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Balkan Rural Development Network



www.brdnetwork.org

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN)

The Balkan Rural Development Network BRDN is a regional platform of NGO-based rural development networks in the Western Balkan WB.

The overall aim: strengthening the civil society and promoting multi-national exchange in rural development at regional and EU level.

BRDN brings together the rural development networks from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The member organizations are all established in the SEE region, and are themselves member organisations, which represent national rural communities' interests and rights, and act for rural development. The BRDN member organisations represent more than 200 rural development associations from the region, and advocate for the interests of more than 9 million rural people from the represented countries.

BRDN Members Joint Activities

Develop capacities of BRDN network to become accountable actor for development of sustainable rural areas in the Western Balkan Region



With the support of We Effect, the Balkan Rural Development Network actively works on developing its capacities to become accountable actor for development of sustainable rural areas in the Western Balkan Region. During the period of September and October, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, as coordinator of the activities supported by We Effect, has developed a draft version of BRDN's Statute, which was discussed at a meeting organized in Skopje, on December 13th and 14th. Representatives of the rural development networks of Serbia, Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro, gathered at this workshop to define a final draft of BRDN's Statute, which will serve as a base in the further process of formalization of BRDN.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, presented the activities planned for the following year as part of the We Effect's support for developing the capacities of BRDN and introduced the concept for establishing of Gender Equality Hub as an advisory body within BRDN as well as the rest of the governing and executive bodies. The Gender Equality Hub was formed in September, when 6 of the nominated members of the hub, gathered in Skopje and discussed about future functioning of this core group within BRDN. They identified the following main priority which needs to be included in the BRDN strategy: Gender mainstreaming within BRDN as cross cutting strategic priority that will apply on each of the BRDN strategic priorities.

The consultant engaged for conducting training needs assessment of BRDN member networks, shared the initial findings from the research. According to the needs identified through the TNA, activities will be planned for building the capacities of BRDN member organizations.

During the two-day workshop a fruitful discussion was initiated by the BRDN members related to the organizational structure and the membership provisions. It is expected during 2019, BRDN to have defined its Statute and procedures for functioning of management and executive bodies.



ALTER – Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas

“ALTER – Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas” is a four-year project financed by the European Commission and implemented by project consortium of rural development networks from the Western Balkan (the leading partner - Network for Rural Development of Serbia and the rural development networks of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Croatia and Montenegro), the Development Foundation of Turkey and the Latvian Rural Forum. In the period from October 30th to November 1st, 2018, the project organized the second multi-national thematic meeting in the town of Peja, Kosovo. About 60 participants from more than 15 European countries gathered at the event to discuss about themes related to the rural development in the European countries: The role of

the civil society in the rural policy development; Capacity building and sustainability of PREPARE Network; LEADER as a driving force for the integrated local development and Communities’ development and volunteering. For each of the four themes were defined recommendations for civil society actions to be carried out in the forthcoming period.

The ALTER project supports the implementation of LEADER approach through establishment and development of two local action groups, LAG “Srem+” and LAG in Bajina Basta and Uzice municipalities. Both LAG’s were supported through re-granting projects.

More details about the project:

<http://www.balkan-noborder.com/>

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy – NAGE

The regional project “Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy” financed by EU, was launched in April 2018. This three-year project applies wide-stakeholder participative approach in order to promote and facilitate the introduction of the concept of green economy, as well as to support the approximation towards the EU CAP, especially in the area of environmental protection and sustainable development. The lead implementer of the project is the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, while partners in the project are: Croatian Rural Development Network, Albanian Network for Rural Development, Network for Rural Development of Montenegro, Network for Rural Development of Serbia, Network of organizations for rural development of Kosovo and Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Aiming to strengthen the grassroots’ CSOs capacities in generic work, during the period from September till November, 2018, the project organized three trainings of trainers at regional level, covering the following themes: Transparent and accountable governance; Planning and reporting and financial management; and Funding diversification. With this activity the partners of the project “Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy – NAGE” will ensure that as members of BRDN they have strong generic management knowhow and skills, which may be transferred to grassroots level, but also multiplied in all activities and future actions that are going to be implemented by BRDN.



Following this training, the trainers started transferring the gained knowledge to grassroots organizations at national level, in order to develop their capacities and to make sure that the management capacities are not a constraint that would eliminate good citizen initiatives and hinder the implementation of successful green entrepreneurship projects as part of the sub-granting program. In 6 of the project implementing countries, the first of the series of trainings was organized during November and December, 2018. This process of knowledge transfer will continue during the next year by organizing trainings in each country, covering the rest two topics: Planning and reporting and financial management; and Funding diversification.



