



**INFORMED
AND EXPERIENCED FOR
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

Project VS/2012/003/0305

“Informed and Experienced for Sustainable Agriculture” - Enhancing the information and consultation capacity of the social partners in sector of Agriculture for active participation in working life for sustainable Agriculture

Second Steering Committee Meeting PM2, Skopje 5-6.11.2012 *Minutes*

The meeting took place in the period 5 -6.11.2012 in Hotel Continental in Skopje, Macedonia. According to the Project Plan adopted and agreed by the partnership during the first Project meeting all the project partners were invited by the leading partner - FNSZ to take part on the Second Steering Committee meeting. This project meeting was planned to be held after organizing and carried out the national workshops in the three pilot countries – Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. The meeting was attended by 11 participants from the partnership: AGROSTAR - Romania, ALPA - Italy, Agrosindikar – Macedonia, FNSZ and BAAP/ AZPB – Bulgaria and FGA-CFDT – France. The partner from IG BAU was absent due to previous engagement arrangement in his organization, but was declaring full support to the partnership work. All the mentioned participants were presenting, both the employees and employer’ representatives in the partnership. External expert from Reseau Projective, chosen for the purpose of efficient project implementation, took also part on the project meeting and played an important role during the work. All the participants were provided in advance and on the spot with all necessary information regarding the meeting aims and working documents. All the partners were aware about the meeting aims which are as follow:

- To explore the partnership work and communication in the frame of the project concept
- To monitor the process of gathering and analysis of information regarding the information and consultation process in the sector of agriculture
- To check the progress of the Methodology (Questionnaires, Analysis, National Guidelines/ Recommendations, Transnational Brochure concept) following the common quality criteria for the products
- To work on the dissemination and publicity of the project outcomes
- To check the financial flows
- To envisage the final Transnational conference concept
- To draw a corrective measure if needed.

The work started with a pre–planning meeting of the Project manager and project coordinator with the expert from Reseau Projective in order to agree the program and the structure of the work during the Steering committee meeting and to make a revision of the work done during the recently carried out National workshops. The discussion covered also the concept of research and analytical work expected by the partnership from the experts’ side and the way of presenting the state of play till the moment. All the participants had a common dinner where the communication has been held in an informal way again under the impression of the national workshop in Macedonia.

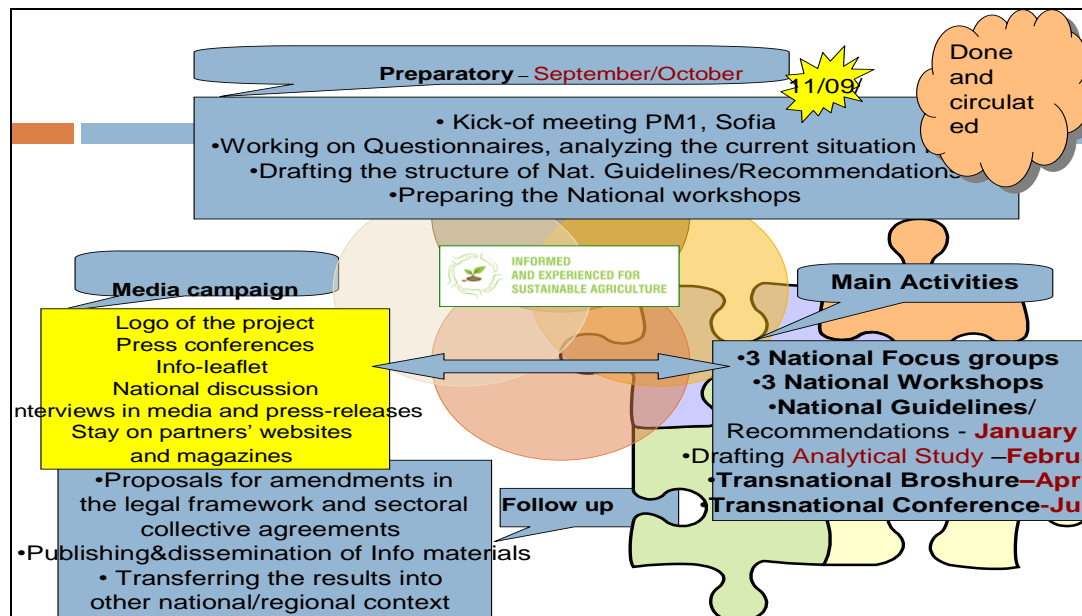
The meeting on 6th of November 2012, started with welcoming speech of Mr. Jivko Danevski - the President of the hosting organization Agrosindikar. He expressed the gratitude of Agrosindikar to the project partnership to give space in Macedonian Agricultural Sector to speak about the Information and consultation rights of the workers and employees. He referred to the hard necessity of the National Law regarding the information and consultation

