a national association of the organic producers and now has 30 members.

The Pantović family, led by a young farmer who originated from Canada, is producing milk and meat. They have benefited from taking part in information meetings run by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. They received a grant through the national MIDAS programme towards construction of a new stable. They are members of the beef producers’ association.

The Bogdanović family near Podgorica gained support from the MIDAS programme for expansion of their mushroom producing business. This supports five-year round and two seasonal workers. Mushrooms are sold at the market and to shops and restaurants. The family sees the need for investment in better equipment in order to cope with increasing demand.

Veselin Jovović runs a family farm, with 15 ha of open field production and 11,000 square metres of greenhouses, producing vegetables and herbs. He has 10 to 15 full-time employees, depending on the season, and is a national player on the direct-sales market. He gained much of his technical expertise through attendance at seminars organised by the government, and has been helped also by the University. He used a loan through a national programme to build the heating system in his greenhouse.
The Rajković brothers on their small vineyard at Kući

The wider scope of rural development
In recent years, the government has devoted most of its effort and funds in the field of agriculture and rural development to boosting the competitiveness of the larger or more enterprise farms and food-processing companies. This is wholly understandable, in view of the need to expand the national economy, the contribution which farming and food industries make to the national GDP, and the need to prepare these industries for the competition which will affect them when Montenegro accedes to the EU. But these priorities bring little benefit to the very small family farms in the hilly and mountainous parts of the country, where the average farm size is less than 2 ha, and only 30% of the farmers are older than 55 years. The government appears to be content that many of these farm units should gradually wither or be amalgamated, causing a loss of total employment on the land and placing further pressure on the viability of communities in these areas. It has also yet focused attention on the potential for added value to timber and other products from the very large areas of state or private forestry – mainly beech and pine – in the mountains. There is need, particularly, but not only in these upland areas, to focus more widely on the strengthening of rural economies, and on sustaining the services and infrastructure which are needed by rural communities.

The role of municipalities
Municipalities have the ability to raise local taxes and to put money into local development. The Ministry of Agriculture is encouraging municipalities to prepare their own local development strategies. Among municipalities, only Pjevlja has yet completed such a strategy. Other municipalities, such as Budva, Nikšić and Žabljak, are in process of doing so, including public consultation. However, it is not yet clear to stakeholders how the municipal strategies will relate to the government’s action in this field. Officers in the two large municipalities of Nikšić and Pjevlja, which together cover 60% of the country and are mainly mountainous, are extremely concerned about the prospects for the rural areas in their municipalities. They see the rural population, and the farming economy, shrinking. They are trying to help the farming community to diversify and modernise, and to focus more widely on the strengthening of rural economies, and on sustaining the services and infrastructure which are needed by rural communities.

The need to strengthen institutional capacities
The government’s recognition of the need to strengthen its own capabilities in the management of rural development programmes is reflected to a significant degree in other sectors of national life. There is no current mechanism for coordinating the activities of different ministries and government agencies related to actions in rural areas. Education systems offer no curricula related to local development, and there is a severe lack of trained personnel at all levels and also a shortage of systematic information in this field. No serious progress has yet been made towards the adoption of the LEADER approach, apart from the formation of the Regional Development Agency for Komovi and Pjevlja, and the Foundation for Development of the North focused on the municipalities of Nikšić and Pjevlja. For all these reasons, there is an urgent need for strengthening the institutional framework and for capacity-building and training.

Conclusions
Montenegro’s achievements are already significant in the field of rural development, with a major focus on promoting competitiveness in agriculture and the food industry. The government realizes that it must continue urgently the process of developing the full institutional basis that is needed in order to pursue a comprehensive approach to rural development, including the building of a closer and fuller partnership between government and rural stakeholders. Major elements in the institutional framework must clearly include:

- An updated National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, supported by an IPARD 2 programme agreed with the European Commission and run on the basis of decentralised management.
- A phased programme for the introduction of the LEADER approach, building upon the initiatives already taken by the National Rural Development Network and upon the interest of municipalities, trade associations and NGOs in rural development.

We must develop our human capital. We should encourage people in our diaspora to come back to Montenegro. We should involve women and children in the contracts which are signed between government and farmers. We should have scholarships for young rural people, and persuade them to come back to their home areas when they finish their studies. We should create a film to display successful entrepreneurs, to share the pride of farmers in being rich.

Conclusions
Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans
The group enjoys a wealth of local products

The potential offered by tourism
At present, tourism in Montenegro is focused along its Mediter-
nanean coast, including the mass tourism centres of Herceg-Novi, Bar and Budva, and upon historic towns, notably the World Heritage city of Kotor, which are also in the coastal region. The coastal tourism offers potentially a huge market for food, crafts, building materials and other products from the rest of Montenegro. However, poor road systems and relatively undeveloped food chains have brought little benefit from this market to the hilly and mountainous areas of northern Montenegro. There is clearly a potential for greater trade within the country in this respect. In addition, the Ministry of Agri-
culture and Rural Development sees the potential for development of rural tourism in the northern regions, as a means of diversifying the rural economy and increasing the market for direct sales of the region’s food and other products.

This idea is already in the mind of some entrepreneurs.

The two Rajković brothers combine wine production with tourism on their small farm at Kući. They cultivate only 1 ha at present, and hope to expand this to 3 ha. They received a grant for their investment through the MIDAS programme. They are active in the national vine-growers association, exhibit their wine at fairs, and are able to benefit from strong branding and direct sales.

Lidija Martinović is the third generation of farmers and honey producers in Cetinje municipality. She has already diversified her products related to food, therapy and cosmetics. She uses only direct sale, in cooperation with tourist agencies and with six other honey producers in a small beekeepers’ associations. She hopes to expand her business and to invest in tourist facilities in order to sell products to visitors to her farm.

“Food, therapy and cosmetic products made by Lidija Martinović.”

The Rajković brothers offer products to visitors to her farm.

The need to strengthen institutional capacities
The government’s recognition of the need to strengthen its own capabilities in the management of rural development programmes is reflected to a significant degree in other sectors of national life. There is no current mechanism for coordinating the activities of different ministries and government agencies related to actions in rural areas. Education systems offer no curricula related to local development, and there is a severe lack of trained personnel at all levels and also a shortage of systematic information in this field. No serious progress has yet been made towards the adoption of the LEADER approach, apart from the formation of the Regional Development Agency for Komovi and Pjevlja, and the Foundation for Development of the North focused on the municipalities of Nikšić and Pjevlja. For all these reasons, there is an urgent need for strengthening the institutional framework and for capacity-building and training.

Conclusions
Montenegro’s achievements are already significant in the field of rural development, with a major focus on promoting competitiveness in agriculture and the food industry. The government realizes that it must continue urgently the process of developing the full institutional basis that is needed in order to pursue a comprehensive approach to rural development, including the building of a closer and fuller partnership between government and rural stakeholders. Major elements in the institutional framework must clearly include:

- An updated National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, supported by an IPARD 2 programme agreed with the European Commission and run on the basis of decentralised management.
- A phased programme for the introduction of the LEADER approach, building upon the initiatives already taken by the National Rural Development Network and upon the interest of municipalities, trade associations and NGOs in rural development.

We must develop our human capital. We should encourage people in our diaspora to come back to Montenegro. We should involve women and children in the contracts which are signed between government and farmers. We should have scholarships for young rural people, and persuade them to come back to their home areas when they finish their studies. We should create a film to display successful entrepreneurs, to share the pride of farmers in being rich.

Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans

We must develop our human capital. We should encourage people in our diaspora to come back to Montenegro. We should involve women and children in the contracts which are signed between government and farmers. We should have scholarships for young rural people, and persuade them to come back to their home areas when they finish their studies. We should create a film to display successful entrepreneurs, to share the pride of farmers in being rich.

“People must be willing, and enabled, to work together.” Prof. Dr. Petar Ivanović, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.
Taking part in the traveling workshops in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro were a number of officials and NGO representatives from four other countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey - Ministers or their representatives from these countries attended the Concluding Conference in Brussels on 8 April 2014.

This chapter draws on the reaction of those participants, and the statements of Ministers, in order to summarise for each country the challenge of rural development, the processes being pursued by government, the rural stakeholders; the means by which rural stakeholders can take part in shaping and implementing rural development programmes, and prospects for the future relationship between rural stakeholders and administrations.

Albania

Albania voted for its first democratically elected government in April 1992. Along with other Western Balkans countries, it was identified as a potential candidate for EU membership during the Thessaloniki European Council summit in June 2003. Based on a recommendation by the European Commission, the European Council granted EU candidate status to Albania in June 2004.

Agriculture

Despite this shift, agriculture remains one of the largest and most important sectors in Albania. It provides about half of total employment, and about 20% of national GDP. The main farm products are wheat, maize, potatoes, vegetables, fruit, sugar beets, grapes, meat and dairy products. The agricultural sector continues to face a number of challenges, including small farm size and land fragmentation, poor infrastructure, market limitations, limited access to credit and grants, inadequate rural institutions, vulnerability to climate change and the need for improved management of water resources.

Support from the European Union

Albania has benefited from three successive phases of pre-accession assistance from the European Union – PHARE, CARDs and now IPA. It has made substantial progress in preparing for the decentralised management of IPA funds. The Commission expects an application for an IPARD 2 programme, with funding to start not before 2015. The ‘Albania Progress Report’, issued by the European Commission in October 2013, notes that Albania is making continued progress in the movement towards conformity with the EU’s acquis communautaire:

- Relevant to the present article, it states that:
  “Albania made some further progress towards becoming a functional market economy, and should be able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the medium term, provided that it accelerates structural reforms…”

- “The adoption of the 2014-20 strategy for agriculture and rural development is pending. Preparations to manage and control rural development funds under IPARD have continued. The first call for proposals under an IPARD-like scheme took place from December 2012, followed by a second call in April 2013.”

- “There has been limited progress in the area of agriculture and rural development. The agricultural statistics have been improved. While the administrative structure to implement the IPARD scheme has been established, all involved elements of the management and control system need to be substantially strengthened in order to carry out their respective functions. Overall, preparations in this area are not yet very advanced.”

- “In the area of placing on the market of food, feed and animal by-products, the pace of progress is slow, with the exception of the updating and validation of the food establishments database… which now records 17,800 units.”

The Government’s view.

