



THE PRAVETS AGENDA

By

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The Agriculture Policy Forum (APF)

The APF is the culmination of the past year's work where:

- Policymakers, academics and experts discuss achievements and selected topics.
- Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made to the political level for the future SWG working agenda.
- The Pravets Agenda 2015

The Pravets Agenda 2015

Main themes:

- Agricultural and rural development policy orientation in the region and the EU integration process.
 - Cooperation with the RCC on SEE 2020 implementation
- Area Based Development and rural development vis natural resource management.

Policy orientation in the region and EU integration

Background

- EU integration put on hold with Juncker statement
 - Slowing down the drive for reforms in the CC
 - Tendency to make **national** policy choices contrary to choosing **regional** oriented or **CAP** like policy measures.

Recommendation:

- Continue the policy integration process – towards the EU and among **countries in the region.**
- Intensify regional harmonisation of trade and agricultural policies to facilitate cross border cooperation and rural economic prosperity.

Policy orientation in the region and EU integration

Regional Policy Analysis Platform

- Platform of policymakers and researchers.
- National platforms – working together at regional level.
- Baseline studies and first report 2014.
- **Second policy monitoring report delivered October 2015**
- The platform continue working with support from AGRI and JRC
- Cooperation established with AGRI policy analysis experts

Policy orientation in the region and EU integration

Policy analysis and monitoring

- Strategies 2015-2020 in place.
- Objectives and policy measures in line with EU integration Agenda.
- However, planned policy measures not fully in line with strategic objectives.

Recommendation:

- increasingly rely on **evidence based** policymaking.
- Involve all **stakeholders** in policy formulation.
- Consistently **implement the objectives** and actions set out in the Strategies.

Policy orientation in the region and EU integration

Cooperation between the Regional Cooperation Council and the SWG

- The **South East Europe 2020 Strategy** articulates a shared vision for
 - Regional integration, innovation and governance,
 - Regional economic development, trade, jobs and prosperity
 - The importance of environmental sustainability and
 - the EU accession processas a core pillar of growth and development in the Western Balkan region.
- The **SWG** is involved in the programming and implementation of these elements of the **SEE 2020 Strategy**

Area Based Development

- The **stakeholder groups** are working well in 4 areas.
- The SHGs have a balanced representation of local authorities, civil and business sector.
- **Pilot grants scheme** implemented.
- Particular focus on **targeting small entrepreneurs** operating in rural cross-border regions.
- Private businesses are interested in **developing business partnerships and quality oriented short value chains**.

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Kaj Mortensen, 11/4/2015

GRANT SCHEME

In the cross-border regions "Drina - Tara" and "Drina - Sava"

