

SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Rural Development Standing Group & Area Based Development Approach in the Western Balkans

The **Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South East Europe (SEE)**:

- An International Intergovernmental Organisation consisting of institutions responsible for agriculture and rural development in the respective countries and territories.
- A platform for networking and regional cooperation among the SEE countries and territories in the field of agriculture and rural development.



The Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG)

Vision

Innovative and sustainable agriculture and rural development through cohesive regional cooperation to achieve an improvement of rural livelihoods in SEE countries.

Mission

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

Specific Objectives

- Facilitate close cooperation among the Ministries of Agriculture and other stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development and to support the EU integration process.
- Improve the general understanding of EU agriculture and rural development policies.
- Assist the improvement of implementation structures and systems for agriculture and rural development in rural areas, with specific emphasis on cross-border cooperation.
- Improve the understanding and use of tools for agriculture and rural development.
- Identify and share information, including the application of good practices in agriculture and rural development to broaden the rural agenda.

The Area Based Development (ABD) approach in the Western Balkans: a tool for rural development with up-scaling potential

Area Based Development (ABD) is an innovative approach enabling a breakthrough in sustainable economic growth by targeting specific geographical areas in cross-border regions, which are characterised by a set of common, complex development problems. It is considered an effective approach to facilitate sustainable growth in rural areas in decline. The approach uses a methodology that is inclusive, participatory, flexible, and ensures integration and coherence.

Objectives

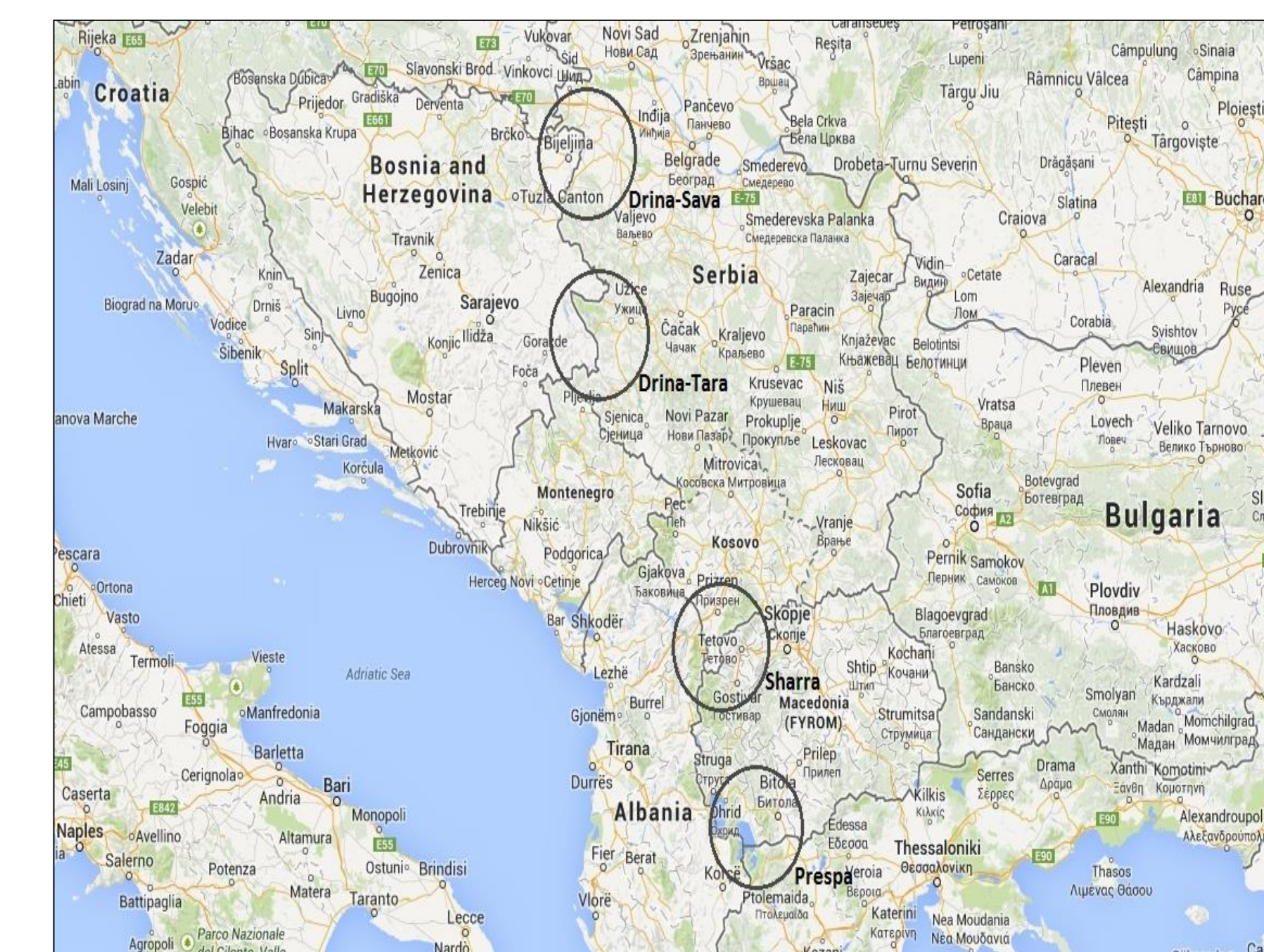
The overall action focuses on three parallel processes:

1. Facilitation of **cross-border and regional cooperation and reconciliation** by providing mechanisms for legitimate, transparent and participatory processes of needs assessment, priority setting, and action planning in a particular region.
2. Contribution to **sustainable economic growth** of a region by facilitating the implementation of projects and by providing investment support to the sector with the highest added value for and catalytic effects on the rural economies.
3. Strengthening **cooperation among public administrations and other public bodies, and NGOs** in the field of local development and regional cooperation by building up local and regional cross-border capacities.