Edmond Pananti, Albanian Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, speaking at the Concluding Conference in Brussels, expressed a strong support for the bottom-up approach to rural development and the achievement of increased productivity. He said that the change in his country from centralised government to democracy had forced farmers into a change of mentality. Government support to them was no longer an issue of social welfare, but was focused on stimulating them to create effective businesses and contribute to the growth of the economy. Before he established his current policies, he consulted producer groups and other stakeholders, and was surprised by the positive feedback. The producer groups asked for support towards their collective activity, for example in building facilities for storage and refrigeration. They wanted new technology, focused on improved production. This response was found even among mountain farmers, who would clearly benefit from more generalised individual support. His policies include subsidy to registered farmers, and the use of fiscal measures. To throw light on policy issues, the Minister uses ad hoc committees, with stakeholders involved: he sees these as rather like ‘black belt judo teams’, able to tackle issues effectively. “If you only work top down, you can miss tricks”.

Advocacy for LEADER

The Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), based in Tirana, is actively involved rural issues in Albania. In October 2013, PREPARE and IDM co-organised a Conference under the title ‘Community Led Local Development in Albania’. More than 100 participants from all parts of Albania were present, mainly from the civil sector and local government, but also including the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration. The mass media were well represented, and the event attracted much press coverage.

The conference focused upon the challenges facing civil society with regard to local development in Albania. It was agreed that the creation and activity of Local Action Groups, i.e. sub-regional partnerships with full participation of civil society, will have a vital role in facing these challenges and in achieving social equality, sustainable economic development, and the growth of social capital. In February 2014, at a roundtable held in Tirana on the initiative of the NGO Quodve, it was agreed to establish a network of Local Action Groups.

Speaking at the Western Balkan Concluding Conference in Brussels, Ms. Anila Vendredda, Executive Director of the NGO Quodve, argued strongly for the creation and support of LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. She said, the appetite of rural stakeholders for participation is quite good, and LEADER could stimulate that participation. LAGs can bring together people from different angles, and help to create a culture of consensus about priorities for rural development. They can encourage innovation, risk-taking and investment, which are much needed in Albania: people can be frightened to take risks, and LAGs can provide some measure of safety net. Local authorities in Albania are not yet experienced in local development, and the LAGs can press the local authorities to be responsive and participative. More finance is needed to help the emerging LAGs to widen their scope and to build their legitimacy. She would welcome support from PREPARE and ELARD for building capacities in Albania.

Quodve was set up by Oxfam UK in 2013, to continue its work in Albania, which started in 1993 in some of the most remote mountainous and marginalised rural areas. Initially Oxfam repaired irrigation channels, drinking water supplies, mills, and bridges, and helped small farmers with new farming techniques. More recently, it focused on creating sustainable livelihoods by working with small producers throughout the supply chain from form to market. It has supported farming associations and cooperatives to produce a range of marketable local products.
Quo vadis’ aims to build capacities, resources and partnership to foster sustainable local development; to implement rural development projects; and to pursue research and advocacy on sustainable rural development. It seeks to create civil-society-led and community-driven linkages between the EU model, with an emphasis on the role of women. It has taken the lead in networking between LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. In February 2014, as a follow up to the travel workshop held in Razem, it hosted in Tirana a roundtable with partners and LAG members. The participants agreed on a programme for enhancing capacities and exchanging information. LAG members will meet twice a year Quo vadis will coordinate the network and ensure that the LAGs become known and active among governmental agencies and civil society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member Presidency composed of a member of each major ethnic group. However, the central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralised and comprises two autonomous entities — the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska, a third region, the Brčko District, is governed under local government. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself complex and consists of 10 federal cantons. A final level of governance is represented by municipalities, of which there are 78 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

Population and economy The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused large migration within, and out of, the country. The 2013 census found a total population of 3.8 million, as compared with 4.4 million in 1991. About 60% of the current population lives in rural areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced the dual problem of rebuilding a war- torn country and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

QoM’s aims are to build capacities, resources and partnership to foster sustainable local development; to implement rural development projects; and to pursue research and advocacy on sustainable rural development. It seeks to create civil-society-led and community-driven linkages between the EU model, with an emphasis on the role of women. It has taken the lead in networking between LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. In February 2014, as a follow up to the travel workshop held in Razem, it hosted in Tirana a roundtable with partners and LAG members. The participants agreed on a programme for enhancing capacities and exchanging information. LAG members will meet twice a year Quo vadis will coordinate the network and ensure that the LAGs become known and active among governmental agencies and civil society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member Presidency composed of a member of each major ethnic group. However, the central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralised and comprises two autonomous entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska, a third region, the Brčko District, is governed under local government. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself complex and consists of 10 federal cantons. A final level of governance is represented by municipalities, of which there are 78 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

Population and economy The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused large migration within, and out of, the country. The 2013 census found a total population of 3.8 million, as compared with 4.4 million in 1991. About 60% of the current population lives in rural areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced the dual problem of rebuilding a war- torn country and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

QoM’s aims are to build capacities, resources and partnership to foster sustainable local development; to implement rural development projects; and to pursue research and advocacy on sustainable rural development. It seeks to create civil-society-led and community-driven linkages between the EU model, with an emphasis on the role of women. It has taken the lead in networking between LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. In February 2014, as a follow up to the travel workshop held in Razem, it hosted in Tirana a roundtable with partners and LAG members. The participants agreed on a programme for enhancing capacities and exchanging information. LAG members will meet twice a year Quo vadis will coordinate the network and ensure that the LAGs become known and active among governmental agencies and civil society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member Presidency composed of a member of each major ethnic group. However, the central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralised and comprises two autonomous entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska, a third region, the Brčko District, is governed under local government. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself complex and consists of 10 federal cantons. A final level of governance is represented by municipalities, of which there are 78 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

Population and economy The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused large migration within, and out of, the country. The 2013 census found a total population of 3.8 million, as compared with 4.4 million in 1991. About 60% of the current population lives in rural areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced the dual problem of rebuilding a war- torn country and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

QoM’s aims are to build capacities, resources and partnership to foster sustainable local development; to implement rural development projects; and to pursue research and advocacy on sustainable rural development. It seeks to create civil-society-led and community-driven linkages between the EU model, with an emphasis on the role of women. It has taken the lead in networking between LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. In February 2014, as a follow up to the travel workshop held in Razem, it hosted in Tirana a roundtable with partners and LAG members. The participants agreed on a programme for enhancing capacities and exchanging information. LAG members will meet twice a year Quo vadis will coordinate the network and ensure that the LAGs become known and active among governmental agencies and civil society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member Presidency composed of a member of each major ethnic group. However, the central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralised and comprises two autonomous entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska, a third region, the Brčko District, is governed under local government. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself complex and consists of 10 federal cantons. A final level of governance is represented by municipalities, of which there are 78 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

Population and economy The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused large migration within, and out of, the country. The 2013 census found a total population of 3.8 million, as compared with 4.4 million in 1991. About 60% of the current population lives in rural areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced the dual problem of rebuilding a war- torn country and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

QoM’s aims are to build capacities, resources and partnership to foster sustainable local development; to implement rural development projects; and to pursue research and advocacy on sustainable rural development. It seeks to create civil-society-led and community-driven linkages between the EU model, with an emphasis on the role of women. It has taken the lead in networking between LEADER-type Local Action Groups in Albania. In February 2014, as a follow up to the travel workshop held in Razem, it hosted in Tirana a roundtable with partners and LAG members. The participants agreed on a programme for enhancing capacities and exchanging information. LAG members will meet twice a year Quo vadis will coordinate the network and ensure that the LAGs become known and active among governmental agencies and civil society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member Presidency composed of a member of each major ethnic group. However, the central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralised and comprises two autonomous entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska, a third region, the Brčko District, is governed under local government. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself complex and consists of 10 federal cantons. A final level of governance is represented by municipalities, of which there are 78 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 63 in Republic of Srpska.

Population and economy The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused large migration within, and out of, the country. The 2013 census found a total population of 3.8 million, as compared with 4.4 million in 1991. About 60% of the current population lives in rural areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced the dual problem of rebuilding a war- torn country and 63 in Republic of Srpska.
The Local Action Groups, there is a need for further effort to involve them. There is a con-
migration, have not yet been involved in stakeholder groups, and
bers. Some parts of the rural population, for example those who
through involvement in the working groups and the information
nomic development of the wider region.

The Minister believes that this sequence of intensive discussions
ed to a second national conference in June 2013, which dis-
atives in order to benefit from their experiences: if necessary, the
ish authorities to reflect on targeting the funding on certain groups

IPARD. Turkey is one of only three countries which benefited from the
use of IPARD 1 (the others being the former Yugoslav Republic of
was approved by the European Commission in 2008, with a total in-
dicative budget of €865.1 million. The process of introducing the pro-
gramme, on the basis of decentralised management by the national
government, has proved to be complex and demanding. So it has
become operative by stages, with the first calls for proposals issued in 2011 and
the full process in place only in July 2013. The programme is now being
implemented in 42 of the 81 provinces of Turkey. The government’s
IPARD agency has regional offices in these provinces and currently
employs about 2,000 staff.

The number of projects submitted for IPARD support has been grow-
ing at a rapid rate, from 1,100 projects in response to the first eight
calls for proposals in 2011 to more than 5,800 in response to a single call in November
2013. The range of types of projects supported by the programme has
gradually increased, and in 2013 the Commission invited Turk-
ish authorities to focus on targeting the funding on certain groups
of stakeholders, including smaller farms and SMEs involved in pro-
cessing and marketing. The government has carried out consultations
with people in different sectors, and officers visit IPARD benefi-
ciaries in order to benefit from their experiences: if necessary, the
IPARD measures are then modified in the light of these experiences.
By the end of the programme period, it is expected that at least
€300 million will have been spent. The Ministry of Agriculture is
currently preparing its application for IPARD 2 funds 2014 to 2020, which will have
a scope similar to IPARD 1.

Regional development projects. The government has pursued
a variety of regional development projects, using national and
external finance, in order to improve the economic and social sta-
tus of people living in rural areas. Examples include the Çoruh
River Basin Rehabilitation Project, the Project for Improvement of
Livestock for Small-scale Farmers in Eastern Turkey, and
the Southeast Anatolia Project, which is implemented in 9
provinces, and the Ministry of Development’s social support pro-
grammes entitled SODERs. These projects include: involvement of
rural groups and training for local people jointly organised by
the government and NGOs.