Albanian Network for Rural Development



Networking for Participatory Rural Development

Networking for Participatory Rural Development is the initiative of three founding and most active member organizations of the ANRD - IDM, Agrinet and Agro-Puka - funded by the European Union, which aims at consolidating the role of Albanian Network for Rural Development toward a functional model of bottom-up and participatory perspective in national rural agenda. The project builds upon ANRD member organizations shared vision of civil participation in the rural policy making and seeks to enhance the impact of ANRD and other rural stakeholders in advocating and influencing the formulation and implementation of rural development policy in Albania.

In the framework of this initiative, a series of activities have been car-

ried out in the period September-December 2018:

i) Establishment of four ANRD regional forums in the four development areas in Albania

Over the last six months, ANRD has been working on establishing and consolidating four regional forums to address ANRD's need for a more functional organization at local level. The four Forums - Drini, Arber, Egnatia and Vjosa - as new ANRD structures ensuring country-coverage of the country territory and various thematic area of rural development, exist to reflect and address the needs, priorities and interest of local stakeholders and rural communities of each region. Composed of active and visible grass-root CSOs, member organisations of ANRD are key actors of these forums.



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ii) Multi-stakeholders regional forums "Consultation process on Agriculture and Rural development Governance"

In October 2018, ANRD launched an extensive consultation process with the four ANRD regional forums (farmers, producers' groups, CSOs, rural entrepreneurs etc.) on GOVERNANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. The nation-wide consultation aimed to promote public discussion and consult on the ground the issues/challenges and provide recommendations to tackle the barriers that hinder the public support programs and instruments from being effective and produce tangible and sustainable results. A key aspect of this advocacy effort has been the development of the Position Paper "on Agriculture and Rural Development governance" addressed to policies and public instruments in support to rural development sector. <https://anrd.al/publications/position-paper-on-agriculture-and-rural-development-governance/>



National Training “Transparent and Accountable CSO Governance”

In the framework of the project NAGE - Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy, a national training on “Transparent and Accountable CSO Governance” was organized by the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD), on November 21st 2018. ANRD is the implementing partner of the NAGE project which is being implemented by the consortium of rural networks in the Western Balkan countries.

The specific purpose of the training was to increase the capacities of civil society representatives in relation to the good governance of their organizations. The participants in the training exchanged and shared their experiences by assessing the importance of the knowledge gained about the transparent and accountable governance of civil society organizations.

This was the first of the several trainings that will be offered in the framework of this project.

Croatian Rural Development Network



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Partnership in projects

Together with the Caritas Czech Republic (applicant) and PMC Research Centre - Georgia, HMRR is the partner in the project financed by European Commission - **Promotion of rural development and diversification in Khulo Municipality** (01/05/2017 - 28/02/2021). In August 2018, HMRR implemented a one-day workshop on LAG management and strategy implementation, and a two-day workshop on writing project proposals. Also, HMRR representatives participated at the LAG Khulo Festival, which promoted the project, as well as local agricultural products, handicrafts and cultural heritage (dance, music).



As partner in the **project Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy - NAGE**, HMRR had its representatives at three Training of trainers (ToT) in Macedonia. Educated trainers held the first national training for Croatian CSOs in December 2018, with the topic "Transparent and accountable governance in CSOs". Participants discussed and learned about governance and good governance principles, accountability and transparency, management structures, work and decision-making processes in CSOs, solving common problems.

As partner in the EU funded project - **Rural youth assisting Macedonia in EU integration** (19/12/2017 - 18/12/2019), HMRR appointed a representative to present Croatian experiences and examples of good practices at two forums concerning youth employment in rural areas, held in December 2018 in Macedonia.

Other gatherings and workshops organized by HMRR



With joint organization of HMRR and the Czech network for rural development, a **gathering of representatives of four Czech, five Croatian LAGs and one LAG from Serbia (Vojvodina)** was held on December 4th. The representatives of the LAGs presented their organizations, areas of activity and projects. Furthermore, they discussed the possibilities of cooperation and identified potential topics on which they can work together, as well as possible sources of funding.



HMRR held its **regular annual Assembly** on December 5th. Among other, the new Strategic plan for the period 2019-2021 was adopted. Also, back-to-back with the Assembly, two workshops were organized on 5th and 6th of December.