rights to be made in order to serve to the workers and the pressure and lobbying needed in order these rights to be exercised and implemented into practice.

The participants were given the floor to introduce themselves and to refer to the aims of the meeting as expectations and recommendations. This was needed because there were “new faces in the partners’ meeting” also involved in the project concept.

The progress of the project was reported by Mrs. Vasilyonova, project coordinator. She made an deep overview of the work done till the moment starting from the beginning of the project partners’ work in September and referring to the all steps agreed by the partnership. The overview was made via Power Point presentation and covered all the issues in the agenda.

The concept of the revision could be seen in the following mind-map:



A special focus was given to the main activities and indicators especially on:

1. The research process on the realization of rights in the I & C in Agriculture.

This is made with the support of Resea Projective external expertise and with the full commitment of the national partners’ organizations. According to the Methodology the Questionnaires for gathering information were elaborated for social partners, workers’ and employers/managers point of view, were circulated to the partners and finally 47 feedback answers were collected in the three pilot countries (17 in Romania, 15 in Bulgaria, and 17 in Macedonia). What is foreseen according to the decision of the partners during the meeting is 6 more Questionnaires, developed to be filled in by the partners’ unions from the partnership. This will enrich the basis information gathered from the point of view of the employee’s representatives. Mr. Jan-Pierre Klapuch, the external expert, insisted the Questionnaires to be summarized and presented to the experts on French or English to them till the end of November. The information, gathered during the workshops along with the examples of good practice, provided by partners from Italy, France and Germany will be taken on board in the process of elaboration of the Analytical Study, which will be drafted by the end of February.

Meanwhile the National Guidelines are being elaborated in the pilot countries Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania. They have to be finished in January and also circulated to the external experts as an important contribution to the process of analyzing and will provide it with conclusions and recommendations for the final version of the Study and will be a prerequisite for drafting the Transnational Brochure, which has to be ready in April 2013. Our target is the final Transnational conference on July 4th, where all the results of the project work will be presented to the large audience and publicity will be given.

2. The National workshops were reported by the project coordinator. All the workshops were held according to the planned data.



ИНФОРМИРАНИ И ОПИТНИ ЗА УСТОЙЧИВО ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕ

Start date	End date	Venue	Type of event
29/10/2012	30/10/2012	Bucharest	Workshop 1 WS RO
01/11/2012	03/11/2012	Sofia	Workshop 2 WS BG
05/11/2012	07/11/2012	Skopje	Workshop 3 WS MK Steering Committee Meeting PM2

The participants by countries were chosen by the partner organizations as follow:
In Romania - 22 participants – 10 of them farmers and 12 of them union’s representatives.
In Bulgaria – 27 participants have taken part on the workshop – 10 of them employers representatives, 11 union’s representatives and 6 experts.

In Macedonia the participants were 23, 11 of them union’s representatives and ...employers

The program of the National workshops was dedicated to the Information and Consultation and participation of the employees, whereas the responsible for the events were inspired to design the topics in attractive, crosscutting and interactive way. That for the chosen topics were different in the different partners’ countries and they covered the following questions: information and consultation process in the agricultural enterprises, Social Dialogue as the main important topic, Corporate Social Responsibility, Change Management and employee’s involvement. *(The programs for the three workshops are attached as reference).* In all the workshops a basic knowledge toward the legislative framework of I&C process – From the European directive to the implementation in the national legislation and at the workplace were given to the participants. The innovative approach was experienced by the contribution from the “old-members – states” partners’ experts, that inspired a fruitful discussion in the plenary and moves the process of learning and acting forward. Moreover, because of the discussion and exchange of case-studies from the practice the participants pointed the shortages in the legislation and its implementation in the agricultural practices. *(All the workshops are summarised in Reports/ Minutes, also attached to this document.)*

The success of the workshops was shown by the high level of satisfaction of the participants, expressed as feedback during the closing sessions. More over, the partners in Macedonia suggested following this activity by their own in order to spread more knowledge and to raise awareness of the issue amongst the workers in agriculture.