LEADER. The Ministry of Agriculture is promoting the LEADER
approach in Turkey. Capacity building for this purpose has recently
started, and two pilot areas have been chosen in different
parts of the country. The Ministry has engaged experts who are
familiar with LEADER and who will help with the training of anima-
s; some strong NGOs are being involved, and the aim is to
consult all stakeholders in the area. The proposed Local Action
Groups, which are described in Kastoria, will be established under the
Leadership of Civil Associations, in consultation with the Ministry of Interior.
NGOs and Foundations. Turkey has a significant number of NGOs
and foundations which are active in different fields directly or
exactly related to rural development. A significant example is
the Turkish Council on Sustainable Development which
organises many training programmes and workshops and has
veloped a number of projects which have been successful in
raising awareness and promoting sustainable development in
Turkish society. The Council’s main objectives are to promote
sustainable development through education and awareness-raising
among all segments of Turkish society, including NGOs, private
sector organisations, and the general public.

Ibrahim Tuğrul, Development
Foundation of Turkey, reflecting on the traveling workshop in Serbia
The most salient conclusions seem to be the following:

What have we learnt about the present state of relations between stakeholders and governments from the traveling workshops in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro provided a rich set of impressions and ideas. The candid responses of local people, enterprises and authorities provided a true ‘reality check’. The presence on the traveling workshops of both government officials and stakeholders from the host countries, and outsiders from other Western Balkan countries and Turkey and from the European Union, enriched the insights that were gained. Those insights were then subjected to further discussion at the three national conferences and at the concluding conference in Brussels.

The traveling workshop was very useful for the future work and programming of IPARD. The conclusions will be presented in the IPARD Programme as part of communication process, since it gave good insight into the situation in the field and showed possibilities for the rural development programmes. For me, it was the first visit to that area and, considering the difference between regions, it was very informative. We understood the expectations of beneficiaries and their possibilities, and got good ideas about information gathering and the work of extension services. Also, it was good to hear the opinion and actions of the municipalities. Some stakeholders demonstrated good knowledge in rural development policy and have valuable information about policy design. So, we already arranged for their inclusion in communication process of future measures. Aleksandar Bogunović, Serbian Ministry of Agriculture.

These key points are described below.

Rural development is both top-down and bottom-up

From a bottom-up perspective, the field visits in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro showed that rural entrepreneurs, and some rural communities, can make good things happen, and that in some cases they do so without much help from government. However, it was also clear that farmers generally depend upon financial support from government and advisory services; that many enterprises would like help from government, and that rural communities depend upon infrastructure and services provided by public authorities. Far-sighted stakeholders, looking ahead to the hoped-for accession to the European Union, realise that national systems must be reformed in order to create a workable climate for the long-term social and economic viability of their country.

From a top-down perspective, the field trips showed that government action is essential in order to provide infrastructure and services, to ensure fair play and cohesion and to create and pursue strategies for development. However, it was also clear that governments realise that much of the action lies with farmers, entrepreneurs, village communities and non-government organisations. So, bottom-up and top-down are both essential.

Connecting stakeholders and government

There was general acceptance, among participants in the traveling workshops and conferences, that the two sides - government and stakeholders - must connect if effective development is to be achieved. Government policies must reflect the true realities of rural resources and needs. Rural actors must understand the help they can gain from government and be enabled to seek that help in workable ways.

This is not an issue simply of connecting governments and people, or ensuring the take-up of grant programmes. It is an issue of democracy, of what President Lincoln in his Gettysburg address called ‘government of the people by the people for the people’. The democratic challenge is to move beyond information and consultation into the field of participation of stakeholders in the shaping and implementing of policies - and beyond that into partnership between government and stakeholders.

We need new methods, new ideas, new tools to empower citizens, to create solid trust between stakeholders and governments. Farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, village communities need to participate, allowing decision makers to have a clear view of realities and needs on the ground. Sustainable development can be achieved only if everyone is on board. Dacian Ciolos, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Partnership is not an easy concept, because of the imbalance of power between people and governments and that is why this event focuses on empowering rural stakeholders. What do we mean by stakeholders? We mean all the people, enterprises and organisations who can contribute to, or are affected by, rural development. Truly, this involves everybody in rural areas, because the quality of their lives is at stake.

Bottom-up growth points

In all three countries, we had the privilege to meet lively initiatives, active and successful leaders, both men and women, often people who had gained experience abroad and then returned. These people show the native entrepreneurial flair of the Western Balkans. They use, or choose not to use, help from bilateral, multilateral, charitable and government sources. They use local physical resources, such as milk, fruit and clay. They provide employment, and bring money into the local economy, providing dependable income to local suppliers. They find ways to strengthen local communities. Some of them have been elected to municipalities, and act as managers of municipal development programmes, thus forming a personal connection between top-down and bottom-up.

I can see a lot of similarities between the situation of Western Balkans (or at least Serbia) today and that of Poland in the early 1990s, at the start of the transition. The civil society is perhaps not very well organised, but it is learning very quickly and has a number of potential leaders, committed, open-minded and with a strong public spirit. In this sense it is possibly more ready for accession (or at least for operating in a context similar to the EU) than the public authorities, who are overly concerned with the perspective of EU funding and struggling with the administrative processes related to the management and control of this funding. Urszula Budzich-Tabor, Polish Rural Development.

These are crucial growth points in the emerging rural development campaign. These individuals may have key roles in future partnerships, associations or LEADER groups. That raises the key issue of replicability - how do we find and encourage more such lively people? What climates of policy, funding, regulation, credit etc. are needed in order to stimulate initiative?

The broader mass of rural people

Many rural regions in the seven countries have narrowly-based rural economies, typically containing farming, forestry, mining, limited industry, some tourism. They have low average incomes, unemployment, under-employment, seasonal labour, out-migration of young people, high average age among those who remain. They suffer from poverty, and often from some social exclusion, particularly among minorities; they may have weak infrastructure, and gaps in social services.
Crucially, in both the Western Balkans and Turkey, there are hundreds of thousands of small farms, disadvantaged by limited size, lack of capital, weak bargaining power, limited markets. They can feel powerless. It is perhaps inevitable that the number of such farms will fall drastically, in order that the remaining ones can increase in size. This will cause grave weakening of rural economies and communities, unless we find ways to enable those economies to grow and to diversify. We should strive to achieve this before it is too late.

Levels of governance

In the Western Balkan countries – each with a population of a few million people – government is effectively at two levels, national and municipal. Each of these two levels can act in the fields of rural development, thereby complementing each other. However, in some cases the potential value in that relevant aspects of public action and funding (including some, such as transport or education, which fall within ‘broad’ rural development) can be flexed by municipalities up to the specific needs of their populations; and also that municipalities are closer to the people, and thus more accessible to rural stakeholders, than central government.

The role of municipalities

However, participants in the traveling workshop were unable to gain a clear impression of the complementarity between the central government and the municipalities in the rural development work. A presentation about rural development policy by the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection contained no mention of the role of municipalities. Later, we were told that local development strategies prepared by the municipalities are subject to approval by central government, and that some nationally-funded services, such as the extension services, are delivered by municipalities. But stakeholders cannot readily understand the structure.

Involvement of stakeholders

I am optimistic about the future, and wish to build a stronger relationship with stakeholders both within the territory and across borders. Bernard Stavileci, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Kosovo.

The governments in the seven countries have all, to varying degrees, sought to involve stakeholders in the process of preparing strategies and programmes for agriculture and rural development. The main focus has been upon information and consultation (which are the classic first steps in a government’s engagement with their constituencies) by means of conferences, seminars and invitations to the general public to comment. Some groundwork has been laid for the movement onwards into participation, for example the activity of working groups, and other stakeholder representatives, and even partnership, for example the invitation by the Ministry of Agriculture in Montenegro to the national Beekeepers’ Association to deliver and monitor government support to beekeepers.

These are significant first steps in the process of building cooperation and trust between government and stakeholders, which will take time and will be crucial for the success of development processes. At present, the opportunity to be involved is taken up by those stakeholders who are organised into groups, associations, chambers or other structures. This is perhaps inevitable, because the government cannot invite 50,000 farmers to a conference. But it means that large numbers of stakeholders do not now have means of connecting to policy-making processes. If we are truly to empower rural stakeholders, and to build genuine partnerships between government and people in the processes of rural development, we need to develop tools which enable government to stretch outwards and downward among the stakeholders, and the stakeholders to stretch outwards and upward towards government.

The fact is that so far public administration in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have developed support closer to the rural civil society organisations and citizens of Serbia. One reason for this is the weak support of civil sector and experts, and the low level of cooperation and involvement of citizens as a whole. Even though the national administration has given leadership, villages can themselves take communal action to sustain or create services or can press higher authorities to do so. In Turkey, such leadership can come from the village mullah, the equivalent of the mayor in a typical French village: representative, representative, representative, representative, representative.

The European Union has no direct presence in each of the seven countries, but through the Interreg and the IPARD initiatives, the European Commission and other agencies have set up working groups to discuss rural development. This European Union support offers to these countries by the European Union, and particularly by the measures which may be available (at least in five of the countries) through the IPARD programme. However, discussion during the traveling workshops showed that rural stakeholders were concerned about a far wider range of elements of development – such as roads, electricity, water supplies, schools and higher education – which may lie outside the scope of IPARD or of national rural development programmes.

The scope of development

The context of our discussion was provided by the pre-accession support offered to these countries by the European Union, and particularly by the measures which may be available (at least in five of the countries) through the IPARD programme. However, discussion during the traveling workshops showed that rural stakeholders were concerned about a far wider range of elements of development – such as roads, electricity, water supplies, schools and higher education – which may lie outside the scope of IPARD or of national rural development programmes.

This is a familiar issue for governments within the European Union. In Finland, for example, the government distinguishes between ‘narrow rural development’, like the measures funded by the EU’s Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, from ‘broad rural development’ which embraces the policies and expenditure of government on roads, transport systems, water supply, education, health, social services, electricity, telecommunications and much else. The Rural Policy Committee in Finland brings together the nine ministries or government agencies which are responsible for different major aspects of public policy which affect rural areas, plus leading non-government bodies representing rural stakeholders, in order to promote liaison between them.

The proposed National Rural Policy embraces the full range of both narrow and broad rural development. The scope of development is defined so as to include: public policy which affect rural areas, plus leading non-government bodies representing rural stakeholders, in order to promote liaison between them. The proposed National Rural Policy embraces the full range of both narrow and broad rural development.

Rural development policies and programmes

Focusing mainly on narrow rural development, the Concluding Conference noted, from statements by Ministers or their representatives, the progress so far made with national rural development programmes and with IPARD. Governments have been pursuing rural development programmes, with a strong emphasis upon support to farmers and the upgrading of farming systems. Currently, they are in the process of preparing or finalising strategies and programmes for agriculture and rural development for the period 2014 to 2020, in line with the policies and programmes of the EU. In parallel with the national strategies, five of the countries are preparing proposals for the use of IPARD 2. Managing authorities, paying agencies and delivery systems are being strengthened. The Western Balkan governments are cooperating through the Standing Working Group.