The workshop ***Towards the third Croatian Rural Parliament***, held on December 5th, was a part of the preparations of the Croatian Rural Parliament that will be held 24th-27th April in Tisno municipality.

<http://hmrr.hr/hr/novosti/hrvatski-ruralni-parlament/radionica-ususret-hrp/>



Workshop for Local Action Groups (LAGs), was organized on December 5th and 6th, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development. The aim of the workshop was an exchange of the experience about LAG tenders and implementation of Local Development Strategies, and the presentation of the next LAG tenders (eligibility requirements, eligible projects/costs, selection criteria, etc.).

Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo*



RURAL DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK OF KOSOVO

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Preparation of the 1st Kosovo Rural Parliament

The Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo began with the preparatory activities for the 1st Kosovo Rural Parliament. This initial process is supported by the Ministry for Regional Development of Kosovo within the framework of the small grants program for civil society organizations.

The preparatory process includes promotional sessions of the Rural Parliament and regional consultancy meetings which will be concluded by the main gathering that will be organized after securing additional support from the potential donors.

Main purpose of these activities is to promote the idea and concept of the Rural Parliament and to prepare the circumstances for a successful edition of the rural parliament in Kosovo.



Assembly of the Local Action Group "Rahoveci & Anadrinia"

The Assembly of LAG Rahoveci & Anadrinia was organized in the premises of NORDK. During the working session of the assembly, the general activities were discussed and also the new leading structures were constituted!

LAG Rahoveci & Anadrinia is an important member / partner of NORDK, therefore the support of their activities is aiming to advance more their internal capacities.





PREPARE Gathering 2018 Organized in Kosovo

PREPARE Gathering is the main annual event of the PREPARE Network, organized each time in a different country. This year's PREPARE Gathering was organized from 30th October until 1st November in Peja, Kosovo. Representatives of member organizations of the PREPARE network and the members of the Balkan Rural Development Network - BRDN, who are partners in the regional project ALTER, participated at the event. They gathered to exchange and to learn from each other with a common objective: to contribute to networking for sustainable rural development.

The Gathering started with traveling workshops for participants to get acquainted with the work and activity of some farmers and individuals engaged in agricultural and livestock activities in some rural localities in Kosovo. The participants shared their impressions from the field visits and came up with some findings and recommendations that mainly relate to providing support by different national programs.

The Gathering's opening session was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo, the representative of the European Union office in Kosovo, as well as

other participants from government institutions and civil society organizations. The Minister, in the panel section, presented the overall situation of the rural sector in Kosovo, quoting the achievements, difficulties, challenges and needs faced by the rural community in Kosovo, highlighting the application of the Rural Development Programme as a good opportunity to support the activity of all those who invest in the development of rural areas.

During workshops, participants in working groups discussed topics related to the: LEADER approach, capacity building and sustainability of PREPARE Network, the role of CSOs in rural development policy. Key outcomes from the discussion have been presented by each group at the end of the session.

One of the most important conclusions of the Gathering is the joint commitment of all participants to insist even more on strengthening cooperation between civil society stakeholders, including networks and organizations in the region / Europe by advocating to public institutions to improve the support to rural development, which will have an effect on improving the quality of life of the rural community.

Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia



The Annual Assembly of RDN of RM Held

The Annual Assembly of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia was organized on September 21st and 22nd, in Strumica. This opportunity of gathering 31 representatives of 27 organizations – members of RDN of RM, was utilized to attain greater participation of the membership in development of RDN's strategy for the period 2019 – 2022. The consultant stimulated a fruitful discussion among RDN members related to the main issues and opportunities of the network. As a result of the two-day work, strategic priorities were defined and draft versions of a strategy and an action plan were developed.




RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
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Increased Involvement of RDN Members in Achievement of the Network's Strategic Goals

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia developed its thematic work which derived from the following three main strategic goals:

- Advocacy with policy decision-makers who protect and promote the rights and interests of the rural population, and contribute to the equal and sustainable development of rural areas;
- Networking and establishing cooperation with external organizations and stakeholders (including the media) for the exchange of experiences and good practices, as well as promotion of the rights and interests of the beneficiaries;
- Building its own capacities and the capacities of the members, as well as strengthening the working procedures, in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the work.

