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**“Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration -  
*Support to the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe”***

**Reporting period:**

**September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 – December 8<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**December 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 2016, Budapest, Hungary**

# Specific project objectives

- **O1: Political and policy dialogues related to agriculture and rural development** among Western Balkan countries and relevant institutions and stakeholders are **enhanced**.
- **O2: Cooperation in at least four cross-border rural areas** of the Western Balkan (“Drina-Sava”, “Drina-Tara”, “Prespa” and “Sharra”) **is strengthened** with implementation of different projects with cross-border and regional relevance.
- **O3: Performance of baseline analysis and strategic planning** and programming of economic develin **at least two additional cross-border regions is initiated**.
- opment

# Expected project results related to specific project objectives

- **R1:** Joint documents on agriculture and rural development issues (statements, positions, declarations) of the participating Western Balkan countries are prepared based on the political and policy discussions organized by the SWG
- **R2:** Quality project proposals for economic development of rural cross-border areas are prepared and submitted for financing
- **R3:** Baseline analysis and strategic planning has been performed in at least two additional cross-border areas

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## **This presentation focuses on:**

- ***Facilitation of the economic development in the targeted cross-border regions through continuous dialogue and cooperation among the stakeholders and support by the PMU's***
  - SHG meeting and organization of P2P event;
  - Support to preparation of quality project proposals on different open calls in the cross-border regions;
- ***Support to political and policy discussions on agriculture and rural development issues;***
- ***Update on the preparation of the baseline analysis and strategic planning in three additional cross-border regions;***
- ***Complementary activities facilitated by the ABD Approach***
- ***Future activities;***

***Facilitation of the economic development and cooperation in the cross - border areas (regular SHG Meetings in the cross-border regions Drina- Tara, Drina Sava, Prespa and Sharra)***



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## ***Facilitation of the economic development in the cross - border areas (People to People events)***

***25 P2P events till now, 6 were supported in this reporting period:***

- **4th Youth Night Falcon Games “Dobrun 2016”**, 24 September, 2016 in Dobrun, Visegrad, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **“Beans Day 2016”**, 24th September, 2016 in Tearce, Macedonia
- **Korca Apple Fest**, 2 October in Dvoran, Korca, Albania
- **XV International trade fair “Brcko 2016”**, 24 – 26 November 2016, in Brcko, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Prespa Business Forum**, 1-2 December, Resen, Macedonia
- **“Regional Gastronomy Fair”**, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 in Strpce, Kosovo\*

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

## ***Facilitation of the process of economic development of rural cross - border areas***

### **Support to preparation of quality project proposals on different open calls in the cross-border regions**

- **Till now 35 project proposals were prepared and submitted with the support of the PMU' staff (average 8-9 per region);**
- **2 (two) of the submitted project proposals are granted:**
  1. Project title: Development of raspberry production on the territory of Municipality of Visegrad with total value of 104.025,29 BAM (53.187 EUR) Applicant: Association of raspberry producers "Lastar", Visegrad
  2. Project title: Establishment of raspberry collection center in Zhupa with total value of 80.000 USD  
Applicant: Association of Raspberry cultivators and collectors of medical herbs Agro Red Gold
- **16 of the submitted projects are refused**
- **17 are still under evaluation process (most of them under IPA CBC Programmes and Transnational Programmes)**

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## ***Support to political and policy discussions on agriculture and rural development issues***

The 16<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Policy Forum (APF), held in Tirana, Albania on 12 – 13 October 2016, brought together around 110 diverse stakeholders from 19 different countries/territories representing relevant international and regional institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations and academic establishments. The main theme of the APF was Evidence – Based Agricultural Policy: Enabling Environment for Developing the Agricultural Sector in the South East Europe. Tirana Agenda 2016 addressed the need for adjusting the agricultural policy in SEE based on relevant in-depth analyses of the situation, at the same time having in consideration the adaptations necessary due to the EU approximation process.





## ***Support to political and policy discussions on agriculture and rural development issues***

The 10th Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South Eastern Europe was organized under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro in cooperation with the SWG on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 in Bečići, Montenegro.