IPARD 1, which was launched in 2007, applies only (among the countries involved in this event to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has had delegated management of that programme since 2008 and has experienced slow, but gradually increasing uptake of the funds; and to Turkey, where the programme has operated since 2011 and has attracted many applications, now accelerating in number. Applications for funding under IPARD 2 are expected from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. The IPARD programme will be built upon, and run alongside, the national strategies and programmes for rural development, the funds of Ministries of Regional Development, the activities of municipalities, and the funds and other support provided by bilateral and multilateral agencies and foundations.

This array of agencies, programmes and funds poses a major challenge of achieving complementarity, clarity about who is doing what, the search for simplicity in the ground rules for funds, and high-quality systems of information. Discussions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia showed that many stakeholders there do not apply for IPARD funds because of the complex paperwork, the demand for 50% match-funding, and delays in making retrospective payments. The Director General for Enlargement recognised that there is room for improvement, and commented that the IPARD programme aimed at impressive leadership and variegated support to stakeholders, or have laid the groundwork for integrated local development through production of strategies and creation of potential linkage between actors. Others are including stakeholders representing the municipalities clearly feel that they are disregarded by government or severely under-funded. In some places, there is a strong degree of frustration and mistrust among stakeholders about the municipalities. In short, there is a need for significant further progress in turning the two-tier system of government into a really effective and publicly understood alliance to achieve integrated rural development.

The village level

However, this two-tier system may not be enough to meet the needs of rural people in the Western Balkans. Many municipalities have significant population, as much as 100,000 in some cases, and cover large territories. These territories contain many villages, which are the main theatre of rural development. The main focus has been upon information and consultation (which are the classic first steps in a government’s engagement with their constituencies) by means of conferences, seminars and invitations to the general public to comment. Some groundwork has been laid for the movement onwards into participation, for example the activity of working groups, and other stakeholder representatives, and even partnership, for example the invitation by the Ministry of Agriculture in Montenegro to the national Beekeepers’ Association to deliver and monitor government support to beekeepers.

These are significant first steps in the process of building cooperation and trust between government and stakeholders, which will take time and will be crucial for the success of development processes. At present, the opportunity to be involved is taken up by those stakeholders who are organised into groups, associations, chambers or other structures. This is perhaps inevitable, because the government cannot invite 50,000 farmers to a conference. But it means that large numbers of stakeholders do not now have means of connecting to policy-making processes. If we are truly to empower rural stakeholders, and to build genuine partnerships between government and people in the processes of rural development, we need to develop tools which enable government to stretch outwards and downward among the stakeholders, and the stakeholders to stretch outwards and upward towards government.

The fact is that so far public administration in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have developed support closer to the rural civil society organisations and citizens of Serbia. One reason for this is the weak support of civil sector and experts, and the low level of cooperation and involvement of citizens as a whole. Even though the national administration has...
prepared major documents about LEADER and papers about IPARD, there was not enough support, nor pressure from experts, from civil society and from potential beneficiaries. As a result, those documents did not become actual programmes, and did not receive funding or staff support from government. Rural development in Serbia is now at a critical stage. The lack of human resources, and of inter-sectoral cooperation at all administrative levels is preventing rural Serbia from using IPARD funds. On the other hand, at the local/regional level, 20+ potential Local Action Groups have been formed, with 605 rural stakeholders, local development strategies in place, and both will and desire for positive action towards approaching EU standards and quality of rural life. Ivana Stefanović Ristan, LEADER Association, Serbia

Partnership, and LEADER

In some of the countries, significant steps have been taken towards introducing concepts of partnership and the LEADER approach. This approach is focused upon the creation, at sub-regional level, of partnerships between public bodies and private or non-governmental interests; and the production by those partnerships of local development strategies for their sub-regions. Governments, the EU and some bilateral agencies have encouraged and supported processes of information about the LEADER approach, the formation of embryo partnerships, training and capacity building, and the production of local development strategies. In some of the countries, there is now a network of informal or formal partnerships, or Potential Local Action Groups, created on the initiative of municipalities, local leaders or national Rural Development Networks. Some of these partnerships have been able to fund a first set of projects.

So, the groundwork exists for the phased introduction of LEADER as a significant element in future rural development programmes, and as one leading mechanism for cooperation between government and stakeholders. The regulations for IPARD 2 enable governments to include measures for this purpose. The next chapter explores how the potential of LEADER might be realised.

Networks

A crucial asset for the forward march into effective local development in the Western Balkans is the family of Rural Development Networks in at least four of the countries. These networks, independent from, but recognised by governments, already have a significant and positive role in the pursuit of local development in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. They are gaining strength in Montenegro and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They provide crucial points of contact and collaboration between municipalities and non-government organisations, and are able to relate directly to stakeholders and to encourage the creation of groups, cooperatives or associations which strengthen the hand of stakeholders. They can promote action at village level, and provide support for village leaders. They are a vital part of the ‘architecture’ of future development structures in these countries.

Moreover, these Rural Development Networks are federated within the Balkan Rural Development Network. They work closely with the Standing Working Group, and thus provide a crucial connection between civil society and governments. They have strong links to the PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe.
Opportunity – the road to empowerment of stakeholders and to partnership between stakeholders and governments

The previous chapters describe the key elements in the existing structure of actors in the field of rural development, and the commitments and concerns expressed by the key players. In summary, policies and programmes for development are being shaped and pursued by national governments and (to variable degrees) by municipalities. The role of different levels of governance is not fully clear. Action at village level is very limited. Mechanisms for connecting governments and stakeholders are emerging. Government and producers are connected to the further involvement of stakeholders. The groundwork for LEADER-type partnerships is being laid. Rural development networks are in place or emerging. There are many growth points for action by stakeholders. But the broader mass of rural people are still ill-connected to development processes, and many stakeholders feel that their interests and concerns are not being understood or met.

If we are truly to empower rural stakeholders, and to build genuine partnership between government and people in the processes of rural development, we need to develop tools which enable government to stretch outwards and downwards among the stakeholders, and the stakeholders to stretch outwards and upwards towards government.

This is a two-way process, demanding deliberate effort from both sides.

If we are to judge from the Polish experience, the only way forward is slowly building up the civil society organisations and ensuring they have some permanence and stability, as well as some degree of independence from the public sector (if not in terms of funding, then at least in access to information, the possibility of forging partnerships with similar organisations from other countries, etc.). In parallel, it is important to build the capacity of the public sector at all levels, train and motivate officials and decision-makers.

What tools do we need?

Our discussions suggest the following main elements:

- Clarity about the role of different levels of governance
- Integrated approaches to development
- Support to marginal areas and small-farming communities
- Clear and open processes of information, consultation and participation
- Review of systems and programmes where necessary
- Versatile extension services
- Collective action by stakeholders
- Village leadership
- Expansion of the LEADER approach
- Continued and strengthened networking at all levels
- Capacity-building
- Time, and persistence!

These points are described below.

Clarity about the role of different levels of governance

Citizens should be able to find out easily which arm of government is doing what in the field of regional, rural or local development, and at what level - central, municipal or local. This is a straightforward issue, to be addressed by government information services, working closely with municipalities and their associations. It should embrace all aspects of development – both ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’, as earlier defined. Since many aspects of broad development apply as much to urban as to rural areas, the information base should relate to the whole national territory. The information should be available to all citizens, in accessible forms suited to the different levels of equipment and mobility which people have. This implies access to information not only through websites and telephone directories but also through face-to-face services wherever possible – for example, municipal officers and extension services. Assembling and producing this information will oblige governments, where they have not done so already, to clarify who does what. It may also point to gaps in service, for example those municipalities which do not currently contribute to rural development, and this may prompt the progressive filling of those gaps.

Integrated approaches to development

The new generation of strategies and programmes for agriculture and rural development, now being prepared or finalised, give governments the opportunity to review the scope of their intended action in the field of ‘narrow’ rural development. This action will need increasingly to focus both on the needs of farmers and on the diversifying of rural economies and the strengthening of rural services. Governments may also wish to review the links between these programmes and those which are deployed by other ministries or agencies in the fields of transport, water supply, electricity and other services which are of crucial importance to rural enterprises and communities. There may be scope in each country for the establishment of a Rural Policy Committee, like that in Finland, for the production of a broad National Rural Policy, and the introduction of processes for ‘rural-proofing’ of policies and programmes which lie outside the scope of the Ministries directly responsible for rural development.

The National Rural Development Council in Serbia has a membership similar to the public-sector side of the Rural Policy Committee in Finland. It includes representatives of nine different Ministries responsible variously for agriculture, economy and regional development, environment, labour and social policy, education, infrastructure, youth and sport, public administration and local government, plus the European integration office and the office for sustainable management of marginal areas. For the purposes of the IPARD monitoring committee, this group will be enlarged with representatives of civil and non-government sectors. Aleksandar Bogunović, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Serbia

An integrated approach should also apply to the rural development activity of municipalities, who may have duties in fields such as transport or education, in addition to their powers related to local development. They have the opportunity at municipal level to link the action in different fields, and to state in their rural development strategies how they expect to apply their different duties and powers in the rural areas. Those strategies may also make plain how their activities will complement, or help to deliver, the actions of central government and of local partnerships and LEADER groups.

Support to marginal areas and small-farming communities

The previous chapters described the grave social and economic weakness of many rural regions in the seven countries, with continuing out-migration of young people and the further weakening of rural economies and communities. In most of these regions, the economy is based mainly on small family farms, which are disadvantaged by limited size, lack of capital, weak bargaining power and limited markets. They can feel power-les, and marginalised at a time when the attention of the economic growth and commercial competitiveness.