The thematic work of RDN is application of the bottom-up approach in practice, where the Network builds its approaches towards rural development through active involvement of its members and other relevant stakeholders in the rural areas in order to achieve its strategic goals. The thematic work consists of creating thematic working groups of key stakeholders in rural development, by organizing seminars and workshops, preparing the-

matic publications and other information materials. The thematic work aims to fulfill the following goals:

- Identification of key priorities and challenges that could be implemented through the RDN's strategy and action plan;
- Sharing experiences that lead to success, such as useful measures, tools and approaches.

RDN has defined its work on four main themes, each focusing on specific sub-topics, previously defined by the members and the leadership of RDN.

The first meeting of the thematic group "Social inclusion", subgroup "Rural Youth" was held on December 15 in the presence of 22 representatives of civil society organizations - members of the RDN. During the meeting, numerous data from different conducted researches were presented, related to the involvement of the youth in the work of the civil society organizations and in the adoption of policies at the local level.

On December 25, another sub-group within the same thematic group, which is "Gender Equality", was launched. The first meeting of this thematic group was attended by 22 representatives of 14 CSOs - members of RDN.

Coordinators and reporters were selected for the both thematic groups. In the next year, the rest of the RDN thematic groups will be formed.

These activities that contribute to the capacity building of the Rural Development Network are financially supported by We Effect.



Celebrating the International Rural Women Day

On the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, celebrated on October 15th, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and the National Federation of Farmers in partnership with the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, organized an event dedicated to the role of women in rural areas and the inequalities and challenges they are facing. The event was supported by the Swedish Cooperative Centre We Effect and UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women - Office in Skopje. The event organized in Etno Selo, Kuchkovo, near Skopje, gathered around 150 women farmers, women from rural areas, NGOs and representatives from the central and local government, who discussed the challenges and ways forward in improving the social and economic status of women in rural areas.



Development of grassroots CSOs capacities for research and advocacy

Within the project “National Rural Parliament as a Voice of Rural Citizens”, implemented by the Rural Development Network of RM, CNVP and Action for Rural Development, 52 grassroots organizations were involved in the capacity building process carried out from February to December, 2018, through trainings on policy analyses, advocacy and lobbying. Following this cycle of trainings, in each of the 8 planning regions, a few organizations were selected and included in the mentoring process for development of policy briefs.

At the same time, a research was conducted to identify the problems and challenges of the rural population. A total of 840 representatives of the civil sector and the local self-government were covered with the research. The obtained data was analyzed and themes in relevance to the needs of the rural communities in each planning region were defined. Mentoring support was provided to the previously selected CSOs and they developed policy briefs in accordance to the themes defined for each of the planning regions.

Network for Rural Development of Montenegro



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The Third Regional Rural Youth Camp

The Network for Rural Development of Montenegro successfully organized the Third Regional Rural Youth Camp in the period from July 22 to 25, 2018 in Vučje near Nikšić. The camp, which was attended by 40 participants, was recognized as one of the most important regional events in rural development and youth.

The following topics were discussed:

- IPARD;
- LEADER approach and how to apply it best in local communities;
- Establishment and management of LAGs;
- Lobbying and advocacy;
- Establishment, organization and management of clusters.

The Camp gathered eminent lecturers from Serbia, Croatia, Bos-



nia, the European Union, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro, who shared detailed information about the IPARD program in the country.

Participants in the Camp were representatives of partner organizations from seven countries in the region: Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Croatia and Albania.

The camp was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG).



The Second National Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development



The Second National Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development took place on October 29th and 30th, 2018 at the Franca Hotel in the municipality of Pljevlja. The Second National Conference on Agricultural and

Rural Development served as a basis for the transposition and implementation of Montenegro's strategic priorities in the field of agriculture and sustainable rural development, as well as a platform for cooperation of

all relevant actors on the path of development of agriculture and rural areas in the context of Montenegro's overall commitment to the EU accession process.

The topics discussed at the conference were related to IPARD measure in Montenegro, LEADER approach and formation of Local Action Groups in Montenegro, local rural development strategies and available support measures in Montenegro, as well as the perspective of development of green economy in local communities in Montenegro.

The conference included organization of Agro Night, which served as a platform for networking of the public, private and civil sector in the field of agriculture and rural development, within which national recognitions MOBA has been given to prominent individuals at national and local level for their contribution to the development of agriculture and rural development.

The conference gathered over 100 participants from seven countries in the region: Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Croatia and Albania.