The discussion during the Steering committee meeting was enriched by the contribution from each partner, responsible for carrying out it and also by the impressions of the experts from old-members-states partners.

Florin Istrate, Vice-president of AGROSTAR, Romania referred to the situation of the social dialogue in agriculture in Romania and its instability because of the political problems in the country. He pointed that in this situation the trade unions are the organization expected to be

the most relevant source of informing and consulting both the workers and farmers in agriculture. He referred to the proposals made in the working groups during the Romanian national workshop insisting on legalization of hiring workers in agricultural farms and enterprises, which is one of the big problems there, legal defense of the leaders of workers and employees and farmers as well, promotion of the farmers associations, cooperatives etc. Fabian Guibretiere, FGA-CFDT, reflected to the importance of this project toward two aspects – first one because the employees in Bulgaria and Romania need more competences and knowledge about possibilities under Information and consultation process in the countries and active involvement in social dialogue, but also is important for the workers, Bulgarians and Romanians- working abroad and object of social dumping. As far as hi by him selves is responsible for preparation and conclusion of 30 collective agreements in the sector at local level in France underlined the fact that in France there are 180 Collective agreements concluded and 400 negotiation processes annually with special focus on the regional differences. From his practical experience hi is for inclusion of the state in the process of effective social dialogue as an important actor and also for guarantor and supporter of the autonomous social dialogue. He also referred to the fact, that in France there are problems with the social protection of the small farmers.

Salvatore Sparacio, ALPA, shred his concerns on the consequences of the crisis in Italy, that brought to closing down of 100 000 companies in the sector, respectively to increasing the unemployment rate. This led to increase of the number of migrant workers from North Africa, and inadequately paid agricultural products. There was a need to elaborate and propose measures directed toward compensation of the workers employed and to create possibilities for realization of the agricultural products on the spot of producing. This approach gives results and now a lot of young people are turning to the farming. ALPA is an unique association of small farmers, which has gained his first results – to give access of those small farmers to the European subventions. For this a long way has been followed by ALPA, special centers for agricultural support have been created and now there is a direct link and interaction between the farmers and trade unions and in the process of social dialogue their partner is the state, presented by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Vladimir Vladimirov, AZPB/ BAAP spoke with concern about the clear polarization in the Bulgarian agriculture – there are small percentage of big farms (over 1000 – 5000 ha arable land) and big percentage of small and medium farmers 9 manly in animal breeding, fruit growing, etc.) which face completely different constrains – limited access to information, big burden of bureaucracy, lack of qualitative work force, low understanding and culture of solidarity and association of farmers. Even today in Bulgaria we have problems with the labour contracts in agriculture. He underlined the confidence of his organization, that the social dialogue and collective agreements are a mechanism for regulating the relations in the sector, because solves the problems. Such type of projects is helping for exchange of information, expertise and generates new solutions for steps forward. Europe has to pay attention of the differences between the members' states and regions and to pay more attention to the new member states. Bulgaria has a chance with Commissionaire Cholosh, because he is familiar with the specifics of our region and agriculture.

This opinion was shared also by our Romanian colleague and he pointed that there are big expectations upon the new CAP after 2013 related to the interests of small farmers.

3. Special attention was given to the National Guidelines/ Recommendations that have to be produced by the pilot countries partners. The Draft of the structure was proposed before the national workshops and it was commented during the workshops. All the partners in PM2 adopted the structure proposed and will stick to it in developing the Guidelines.

Structure – draft:

- √ Introduction –this area will be used to address your political message within this field
- √ Concept of Information and consultation and employee involvement process – main aspects of the European legislation
- √ The place of the process of I&C in the national legislation

- √ The attitude and behavior stereotypes in the process of I&C
- √ The practice of implementation of the process in Agriculture
- √ Unknown opportunities for both employees and employers in the process of responsible governing the enterprise through the process of I&C
- √ Conclusions and recommendations with practical implication.