143.223,79€ 55%

Contributed by the European Union

4 Tourism facilities are reconstructed

3 New products expected as a result from the investment

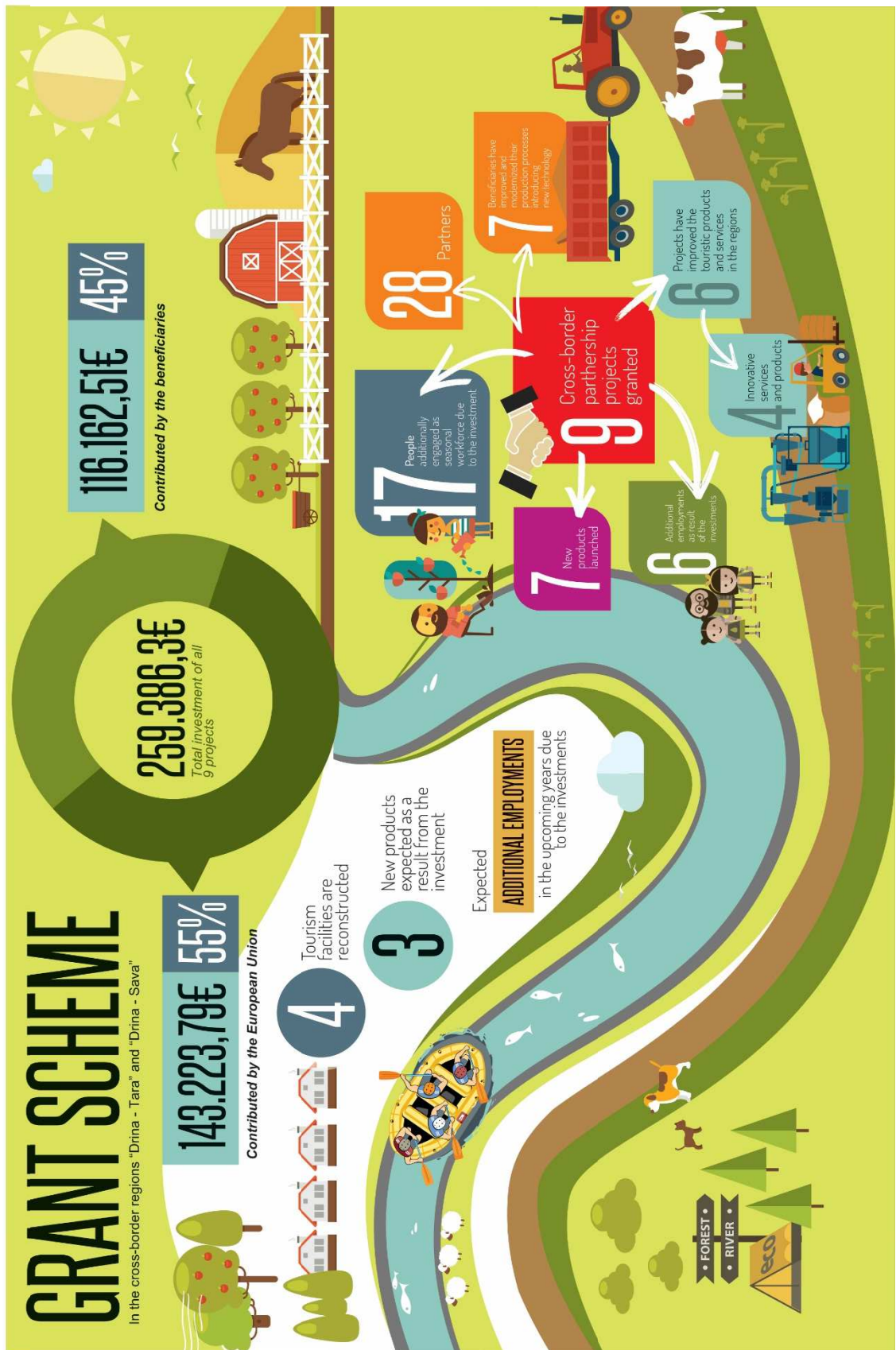
Expected

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENTS in the upcoming years due to the investments



116.162,51€ 45%

Contributed by the beneficiaries



ABDA cross-border regions

“Drina – Tara”

(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro)

“Drina – Sava”

(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia)

“Sharra”

(Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo*)

“Prespa”

(Albania and Macedonia)

“Prokletije”

(Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro)

“Pcinja”

(Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia)

“Neretva”

(Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
and Montenegro)

Area Based Development

The situation:

- We have **ready stakeholder structures** functioning like LAGs
 - The groups are networking and see themselves as partners.
- We have **implemented a pilot grants scheme** effectively.
 - Stakeholders participated actively in elaboration and implementation.
- We have **attracted small business operators** to the process.
 - Beneficiaries had to create partnerships.
 - Two segments of the value chain and two countries as minimum.
 - Payments only after all partners had completed investments.
- We have an expressed interest from the business community to continue developing partnerships
- **But no funding to continue investment support**

Area Based Development in the future

The SWG Assembly and local stakeholders want to continue implementing the ABD approach.

Governments can assist by:

- Facilitating access to IPARD, and national schemes and donor funded programmes.
- Facilitating cross border transactions – people, goods.

Case study: Irish LAG experience – similar to the ABD activities.

- Possibility to establish LAGs in ABD areas.
- Transnational cooperation among LAGs.

Rural Development via natural resource management

- Regional inter-sectoral cooperation at the interface among rural development, agriculture, forest and water would contribute to preservation and use of natural resources for the purpose of rural and economic development.
- Increasing focus on implementing integrated measures for income generation, based on natural resources and using the ABD approach in cross-border regions.

FINAL CONCLUSION

In a time where EU integration has become rather inert, closer regional cooperation and coordination of policies among the Western Balkan countries is even the more important in order to enhance trade and foster economic growth and prosperity in rural areas.