The Fifth New Year's Fair of Local Products in Niksic

The Fifth New Year's Fair of local products, featuring around 120 domestic producers from Montenegro, as well as exhibitors from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Macedonia and Albania, was held at the Niksic Sports Center from December 21st to 23rd. During the three-day event, besides the presentation of the agricultural producers and their local agricultural products, numerous round tables and programs were organized.

The Fair is organized by the Network for Rural Development and the Municipality of Nikšić, with the support of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center of Tehnopolis, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG). The participation at the fair was free of charge for exhibitors and visitors, and for all of them, a whole-day cultural and entertainment program was prepared. For the youngest visitors, animators and Santa Claus were arranged along with other kids programs.

The Fair also had humanitarian character, therefore the exhibitors prepared products which were distributed to about 15 socially endangered families.



The first national training in Montenegro on "Transparent and accountable governance of CSOs" was organized

Within the project NAGE (Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy), funded by the EU where the NRD MN is a partner organization, the first national training in Montenegro on the topic "Transparent and accountable governance of CSOs", was organized from 6th to 7th of December 2018. 25 representatives of CSOs (mostly members of the Network) learnt about the basic concepts and main principles of good governance and accountability.

Network for Rural Development of Serbia

The role of NRDS in the rural development processes

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia is working actively to provide voice of the rural population and to improve the role of the civil society in the rural development processes in Serbia and the Western Balkans. During the past six months, the Network implemented numerous activities which have contributed to improvement of the capacities of the key actors in rural development, harmonizing Serbia's legal regulation with EU legal regulations, and support of rural communities.

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia, together with the European Movement in Serbia, coordinates the work of the working group of the National Convention on the EU (NKEU),

for chapter 11 - Agriculture and Rural Development, chapter 12 - Food Security, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy and chapter 13 - Fisheries. The main activities implemented in the second half of the year 2018 were directed towards monitoring the process of European integration in the mentioned chapters, implementation of IPARD II programs and future plans and amendments to the Law on Food Safety.

The session of the Working Group of the National Convention on the topic of IPARD II program was held on November 30, in Belgrade. The meeting was opened by the coordinators Dragan Roganovic (Network for Rural Development of Serbia), Milos Milovanovic (European Movement in



NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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Serbia) and the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Jasmina Miljkovic, Slobodan Zivanovic and Milan Ivankovic, as well as the representative of the Administration for Agrarian Payments, Ivana Zlatanović. It was stressed that so far, calls under the measures 1 and 3 have been opened, while in the forthcoming period, accreditation of the measure 7 - Diversification of agricultural holdings and business development (rural tourism) and measure 9 - Technical assistance, are expected. The representatives of the Ministry explained to the participants their efforts in raising the standard of small agricultural farms so that they can participate in the implementation of the program. The plan is to introduce two new sectors into the IPARD II program: grapes production and processing - wine sector and production and processing of eggs. The second part of the meeting was foreseen for a debate in which the members of the Working Group had the opportunity to ask questions and get some instructions from the Ministry representatives.



The NKEU session dedicated to amending the Law on Food Safety was held on December 21, 2018 at the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, in Belgrade. The meeting was attended by representatives of several ministries, members of the NKEU, as well as representatives of the civil society in Serbia. The civil society representatives noted that previous public debate on the proposal for changes to this law was not held and hence this opposes the good practice of stakeholders' participation in the adoption of the necessary legislation and its harmonization with EU legislation. Additional consultations with professional organiza-



tions and CSOs were suggested. Considering that the proposed changes have already been sent to the Assembly, the Convention will try to submit the comments through parliamentary commit-

tees prior to the voting for deputies, in order to adopt numerous proposals through the amendments and to improve the legislation on the safety and quality of food in Serbia.

“LEADER reloaded” Conference

Representative of the Network for Rural Development of Serbia participated at the conference “LEADER reloaded” organized by ELARD, in Evora (Portugal) from September 26th to September 28th, 2018. The participants were engaged in a mix of discussions, analysis and creative work, including the development of cooperation initiatives between rural territories of the EU. The representative of NRDS presented the experience of Serbia related to the theme and established several contacts with potential partners.

National training on “Transparent and Accountable Governance” organized in Vrnjacka Banja



The Network for Rural Development of Serbia organized a national training on “Transparent and Accountable Governance” in Vrnjacka Banja, on 13th and 14th of December 2018. At the training participated 24 representatives

of CSOs from Serbia. This activity was implemented within the joint project of BRDN partners, “Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy”, financed by the European Union.



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