Some parts of the rural population, for example those who live in the mountainous areas which have suffered severe out-migration, have not yet been involved in stakeholder groups, and there is a need for further effort to involve them. Zorel Bujatić, NGO “Inisitve for Agriculture Development”, Kosovo

These marginal areas and small farming communities deserve urgent government attention. They are still home to hundreds of thousands of people. If a spiral of decline is allowed to continue, the quality of life of these people will deteriorate. These areas contribute food, timber, minerals and other resources to the economy of their countries. They contain ecosystems, land-
Standing Working Group. But other measures are not even at the
may involve the creation and work of advisory committees,
Governments should then move progressively beyond consultation
Our rural portal is an important tool, informing people and
participation
and between stakeholders and government. At present, this trust
that the most crucial ingredient of all is trust between stakeholders,
for good accessible systems of information, advice and extension
not connecting effectively to the measures. This implies the need
reduce the cost of credit, to support the upgrading of farm and
diversification of farm enterprises, for retirement of older farmers,
support for producer groups, associations and cooperatives, for
needed, notably a package of government measures including
in match funding, and greater clarity about the links between the
applicants in their own localities, more rapid payments, flexibility
These changes may need to include better information, simplified
2 programme, would be well advised to analyse the reasons for
assistance offered through IPARD 1 in the former Yugoslav
European Commission is well aware of the low uptake of the
results of these consultations are a mandatory chapter in
be genuinely listening and seeking to reconcile differences and
find practical solutions to problems which emerge. This implies that,
when necessary, systems and programmes should be reviewed.
Guidelines on how to do this will occur during the
preparation of strategies and programmes for 2014-20, and also at the Mid-Term Review. The IPARD Programme Monitoring Committees have the ability to propose changes in programmes if these are clearly needed. Governments should be ready to adapt systems of delivery in mid-programme where this is justified by experience.

From the beginning of preparing for IPARD, the … administra-
tion should consult on the content of draft programmes with relevant stakeholders … through means such as working meetings on specific topics or broader public hearings. The results of these consultations are a mandatory chapter in the
programme. Once the programme is adopted, the IPARD Monitoring Committee is established. It includes representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant Ministries, and of producers’ associations, academics, rural networks, NGOs etc. The number of non-governmental members shall at least be equal to those from the government side. The Committee monitors the implementation, but also has the right to propose and to adopt programme modifications. Anno Novak, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

One major programme which clearly merits review is IPARD. The European Commission is well aware of the low uptake of the
programme in the Western Balkan countries and can build the capacity of stakeholders to grasp opportunities for development. But do not depend on LEADER alone. Local
development must be embedded into broader strategies.

For that reason, governments should look to ways of promoting and assisting the essential changes that may be needed. But governments cannot achieve these changes alone: the stakeholders must be willing to respond. Part of that response is likely to be involving the key partners – such as producer groups, machinery syndicates, associations and other ways to work together. Good examples of this were seen in the travelling workshops. There is a need to nurture the courage of stakeholders, to develop the building of trust among them and between them and public agencies at all levels.

Village leadership

The travelling workshops revealed two striking examples, from
Zakuska in Serbia and Rezazovo in the former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia, of village leaders who have taken initiative, and
sparked the collective energy of their leaders, in ways which transformed the quality of life and the social and economic opportunities of their village communities. It is clear that the
Balkan countries could benefit enormously from further initiatives of this kind. Many villages in Turkey have muhtaros, who can make good things happen: villages in the Western Balkan counties have no equivalent figures, but they can elect leaders if they wish. The governments, and the municipalities, in those countries should consider how they could stimulate the emergence of village leaders, and support the activities which these leaders may generate to serve the social and economic well-being of their communities. The LEADER approach can attract the support of bilateral and multilateral donors, and might
draw upon the experience of thousands of village-level action

Action by stakeholders

On their side, rural stakeholders should not stand back and expect
government to take the whole lead in connecting with them. They
should be assertive, willing to work with each other; ready to join
or form associations. Individually or collectively, they should press for opportunities to take part in shaping, implementing
and monitoring policies, and respond to those opportunities.

You are the actors of your own development. You must

capacity to manage your own local development. Docia
Colog, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

The Western Balkan countries offer many examples of enterprising
individuals and families who have the courage, flair and willingness
to take risks which are needed to launch significant
enterprises, and who in the process can bring benefits to other
people in their areas. Very many others, including many tens of
thousands of small farmers, are more constrained in circumstances,
more fearful of failure, less inclined to take risks. But if they
remain passive, they are in truth at great risk in a changing world,
and may come under particular pressure when the countries join
the European Union.

LEADER is a successful approach. It mobilises local expertise. It
provides most of the examples of integrated rural development. But do not depend on LEADER alone. Local
development must be embedded into broader strategies.

Information, consultation and participation

Governments at central and municipal level should focus on clear
and open processes of information and public consultations related
to their action in local development. These processes should be
handled in an active way and using all relevant means, including

Our rural portal is an important tool, informing people and the
media. It attracts many visitors. Minister Ivanovic
organised a working lunch with the media, and drew
attention to the portal. Ratko Batkovic, President
Rural Development Network of Montenegro

Governments should then move progressively beyond consultation
and encourage participation of stakeholders in the shaping,
implementing and monitoring of policies and programmes. This
may involve the creation and work of advisory committees,
And the LEADER idea can now be extended into regional policy through the Community-Led Local Development approach: we can apply the resources of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund for the generation of solid rural development. But we need people on the ground to make good things happen. Dick Ahfer, Moderator of the Concluding Conference

So, there is good reason for governments to allocate resources, through their national rural development programmes or the IPARD programme, for the creation of LEADER-type partnerships in rural sub-regions. This can build upon the work which has already been done to publicize the LEADER approach, to build capacity and to create local partnerships and potential Local Action Groups. Government support for LEADER should be handled in a way that allows partnerships and local development strategies to emerge and evolve from the bottom-up, with true equality between the public, private and civil sectors.

The experience of Strumitsa (see chapter 4) confirms the three prerequisites for strengthening and mainstreaming LEADER. First, capacity building, which is top priority for the local stakeholders who would become the members of the Local Action Group, and should include training and advice. Second, animation, which is equally important: without the animation provided by the Rural Development Network, the experiment of Strumitsa might not have got off the ground. Third, ‘Seeing is believing’: getting to know the experience of LEADER-promoted rural development in EU countries offers models and solutions that can then be adapted to local conditions. Fouli Pompoxoglou, rapporteur of travelling workshop in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Continued and strengthened networking at all levels

The travelling workshops and conferences were exercises in networking, focusing on learning for the participants, as much for those from Western Europe as for those from South-Eastern Europe. They showed that we are all learners; we are all teachers; we can help each other. The challenges faced by farmers, by rural entrepreneurs and communities, have parallels in many parts of Europe. We can share with each other the practical ideas for addressing these challenges. There is powerful reason for continued networking at this transnational level, so that we can gain from each other’s experiences and contribute indeed to the empowerment of stakeholders, and the partnership between government and stakeholders, everywhere. But networking is needed at all levels, both between and within countries.

Governments. Networking and cooperation between governments is needed, in order to exchange experience in development processes and to achieve cross-border cooperation where this is beneficial. In the Western Balkans, this cooperation already includes the effective activity of the Standing Working Group, including its cross-border initiatives in the Area-Based Development Programme.

Stakeholder categories. Within each country, networking can have considerable value in strengthening different groups or categories of rural stakeholders, and bringing the people or organisations within them into the fields of dialogue and action in local development. Effective networking can enable:

- Economic sectors to share expertise and to increase their collective influence in the field of commerce and vis-à-vis government - we saw the examples of beekeepers’ associations in Montenegro, cattle breeders’ association in Serbia, food and tourism chains in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Municipalities to share experience and to enhance their ability to play a leading role in local development.
- Village communities to share experience of practical local action and to raise the rural voice at municipal, regional and national level.
- LEADER groups and other sub-regional partnerships to exchange experience and to exercise their collective influence on the whole development process. Such networking is supported at European level by the European Network for Rural Development and by the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD).
- Non-government organisations to raise the profile and enhance the capability of civil society in social and environmental fields. NGOs, who themselves are an expression of the ‘can do’ spirit of citizens, can make a progressively increasing contribution to the social, economic and environmental well-being of these countries. Already, many NGOs are committed to sustaining traditional crafts, protecting cultural monuments and valuable ecosystems, stimulating youth to remain living in the villages, providing social welfare services, caring for vulnerable and marginalised people.

There is provision in the IPARD measures for the creation by governments of more formal National Rural Networks (NRNs), of a kind which are an integral part of EU-funded rural development programmes in EU countries. Finance under the Twelfth Development Objective in IPARD can be used for the formalisation of activities, including costs of participation in the European Network for Rural Development. This NRN concept, which is new in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey, is significantly different from the independent, non-governmental Rural Development Networks described above. The NRNs are conceived as ‘round-tables’ of the all the main categories of stakeholders in the field of rural development, brought together and shared by both Regional Authorities. This model may, in due course, prove to have value in the IPARD countries, as a means of ensuring that all stakeholders are kept informed and consulted as the rural development programmes are implemented in coming years. But experience in the European Union suggests that the NRNs have greatest value where there is already a well-established pattern of stakeholder organisations and a substantial degree of trust between these organisations and government. For that reason, the governments of the IPARD countries may wish to place priority on the progressive building up of workable relationships between themselves and a wide range of stakeholder organisations, with help from the non-governmental Rural Development Networks, before considering the formation of formal National Rural Networks.

Capacity-building

People are the crucial capital for development. If we invest in them, then the financial support will also have more immediate and long-term concrete effect. Ivica Srnic, REDAH development agency, BH

Rural development is about necessary change. The changes may be in economic activity, in social structures, in government systems, in patterns of partnership, in methods of stakeholder involvement, and in other walks of life. The Western Balkan countries have already had to cope with radical changes since the breakdown of the Yugoslav federation. Now, the process of preparing for accession to the European Union is pushing them into accelerated change in many systems.

Rural people are not the only stakeholders. We are all, whether we live in town or countryside, citizens and Europeans. The Western Balkans should be seen as a region, with aspirations for its people. We wish to join the European Union, not because of the funds they can bring to us, but because we wish to thrive, we want our farmers to survive, we want the rule of law and economic growth. To achieve these aims, we need to be self-focused, even selfish: we need to take responsibility. IPARD is not only a tool, it is a training in how the European Union works. It may be difficult, but we have to use it in order to learn the European way.

Boban Vic, Secretary General, Standing Working Group

Change demands personal adaptation for all those who are involved in it - farmers, entrepreneurs, village communities, public officials. Adaptation is not easy; it demands new attitudes, new skills, new resources... and that is why the empowerment of rural stakeholders depends not only on necessary changes in systems but also on strengthening the capacity of people and organisations to react to change. Governments can take the lead in this field by offering not only advisory services and extension services, but also by formal initiatives to improve people’s education. Such services can be offered also by non-governmental organisations, regional associations, the national Rural Development Networks, LEADER groups and others.

Do not copy-paste models from other countries. Focus on your own resources. Work with, not against, your human capital, and enhance it by training. Focus on quality products, focus on the specifics of your region. Together share knowledge, share skills. Work together to commercialise, keep the added value locally.