It was agreed that they will be ready till the end of January and send to the coordinator and to the Reseau Projective in order to be taken into account for the Analytical study and then for the Transnational brochure on information and consultation in the Agriculture.

4. Dissemination of project idea & results was also presented to the Steering Committee members, emphasising the work done till the moment – creation of the Project logo



which is discussed and adopted by the partners and used for different materials and events dedicated to the idea and project dissemination.

The logo was translated into Bulgarian, Romanian and Macedonian and was published on the website of FNSZ, AGROSTAR, AGROSINDIKAT along with more information for the project goals, objectives and results. Information leaflets on the project were designed and published as bi-lingual information tool in Bulgarian - English, Romanian - English and Macedonian-English, in 1500 copies and were distributed amongst the participants in the workshops and also amongst the employees in the enterprises in the three pilot countries. Several publications in Partners' internet sites and magazines were also dedicated to the project.

5. Communication is a crucial part of the partnership awareness. Till the moment communication was conducted at distance via internet, emails, and telephone and face-to-face during the formal meetings and conferences. English is the project language, but other partners' languages are to be used for the internal communication in the partnership. During the formal meetings interpretation into 3-5 languages have been used as follow:

- √ PM 1 – Sofia – Interpretation provided from and to German, French, Romanian, Italian and Bulgarian was used as pivot language
- √ WS 1 – Bucharest - Interpretation provided from and to French and Bulgarian and Romanian as pivot
- √ WS 2 – Sofia – Interpretation provided from /to German and Bulgarian
- √ WS 3 – Skopje – Interpretation from and to French, Romanian and Bulgarian, using Macedonian as pivot
- √ PM 2 – Skopje – interpretation provided from/into Romanian, Italian, French, and Bulgarian, using Macedonian as pivot.

All the written materials – programs, letters of invitation or information, handouts, power point presentations, and other materials - were also translated from English into partners' languages for the main events.

Resuming, it is obvious that all the partners' languages were used during the project cycle till now. The partners confirmed their agreement on communication strategy and declared their engagement in spreading the project idea and results on their websites.

6. Monitoring and evaluation is performed according to the adopted strategy for evaluation of the project. All the partners were carefully monitor the project process, discuss the progress of the project on each phase on the planned Steering committee meetings and if corrective measures were needed to be duly undertaken. The project coordinator reminded the participants, that the Minutes after each Steering committee meeting are sent to the partners in a prompt time and asked the partners to reflect to the project life till now and is there any need of corrective measures to be taken. It was not the case. The partners

expressed their satisfaction by now. A decision were taken the results of the project to be communicated on the conferences, committees, consultations etc., including the Sectoral Social dialogue committee meeting in order to make pressure on the public and decision makers. After PM 2 the participants will receive along with the minutes the PowerPoint presentation in English and summary of agreed tasks.

7. Planning of the Transnational Conference – the final event of the project.

Partners discussed the organization of the final event. The project coordinator presented the mail stones of the event:

- √ The motto: active participation and corporate responsibility for sustainable agriculture and better quality employment
- √ The venue and date: Sofia, 4 July 2013
- √ Number of invited external participants: 32 participants from partner organizations in the frame of EFFAT
- √ followed by Stearing committee meeting – PM3, Sofia, on 5th July 2013

The partners were brainstormed to think on the political accents to be included in the conference and other stake holders at European and national level to be invited. It has been taken decision the final list of participants and program to be elaborated by the coordinator and manager and circulated amongst the partners in June and to be consulted via emails.

The project management is responsible for giving adequate information in every moment of the process cycle and to manage the process and report to the Steering committee. For the reason of mutual responsibility of the success of this project, clear financial rules and discipline and transparency till the end of September a special guide – Vadamecum - was elaborated by the management and sent to the partners in pilot countries to facilitate the process of action implementation.

The work day finished with the conclusion how important are the cooperation, solidarity and discussions amongst the partners of project to learn from each other to create a culture, knowledge and skills upon the process of information and consultation, by taking actions at European and national levels and to make step forward in creating better place for work and life for the workers in agriculture.