The 'Pilot Grant Scheme' for the enhancement of the competitiveness of small- and medium-scale producers

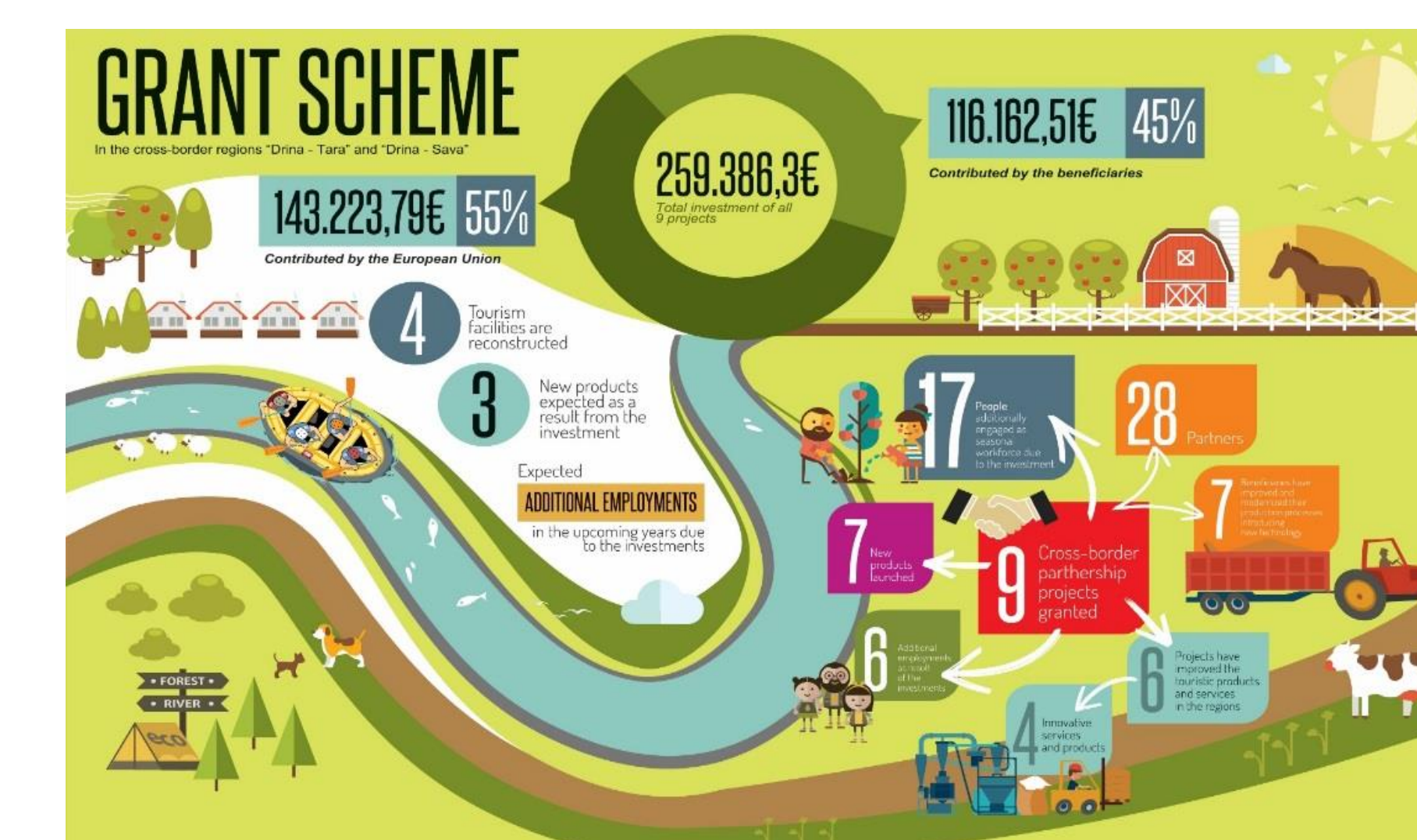
The 'Pilot Grant Scheme' largely follows the modalities of the support measures as implemented under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Agriculture and Rural Development component of the Instrument for Pre-Accession – (IPARD).

Its main goal is to enhance the competitiveness of small- and medium-scale producers by providing **small grants for renewing production facilities and purchasing equipment to create new innovative products or to improve existing ones**. In total, small grants of an approximate value of EUR 150 000 distributed among nine projects with 28 beneficiaries were successfully implemented.



ABDA cross-border region

- "Drina- Tara" (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro)
- "Prespa" (Albania and Macedonia)
- "Sharra" (Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo*)
- "Drina – Sava" (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia)



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