I have been working in the rural sector in Serbia for the last 6 years and I find myself familiar with the situation. So, there was nothing new to see. Still, this excursion was a good chance to meet people from other EU countries and see their perspective on our road to development and towards EU integration. I notice that some of them were impressed (mostly positively) with what they saw. I think that we need much stronger Rural Development Networks described above. They can act as an umbrella for local rural stakeholders and amplify their voices in Belgrade. On the other hand, I think that colleagues working in Ministry of Agriculture and in Government should have similar travelling workshops in EU countries and notice how in those countries local people participate in policy making. Aleksandar Danjurovic, Serbia

What about formalising the Travelling Workshop Approach to bolster the work of the Monitoring Committees? Ryan Howard, Manager, South East Cork and District LAG, Ireland

Time, and persistence! Creation of close working relationships between stakeholders and governments cannot be achieved overnight. It will take time, patience and persistence to create workable systems, to build trust, to develop personal contacts and working relationships. This is not a reason to delay in taking the next crucial steps. But we should see this as a continuing process, to be pursued over the coming years.

Partnership needs energy and time. It will take time to achieve integration – social, economic and environmental. It will take time to prove that we are not copy-paste models from other countries. Focus on your own resources. Work with, not against, your human capital, and enhance it by training. Focus on quality products, focus on the specifics of your region. Together share knowledge, share skills. Work together to commercialise, keep the added value locally.

Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans

Papageorgiou, rapporteur of travelling workshop in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
We need more trust. The history and culture of countries can make it difficult for people to trust each other. People can be so afraid of failure that they do not summon the courage to trust each other. So, there is a challenge of building trust, as a vital basis for cooperation. This implies that we need time to lay the basis for action. Give yourself time. Do not feel pushed to act before you are ready, in order to spend the money. Hannes Lorenzen, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe

Rural development is a process, a life, not simply a bundle of measures. We must support the process over time, otherwise it may fail. Dragan Roganovic, Rural Development Network of Serbia

Conclusion

This event should be seen not as an end, but as the beginning of a process of empowerment of rural stakeholders, and the strengthening of the partnership between them and governments. The action lies with the people of these remarkable countries, the main groups and sectors of stakeholders, the village leaders and local authorities, the non-government organisations, and the national governments. Continued leadership will be needed from the national Rural Development Networks, the Standing Working Group, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe, the governments and the European institutions.
**Programmes of the Western Balkan events**

**Annex 1**

*Empowering rural stakeholders in the Western Balkans*

---

**Serbian Traveling Workshops 31 March and 1 April 2014**

**First Traveling Workshop**
Moderator Dragan Roganovic, Rapporteur Ryan Howard

**31 March**
- 09.00  Briefing
- 09.30- 12.15  Travel to Zlakusa village, including coffee break at Sipiska Magaza roadside shop
- 12.15- 12.45  Presentation of local development in Zlakusa village
- 12.45- 14.00  Visit to Potpec cave as example of using natural heritage and people’s beliefs for rural development
- 14.00- 14.30  Visit to fishpond
- 14.30- 15.30  Lunch break in Efho-crni ‘Terce avlija’
- 15.30- 16.30  Visit to pottery, and presentation of pottery as a tool for rural development
- 16.30-17.15  Visit to Efho-crni ‘Terce avlija’, and display of traditional music and dance
- 17.15- 18.00  Workshop with local stakeholders
- 18.00-19.30  Travel to Kraljevo
- 20.00-21.00  Group discussion on the field trip findings, Overnight in Zlakusa

**1 April**
- 07.00-07.30  Travel to Obra Village
- 07.30-08.30  Visit to processing unit of Kraljevo Ajmov (traditional Serbian product)
- 08.30-09.00  Travel to Kraljevo
- 09.00-09.30  Presentation by City of Kraljevo
- 09.30-10.00  Travel to Logatinska Village
- 10.00-10.45  Presentation of Honey Producers Association in Kraljevo
- 10.45-11.45  Visit to women’s rural tourism initiative, family Milojic
- 11.45-12.30  Presentation of ‘Oker’ Mountain Bike Association and its work to create an international mountain bike route through rural areas of Serbia and Montenegro
- 12.30-13.30  Workshop with local stakeholders
- 13.30-14.30  Lunch break
- 14.30-15.15  Travel to Vrhnika Village
- 15.15-16.15  Visit to Venca Gunjic, female entrepreneur, at ‘Zdrava hrana’ company producing traditional Serbian food
- 16.15-19.00  Travel to Belgrade

---

**Second travelling workshop**
Moderator Marko Kozlik, Rapporteur Urszula Budzich Tabor

**15 March**
- 09.00  Briefing
- 09.30-12.15  Travel to Srpska Magaza roadside shop
- 12.15-12.45  Presentation of local development
- 12.45-14.00  Visit to Potpec cave, example of using natural heritage and people’s beliefs for rural development
- 14.00-14.30  Visit to fishpond
- 14.30-15.30  Lunch break in Efho-crni ‘Terce avlija’
- 15.30-16.30  Visit to pottery, and presentation of pottery as a tool for rural development
- 16.30-17.15  Visit to Efho-crni ‘Terce avlija’, and display of traditional music and dance
- 17.15-18.00  Workshop with local stakeholders
- 18.00-19.30  Travel to Kraljevo
- 20.00-21.00  Group discussion on the field trip findings, Overnight in Kraljevo

---

**Serbian National Conference, 2 April 2014, Hotel Moskva, Belgrade**

**Welcome by:**
- Ivan Knežević, Deputy Secretary General, European Movement in Serbia – Conference Chairman
- Oscar Bendiket, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia
- Dieter Goetz, TAIEX, European Commission, DG Enlargement
- Aleksandar Bogunovic, SWG
- Dragana Roganovic, Network for Rural Development of Serbia
- Michael Dower, PREPARE

**Statement by Danilo Solubov, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management**
Presentation of report by First Traveling Workshop (Ryan Howard, Rapporteur) and Discussion

**Presentation of report by Second Traveling Workshop (Urszula Budzich Tabor, Rapporteur) and Discussion**
Sharing of experiences in public/civil partnership in EU Member States

**Panel discussion ’Agro and rural development in Serbia, how to mobilise resources and ensure socio-economic development in local communities’**
- Dieter Goetz, TAIEX, European Commission, DG Enlargement
- Pedro Brosser, European Commission, DG AGRI
- Keitaro Kojima, SGRJ
- Michael Dower, PREPARE
- Dragana Roganovic, Network for Rural Development of Serbia

**Concluding discussion**
Concluding discussion, focused on implications for policy and action within the country and on issues to be raised at the multi-national conference to be held on 8 April in Brussels.

---

**Traveling Workshops of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 31 March and 1 April 2014**

**First Travelling Workshop**
Moderator Petar Gjorgievskev Rapporteur Foul Papageorgiou

**31 March**
- 08.45  Briefing
- 09.30-10.30  Travel to Stara Nagonisce
- 10.30-13.00  Presentation of local development projects, with involvement of civil society Visit to livestock farms, in discussion with local farmers Meeting with Stara Nagonisce Municipality Presentation of 11th century Church of St. George, example of National Heritage Travel to Demir Kapija
- 13.00-15.00  Visit to Popova Kula’s winery, with restaurant and rural tourism accommodation – discussion on wine production and tourism opportunities Lunch at the winery
- 16.30-17.30  Travel to Strumica
- 17.30-18.30  Visit to vegetable farm in village Dobrojsi, with discussion on climate change, adaptive measures in agriculture, marketing of vegetables, use of IPARD funds
- 18.30-18.45  Travel to Strumica Overnight in Strumica

**1 April**
- 08.30-10.00  Visit to Strumica Municipality, and the Centre for Development of South East Planning Region: introduction of activities and discussion with stakeholders involved in the LEADER approach Travel to Pecevo Municipality
- 10.00-11.00  Visit and presentation of sheep-breeding farm, plum orchard, and small facility for processing forest fruits Travel to Berovo Municipality
- 11.00-13.00  Visit to woman entrepreneur in crafts production: presentation of products and discussion regarding small business opportunities and needs Lunch
- 14.15-15.15  Meeting with civil society organisations: discussion
National Conference of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2 April 2014, Hotel Arka, Skopje

Welcome by: 
- Boban Ilic, Secretary General, SWG – Conference Chairman 

Statement by Ljupco Dimovski, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

Presentation of report by the First Traveling Workshop - Fouli Papageorgiou, Rapporteur and Discussion

Presentation of report by the Second Traveling Workshop - Vanesa Halhe, Rapporteur and Discussion

Sharepointing of experiences in public/civil partnership in EU Member States

Questions and discussion

Panel discussion: “Agriculture and rural development in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, how to mobilise resources and ensure socio-economic development in local communities, through partnership between government and rural stakeholders”
- Dan Rotenberg, European Commission, DG AGRI
- Judit Torok, TAIEX, European Commission, DG Enlargement
- Boban Ilic, SWG
- Peter Gjorgievski, Rural Development Network of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Concluding discussion, focused on implications for policy and action within the country and on issues to be raised at the multinational conference on 8 April in Brussels.

Second travelling workshop

Moderator Goran Šoster Rapporteur Anneli Kana

1 March

08:45 Briefing to Nevesinje
09:30-12:00 Visit to farm households in Nevesinje village
12:30-13:30 Visit to Nevesinje School - discussion with pupils and teachers about life in the village
13:30-14:15 Visit to two farm households in Nevesinje village
14:15-15:15 Lunch in Nevesinje
15:15-16:15 Visit to Museum of traditional costumes in Nevesinje
16:15 Travel to Skopje

1 April

08:30-09:15 Travel to Podgorica
09:15-10:00 Visit to the nursery of Mr Veselin Jovovik
10:00-10:15 Visit to Plantable (wine cellar and orchard
12:30-13:30 Visit to greenhouse, and open-field vegetable production, of Jovan Dedebjuk, Vučja Village
14:00-15:00 Lunch in Virpazar
15:30-16:30 Visit to organic honey producer Marijan Planjak, in Virpazar
16:30-17:30 Travel to Podgorica.