The main output of the meeting are the Conclusions of the 10th Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from SEE 2016 which expresses the common policy and political interest in the framework for future cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development.



**4<sup>th</sup> SHG meetings organized in “Pcinja-Krajshte”, Prokletije - Bjeshkët e Nemuna” and “Neretva - Krs” cross-border regions**



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## ***Process of preparation of baseline analysis and strategic planning in three additional cross-border regions***

- *Baseline analysis and strategic planning in “Pcinja-Krajishte”, Prokletije - Bjeshkët e Nemuna” and “Neretva - Krs” cross-border regions in final stage of preparation.*
- *Final editing, proofreading and endorsement by the stakeholders till the next SWG assembly.*
- *After finalization, follow up activities are foreseen, such as cooperation and networking exercises, P2P events and additional SHG meetings;*

## ***Complementary actions facilitated by the ABD Approach***

**“Strengthening regional capacities for rural development through integrated forest and water resources management in Southeast Europe - LEIWW“**

- 1 component of this project is dedicated to income generation from the sustainable use of natural resources which is fostered via implementation of the Area Based Development approach in the Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava, Prespa and Sharra cross-border regions;
- The ABD Grant Scheme was opened, focusing on income generation by improvement of production processes, technology and quality of products and services in “green” value chains (tourism, agriculture, etc), promoting sustainable use of natural resources and integrated water and forest resources management;
- The overall indicative amount available under ABD Grant Scheme within LEIWW Program is estimated on cca. 380.000 EUR.
- The ABD staff also supported and facilitated the organization of ten P2P Actions – regional trade fairs and events promoting tradition and cultural heritage, environment protection and tourism and gastronomy in the targeted cross-border regions;

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## ***Complementary actions facilitated by the ABD Approach***

**“Strengthening regional capacities for rural development through integrated forest and water resources management in Southeast Europe - LEIWW“**

- under the first call of the ABD Grant Scheme within LEIWW Programme in total **17 projects were contracted (27 applicants)** in total amount of **211.00 EUR**. The implementation of these projects should be finalized till April 2017. Signing ceremony was organized on 9<sup>th</sup> of November in Zlatibor, Serbia.
- Due to the low number of applications in Prespa and Sharra cross-border regions, second call for submission of project proposals was opened, **amounting to 120.000 EUR**. Closing date of the call was 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2016. Evaluation of the received applications, contracting and implementation is foreseen till June 2017.

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## ***Future activities within the project (period till the next SWG Assembly)***

- Organization of meetings of stakeholder groups in Prespa, Sharra, Drina – Tara and Drina - Sava;
- Organization of additional 10 P2P events in all four regions;
- Continuous support to the Stakeholders for preparation of project proposals on open calls in framework of IPA CBC and other calls;
- Finalization and promotion of the baseline analysis and strategic planning in “Pcinja-Krajshte”, ”Neretva - Krs” and Bjeshkët e Nemuna - Prokletije” cross-border regions;

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## ***Future activities within the project (period till the next SWG Assembly)***

- Organization of follow-up activities such as P2P events and cooperation exercises in the new cross-border regions;
- Organization on capacity building events for the stakeholders and staff;
- Implementation of projects under the 1<sup>st</sup> call of the ABDA Grant Scheme within LEIWW Programme and selection and implementation of projects under the 2<sup>nd</sup> call in Prespa and Sharra;
- Organization on Working Group meetings for wine, areas with natural constrains, agro-analysis in SEE, Paying Agencies and Managing Authorities, etc.

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## More information on [abda.seerural.org](http://abda.seerural.org)



Facebook page name	Web site
Cross-Border Region of "Prespa"	<a href="http://prespa.seerural.org">prespa.seerural.org</a>
Cross-Border Region of "Sharra"	<a href="http://sharra.seerural.org">sharra.seerural.org</a>
Cross-Border Region of "Drina-Sava"	<a href="http://drina-sava.seerural.org">drina-sava.seerural.org</a>
Cross-Border Region of "Drina-Tara"	<a href="http://drina-tara.seerural.org">drina-tara.seerural.org</a>