Montenegro Traveling Workshops
31 March and 1 April 2014

First Traveling Workshop
Moderator Ratko Bataković Rapporteur Jean-Michel Courades

1 March

09:00 Briefing in Podgorica
09:30-10:15 Travel to Danilovgrad
10:15-11:00 Visit to cheese production “Čevo Katurjanka” (Mr Vlado Vuković), Danilovgrad
11:00-12:00 Visit to Brino Village (NK Šćepanovci) Municipalit
12:00-13:00 Visit to household Drage Mirko, producing cornel-fruit jam, liqueur etc.
13:15-14:30 Lunch at Hotel Maršal, with president of Nikšić Municipality Presentation of LEADER by Jean-Michel Courades, and Discussion
14:30-15:00 Visit to Rastovac village (NK Nikšić) Municipalit
15:00-16:00 Visit to organic farm and apple brandy production (Mr Rajko Pavlović)
16:30-17:30 Visit to dairy farm (family Pantović), as example of using MEDA funds to support rural development
19:30 Dinner and overnight in Nikšić

1 April

08:30-09:15 Travel to Danilovgrad
09:15-10:00 Visit to the nursery of Mr Veselin Jovovik
10:00-10:15 Visit to Plantaže (wine cellar and orchard
12:30-13:30 Visit to greenhouse, and open-field vegetable production, of Jovan Dedebjuk, Vučja Village
14:00-15:00 Lunch in Virpazar
15:30-16:30 Visit to organic honey producer Marijan Planjak, in Virpazar
16:30-17:30 Travel to Podgorica.

Second travelling workshop

Moderator Goran Šoster Rapporteur Anneli Kana

1 March

09:00 Briefing in Podgorica
09:30-10:15 Travel to Danilovgrad
10:15-11:00 Visit to cheese production “Čevo Katurjanka” (Mr Vlado Vuković), Danilovgrad
11:00-12:00 Visit to Brino Village (NK Šćepanovci) Municipalit
12:00-13:00 Visit to household Drage Mirko, producing cornel-fruit jam, liqueur etc.
13:15-14:30 Lunch at Hotel Maršal, with president of Nikšić Municipality Presentation of LEADER by Jean-Michel Courades, and Discussion
14:30-15:00 Visit to Rastovac village (NK Nikšić) Municipalit
15:00-16:00 Visit to organic farm and apple brandy production (Mr Rajko Pavlović)
16:30-17:30 Visit to dairy farm (family Pantović), as example of using MEDA funds to support rural development
19:30 Dinner and overnight in Nikšić

Montenegro National Conference, 2 April 2014, Ramada Hotel, Podgorica

Welcome by: 
- Dirk Ahner, Conference Chairman 
- Andre Leu, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Montenegro 
- anel Hachez, TAIEX, European Commission, DG Enlargement
- Bogdanka Leveska, SWG
- Hannes Lorenzen, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe 
- Ratko Bataković, Rural Development Network of Montenegro

Statement by Prof dr Peter Ivanov, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

Presentation of report by the First Traveling Workshop – Jean Michel Courades, Rapporteur and Discussion

Presentation of report by the Second Traveling Workshop – Anneli Kana, Rapporteur and Discussion

Sharing of experiences in public/civil partnership in EU Member States

Questions and discussion

Panel discussion

- Dirk Ahner, Conference Chairman
- Daniel Hasch, TAIEX, European Commission, DG Enlargement
- Dick van Dijl, European Commission, DG Agri
- Bogdanka Leveska, SWG
- Hannes Lorenzen, PREPARE Coordinator – the experience of running a regional development agency , its role in linking public agencies and stakeholders

Concluding discussion, focused on implications for policy and action within the country and on issues to be raised at the multinational conference on 8 April in Brussels.
**Concluding Conference, 8 April 2014, Mont des Arts, Brussels**

09.30 Opening of the event - Dirk Ahner, Policy Adviser,
Conference Chairman
Welcome by:
- Daniel Hachez, Head of Institution Building Unit D2, DG Enlargement
- Boban Ilic, Secretary General, Standing Working Group
- Harriess Lorenzo, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe

09.45 Presentation of reports from the traveling workshops and conferences in:
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Serbia: Haris Chafield, Director, European Rural Communities Alliance and Foiól Papiagogeni, Managing Director, Euracademy
- Montenegro: Goran Šoster, Coordinator, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe
- Serbia: Urszula Budzich-Tabor, Secretary of the Board, Polish Rural Forum

10.45 Coffee break

11.00 Introduction by Dacian Cioloş, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
Panel Discussion with Ministers and stakeholder representatives of the respective countries followed by a general discussion of issues arising from the reports

12.30 Lunch Break

14.00 Experience with stakeholder participation in policy design and implementation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey
Presentations by the Ministers, complemented by stakeholder representatives followed by a general discussion

15.00 Sharing of experiences in public/civil partnership in EU Member States
- Jean-Michel Courades, former DG AGRI official
- Alexandru Potir, President, National Federation of Local Action Groups, Romania
- Ryan Howard, Chief Executive Officer, South & East Cork Area Development Ltd., Ireland
Questions and discussion

15.45 Coffee break

16.00 Empowering stakeholders in the context of enlargement
Presentation by Christian Danielsson, Director General for Enlargement
Panel discussion, with representatives of rural networks, managing authorities, DG AGRI and EU Member State experts followed by a general discussion on what all of the above experiences offer towards the general theme of the event

17.15 Conclusions and implications for action by the Rapporteur General
Michael Ower, Visiting Professor of European Rural Development, University of Gloucestershire

17.30 Closing of the event by the Chairman

---

**Annexe 2**

**List of participants**

**Event ID:**
- RS TW: Traveling workshop in Serbia
- RSC: Conference in Serbia
- MK TW: Traveling workshop in Montenegro
- MEC: Conference in Montenegro
- CC: Closing Conference, Brussels, Belgium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Grigor</td>
<td>Geci</td>
<td>Management Authority</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>RS TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Edmond</td>
<td>Panarić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration</td>
<td>Minister of Agriculture</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Sarika</td>
<td>Popa</td>
<td>IPARD-Agency A/I</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Anaia</td>
<td>Vändreheja</td>
<td>Quedev</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>MK TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Marina</td>
<td>Brakalova</td>
<td>ENRD Contact Point</td>
<td>Rural Devt. Expert</td>
<td>RS TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Jelena</td>
<td>Prosik</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Senior Expert Associated</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Emir</td>
<td>Rađićić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Expert Adviser</td>
<td>RS TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Ostojić</td>
<td>Šušk</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Officer for financial procedures &amp; accreditation</td>
<td>MK TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Icaia</td>
<td>Sventic</td>
<td>Development Agency from Herzegovina, REDîA</td>
<td></td>
<td>RS TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Annävi</td>
<td>Kana</td>
<td>Estonian Village Movement</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Dirk</td>
<td>Ahner</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Policy Adviser</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Pedro</td>
<td>Brosie</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>RS TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>Catala</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Member of Cabinet</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Dacian</td>
<td>Cioloş</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Provisional code which does not prejudge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Cambetta</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, A4</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Jean-Michel</td>
<td>Courades</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Former Official</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Danilewison</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Project Manager, Team Leader D2</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Hachez</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, D2</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Gerard</td>
<td>Kiely</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, A5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Matthias</td>
<td>Langemeyer</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, H5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Lazdinis</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Cambetta</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, A4</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Jean-Michel</td>
<td>Courades</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Former Official</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Danilewison</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Project Manager, Team Leader D2</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Hachez</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, D2</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Gerard</td>
<td>Kiely</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, A5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Matthias</td>
<td>Langemeyer</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, H5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Lazdinis</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Cambetta</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, A4</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Jean-Michel</td>
<td>Courades</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Former Official</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Danilewison</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Project Manager, Team Leader D2</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Hachez</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, D2</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Gerard</td>
<td>Kiely</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Head of Unit, A5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Matthias</td>
<td>Langemeyer</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Unit, H5</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Lazdinis</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ELARIG</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Ionna</td>
<td>Luchtmans</td>
<td>European Commission, DG AGRI</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>EU Institution, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Irena</td>
<td>Dzimrevska</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>SWG Head of Operations</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ljubomir</td>
<td>Popatulu</td>
<td>Association of Sheep Breeders in Western RM</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Petar</td>
<td>Gjorgievski</td>
<td>Rural Development Network of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kiro</td>
<td>Riev</td>
<td>Individual Farmer</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Boban</td>
<td>Irič</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nada</td>
<td>Jovanovska</td>
<td>CeteFam</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Filip</td>
<td>Karakasovski</td>
<td>Individual Farmer</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Biljana</td>
<td>Kočevska</td>
<td>Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Water Economy</td>
<td>Acting Head of Department</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Veselka</td>
<td>Lambrovačka Domačarstva</td>
<td>Rural Development Network of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bogdanica</td>
<td>Laveška Goroška</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Marijan</td>
<td>Manev</td>
<td>Municipality Beško</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tanja</td>
<td>Milojevska</td>
<td>Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Water Economy</td>
<td>PR Officer</td>
<td>MK, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Marijana</td>
<td>Mihaljevska</td>
<td>PREDA Plus Foundation</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Viktor</td>
<td>Mladonovski</td>
<td>Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Water Economy</td>
<td>Senior associate</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Vida</td>
<td>Mijovska</td>
<td>Agrokém</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Neri</td>
<td>Nikolovska</td>
<td>Women’s NGO “Cvet”</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jasminka</td>
<td>Pasalitska</td>
<td>NGO Ambroja</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ljubo</td>
<td>Peco</td>
<td>Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Water Economy</td>
<td>Senior associate</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gordana</td>
<td>Popsimova</td>
<td>Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Agnieszka</td>
<td>Rudawska</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Katerina</td>
<td>Spasovska</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>MK TW, MKC, CC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sanja</td>
<td>Sibrovskis</td>
<td>Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Manol</td>
<td>Stefanovski</td>
<td>NGO Orči Raven</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Mr. Toni | Stojanovski | NGO RICD Delcevo | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Toce | Stojanovski | Municipality Novo Solo | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Ms. Jelena | Stojanovska | Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Water Economy | Head of Cabinet | MK TW, MKC, CC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Ms. Spasika | Tabacka | Women NGO “Cvet” | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Tomis | Tanovski | Horoič | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Ms. Pavlina | Trancovska | NGO Soli | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Aleksandar | Uzunov | Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Bobi | Veločkovi | Municipality Vasišeno | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Borce | Vodovski | Bob 99 | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Vlado | Vukovski | Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje | MK TW, MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Mr. Igor | Zlatkovski | National Extension Agency | MKC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Ms. Arbenita | Hazan | Mission of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the EU | Attaché | CC | the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| Ms. Thermerfi | Papagorgou | PRFDMA Centre for Development Studies | Managing Director | MK TW, MKC, CC | Greece |
| Mr. Ryan | Howard | South &amp; East Cork Area Development (SECAD) Ltd. | Chief Executive Officer | RS TW, RSC, CC | Ireland |
| Mr. Zenal | Burskaj | Initiative for Agriculture Development of Kosovo | Director | ME TW, MKC, CC | Kosovo |
| Ms. Shpaja | Dama | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Rural Development | Director | MK TW, MKC, CC | Kosovo |
| Mr. Bledar | Stavilci | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Rural Development | Minister of Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Rural Development | MK TW, MKC, CC | Kosovo |
| Mr. Nezhat | Velu | Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development/Agency for Development of Agriculture | Chief of Omission for Rural Devt. Projects | MK TW, MKC, CC | Kosovo |
| Mr. Fremosim | Isufaj | Embassy of Kosovo in Brussels | Counsellor | CC | Kosovo, Brussels |
| Ms. Minosa | Ahmetaj | Embassy of Kosovo in Brussels | Ambassador | CC | Kosovo, Brussels |
| Mr. Cazim | Alilović | NGO Association of Olive growers | MKC | Montenegro |
| Mr. Ratko | Batalević | Network for Rural Development of Montenegro | President | MK TW, MKC, CC | Montenegro |
| Ms. Jenka | Beatočević | Municipality Njilet | Advisor | MK TW, MKC, CC | Montenegro |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Gorica</td>
<td>Bojić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>ME C</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Vesna</td>
<td>Djukić</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development of Montenegro</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Gordana</td>
<td>Đimović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Jovo</td>
<td>Đubović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Sector for authorisation of payments</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Ljubica</td>
<td>Đukanović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Enis</td>
<td>Gjokić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Petar</td>
<td>Ivanović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Minister of Agriculture</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Nenadja</td>
<td>Katinski</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Chief of Cabinet</td>
<td>MEC, CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marija</td>
<td>Klironojčić</td>
<td>MIDAS Project</td>
<td>M&amp;E Specialist</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Vaso</td>
<td>Krivačić</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Đakko</td>
<td>Krajnović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Head of Managing Authority</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Mina</td>
<td>Katić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jelena</td>
<td>Krivošić</td>
<td>Regional Agency for Bjelac and Komorin</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Milos</td>
<td>Kuzmanović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Sector for programming</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jelena</td>
<td>Lalićević</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Kristina</td>
<td>Lapčićević</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Željko</td>
<td>Maćanović</td>
<td>Organic producer of buckwheat</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Radovan</td>
<td>Milićič</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marija</td>
<td>Mijacić</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Stojan</td>
<td>Mržulić</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Rako</td>
<td>Pavlučević</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Neća</td>
<td>Radošević</td>
<td>Municipality of Nikšić</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Blagotina</td>
<td>Radušević</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Assistant Minister</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marija</td>
<td>Radušević</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Andrija</td>
<td>Radušević</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Branko</td>
<td>Sarac</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Sector for on-spot control</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marija</td>
<td>Štrajnović</td>
<td>MIDAS Project</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Dimtroj</td>
<td>Tomasić</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Ima</td>
<td>Vuković</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marija</td>
<td>Vuković</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Natasa</td>
<td>Vuković</td>
<td>Municipality of Pljevlja</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Dejan</td>
<td>Zejak</td>
<td>NGS Center for Development of Agar</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Aleksandra</td>
<td>Lokc</td>
<td>Mission of Montenegro to the EU</td>
<td>First Counsellor</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Montenegro, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>Leković</td>
<td>Mission of Montenegro to the EU</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Nenadja</td>
<td>Budimir Tabor</td>
<td>Polish Rural Forum</td>
<td>Secretary of the Board</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Alexandru</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Federatia Naționala GAL Romania</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Aleksandar</td>
<td>Bogdanović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Marko</td>
<td>Crkanević</td>
<td>Agronomija, LAG Srem+</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Aleksandar</td>
<td>Damjanović</td>
<td>SWIS Secretariat</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Suzana</td>
<td>Đokićević</td>
<td>Association Natura Balkanica</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Danilo</td>
<td>Golubović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Slavica</td>
<td>Grolić</td>
<td>Standing Conference of Cities and Towns</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Igor</td>
<td>Kćin</td>
<td>Association ‘Rural development’</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Zoran</td>
<td>Kijašević</td>
<td>LAG Gornji Tamiš, Botoš</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jasmina</td>
<td>Jagličić</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency Sarajevo</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Milica</td>
<td>Jankić</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Srdana</td>
<td>Jovanović</td>
<td>Ethnonetwork</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Stojan</td>
<td>Lukačević</td>
<td>Rural Development Association</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Stanka</td>
<td>Lukić</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency Žabljak</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Anica</td>
<td>Marcikic</td>
<td>Rural Education Centre, LAG Sunčana vana</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Predrag</td>
<td>Markovic</td>
<td>SWG Secretariat</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Dejan</td>
<td>Mijatov</td>
<td>Network for Rural Development of Serbia</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Nela</td>
<td>Milinkovic</td>
<td>Potential Local Action Group Zlatna dolina</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Goran</td>
<td>Mijatovic</td>
<td>Rural Partnership Lovož, LAG Lovož</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Modrag</td>
<td>Miskošević</td>
<td>CDA, LAG Homolje</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jelena</td>
<td>Nakić</td>
<td>RABBS</td>
<td>Member of Management Board</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Sanja</td>
<td>Nikolić</td>
<td>LAG Mosna</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Biljana</td>
<td>Potentic</td>
<td>Ethno household ‘Miljovic’</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Merko</td>
<td>Potentic</td>
<td>Zlatna dolina II</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Ethna</td>
<td>Požar</td>
<td>LAG Cara Boša, Belo Blato</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Sanja</td>
<td>Predanovic</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture Forestry &amp; Water Management</td>
<td>Head of the group</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Željko</td>
<td>Radulović</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture Forestry &amp; Water Management</td>
<td>State Secretary</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Zoran</td>
<td>Radovanovic</td>
<td>Municipality of Ivenja</td>
<td>Member of Council</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Diagan</td>
<td>Roganovic</td>
<td>Civil Association “IDA”</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Diagan</td>
<td>Sagić</td>
<td>Association Meba</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Milanka</td>
<td>Toperović</td>
<td>Municipality of Nova Varoš</td>
<td>LED office</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Badojić</td>
<td>Savić</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency Raška and Moravski District</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Milica</td>
<td>Stanić</td>
<td>Rural Education Centre, LAG Sunčana vana</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jovana</td>
<td>Stefanović</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>Stefanovic</td>
<td>Association Leader</td>
<td>Member of Management Board</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Slobodan</td>
<td>Stojanović</td>
<td>LAG Despotovac</td>
<td>LAG Despotovac</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Živko</td>
<td>Šunderić</td>
<td>Minister without Portfolio in charge of European Integration</td>
<td>Team Manager</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Zorica</td>
<td>Velimirović</td>
<td>LAG “Zlatka”</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Vesna</td>
<td>Vandić</td>
<td>Touristic organisation of Majdanpek</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Dejan</td>
<td>Velimirović</td>
<td>UG “Nembus”, LAG “Dina”</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Zorica</td>
<td>Velimirović</td>
<td>UG “Agrozem”</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Biljana</td>
<td>Zorić</td>
<td>Agencija za ruralni razvoj, LAG Siemen</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Goran</td>
<td>Žikov</td>
<td>Company SEEDEV</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Snezana</td>
<td>Knezevic</td>
<td>Mission of Serbia to the EU</td>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Serbia, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Marko</td>
<td>Koližek</td>
<td>Studio MKA Ltd</td>
<td>Rural Devt. expert</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC, CC</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Goran</td>
<td>Šošer</td>
<td>PREPARE</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Elfi</td>
<td>Erdoš</td>
<td>Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Seher</td>
<td>Muğla</td>
<td>Ministry of Food, Agriculture &amp; Livestock - General Directorate of Agricultural Reform</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>Nazli</td>
<td>Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Ibrahim</td>
<td>Tağrul</td>
<td>Development Foundation of Turkey</td>
<td>Deputy Chairperson</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Fatma</td>
<td>Saglik</td>
<td>Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the EU</td>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Turkey, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Dowler</td>
<td>University of Gloucestershire</td>
<td>Professor of European Rural Development</td>
<td>RS TW, RSC</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Vanessa</td>
<td>Halhead</td>
<td>European Rural Communities Association</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>ME TW, MEC, CC</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexe 3

Acronyms and links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>Area-Based Development, a programme of SWG (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACED</td>
<td>Agency for Cooperation, Education and Development (NGO in BiH) <a href="http://www.aced.ba">www.aced.ba</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARDS</td>
<td>Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (EU programme of assistance to the countries of south-East Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG AGRI</td>
<td>European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG ELARG</td>
<td>European Commission Directorate-General for Enlargement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOVAST</td>
<td>European Council for the Village and Small Town <a href="http://www.ecovast.org">www.ecovast.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELARD</td>
<td>European LEADER Association for Rural Development <a href="http://www.elard.eu">www.elard.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENRD</td>
<td>European Network for Rural Development <a href="http://www.enrd.ec.europa.eu">www.enrd.ec.europa.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERCA</td>
<td>European Rural Communities Association <a href="http://www.ruralcommunities.eu">www.ruralcommunities.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation <a href="http://www.fao.org">www.fao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha</td>
<td>hectare (unit of measurement of land area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPARD</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance in Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGs</td>
<td>Local Action Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>Liaison entre les Acteurs de l’Économie Rural ‘links between the rural economy and development actions’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDAS</td>
<td>Montenegro Institutional Development and Agriculture Strengthening (Assistance programme funded by World Bank and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRN</td>
<td>National Rural Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDO</td>
<td>Protected Designation of Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHARE</td>
<td>Poland Hungary Assistance for Regeneration of Economies (EU assistance programme later applied to many countries in Central and Eastern Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAGs</td>
<td>Potential Local Action Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPARE</td>
<td>PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe <a href="http://www.preparenetwork.org">www.preparenetwork.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDAH</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency for Herzegovina <a href="http://www.redah.ba">www.redah.ba</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency <a href="http://www.sida.se">www.sida.se</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWG</td>
<td>Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe <a href="http://www.seerural.org">www.seerural.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIEX</td>
<td>Technical Assistance and Information Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAid</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development <a href="http://www.usaid.gov">www.usaid.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The text of this publication is for information purposes only and does not necessarily reflect the Commission’s views.”

“This report was drafted by Professor Michael Dower, rapporteur-general of the Western Balkans traveling workshops and conferences 2014, who is a Professor of European Rural Development at University of Gloucestershire, England, and former Coordinator PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe”