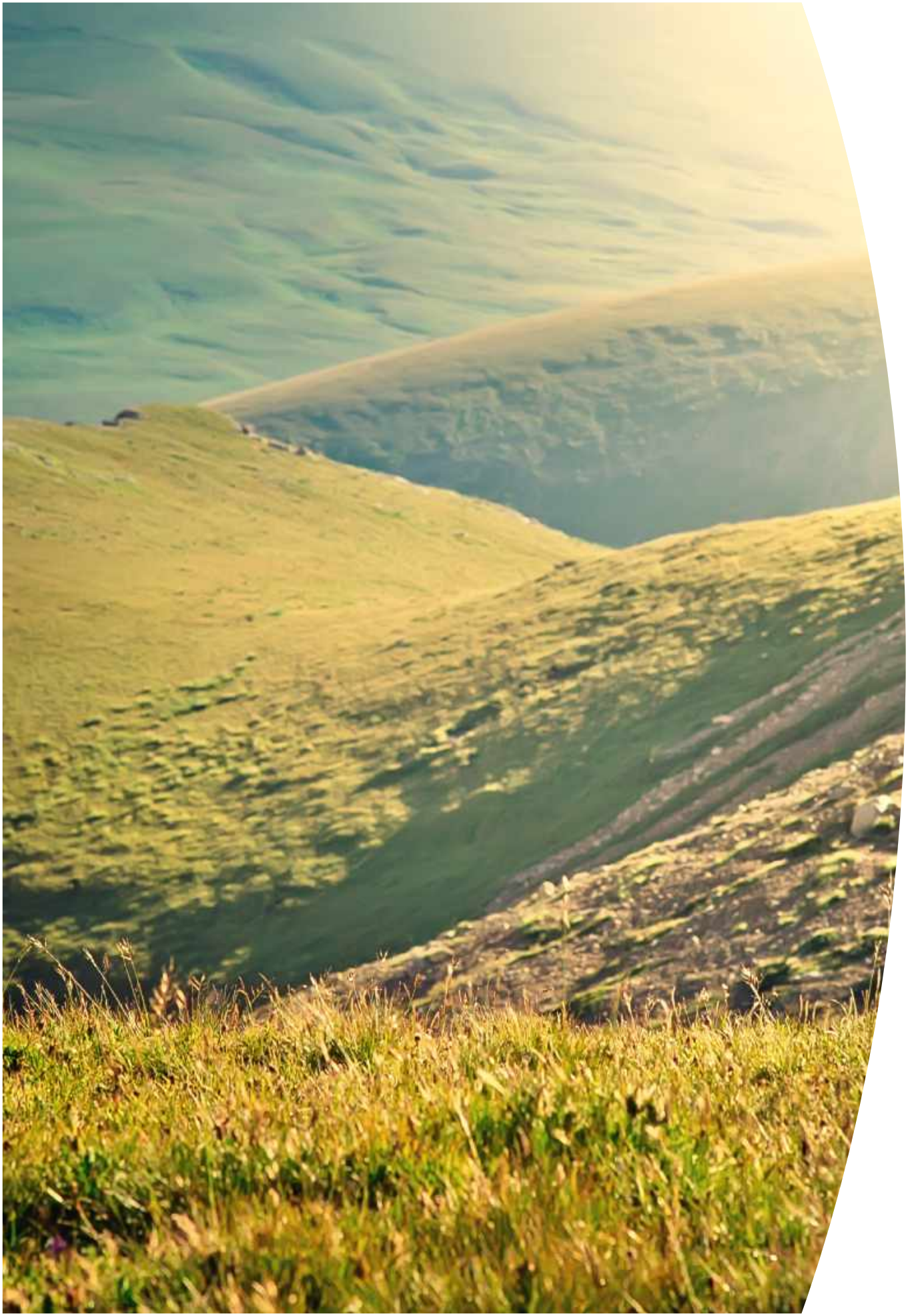
WE EFFECT

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

www.brdnetwork.org



The Balkan Rural Development Network BRDN:

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.

The asset of BRDN

BRDN brings together the rural development networks from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo.

The networks are led by the ***democracy principles,*** *embedding the* ***common values of the rural people in the WB countries.***

Independent from, but recognized by the governments the BRDN member networks are ***crucial assets for effective local development in the WB.***

A hub of contacts *providing collaboration between municipalities, NGOs and local entrepreneurs*

Capacities to link directly with stakeholders *and to encourage the creation of groups, cooperatives or associations, which* ***strengthen the voice of local communities.***

The ***BRDN platform*** *is an* ***added value structure*** *to the WB networks in working more closely and articulating the mutual interests, through joint planning of projects in fulfilling the needs of the rural population.*

Majority of the BRDN networks are partners within PREPARE Partnership for Europe. BRDN works very closely with Standing Working Group in South East Europe (SWG).

Priority areas of cooperation:

- *LEADER activities in creation links at local, national and international level*
- *Trade and economic development*
- *Agriculture and agro-industry*
- *Promotion of cultural heritage and rural tourism*
- *Environmental protection*
- *Improvement of environment for civil society development and work*
- *Exchange of information experience, and knowledge*

Western Balkan Rural Development Challenges

- *Active rural development processes in hand.*
- *Commitment to the reforms in the governmental and other systems to align them with standards and policies of the EU through the instrument for Pre-accession Assistance IPA/ IPARD.*
- *Taking into consideration the needs and capacities of the rural actors contributing to creation and successful implementation of rural development programs.*
- *Mobilizing and building cooperation between rural stakeholders and governments based on the EU LEADER Approach.*

What are we striving for?

- ***Promotion of partnership-based local development**, in stimulating awareness, networking and active participation among all categories of stakeholders.*
- ***Raise knowledge** of the rural actors in the EU's approach to rural development **especially the LEADER principles.***
- *Provide opportunities for LEADER-type groups to take part in **transnational (TNC) cooperation projects** with EU partners*
- *Learn from and contribute to **debates and exchanges related to rural development in the EU**.*
- ***Strengthen the cooperation with ENRD** to become equal partner in participating on multinational events organized at EU level.*
- ***Share experiences** with stakeholders from EU countries to take part in events and projects organized and implemented in the WB.*

Rural Development Network in

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

MRRBiH
Mreža za ruralni razvoj u Bosni i Hercegovini

The Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in April 2014. It has 19 civil-society member organizations, embracing all the ethnicities of the country and including 5 Local Action Groups.

The Network's aim is to improve the quality of life, strengthen the rural economy, and promote the sustainable use of resources in rural areas throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. To this end, it promotes cooperation, dialogue and exchange of information, knowledge and experiences between organisations which operate in the sector of rural development; and seeks to represent the interests of the rural population.

The Network plays an active role in the process of creating policies and programmes for rural development, working with stakeholders, academic and professional organisations in the country and abroad, local authorities and other institutions in all the ethnicities. It works to improve the capacity of its members in their rural development activity; and to strengthen the absorption capacity of all rural stakeholders, especially in their use of EU funds. It organises public forums to enable rural stakeholders to identify problems and find solutions.

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www.ruralnamreza.ba

Activities/Projects implemented by the **Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina coordinates the implementation of Training for Rural Animators, within 6 training modules:

1. Rural development;
2. Rural economy;
3. Rural sociology;
4. Rural ecology;
5. Lobbying and advocacy and
6. Public policies and public campaign.

In total, the Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina trained 106 rural animators in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and published a book – Training for Rural animators.

On May 15, 2015, RDN in B&H organized the First Rural Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo, in the building of Parliament Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The interest was huge and therefore 124 selected participants attended the Rural Parliament. One of the conclusions was that the Rural Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be established as a permanent forum for an active dialogue between the various participants who live and work in rural areas - from individuals to civil society organizations, from economic and social entities to government institutions. It was suggested that the Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina should continue to monitor the implementation progress of the proposals and conclusions from the First Rural Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to take active participation in the implementation of the recommendations within Chapter C - The role of civil society in rural development. In addition, the Rural Development

Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina is entrusted, together with other stakeholders, to continue the development of the concept and the organization of future rural parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

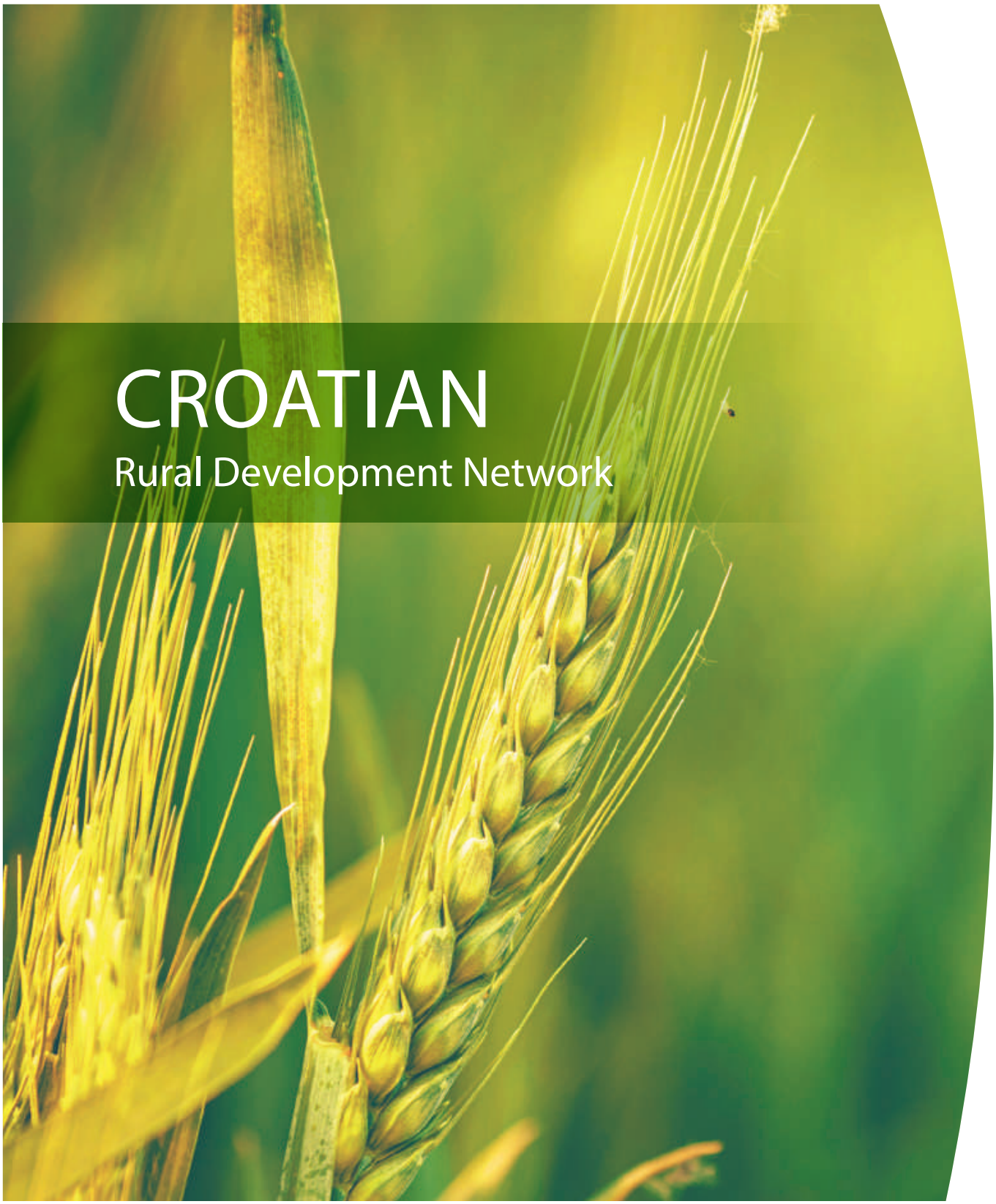
In 2017, the Network coordinated the process of developing civil society answers to the European Commission's Questionnaire for B&H. The Rural Development Network coordinated the process of constructing answers to the Chapter 11 (Agriculture and rural development), Chapter 12 (Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy) and Chapter 13 (Fisheries).

In 2017, representatives of the Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina were involved in consultation process for development of the rural development strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina is project partner in the regional ALTER project (Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural areas), financially supported by the European Commission. Within this project, the Network is implementing different types of activities at national level, such as:

- Training on lobbying and advocacy for CSO's;
- Training on policy research for CSO's;
- Introduction of LEADER/CLLD to the general public in B&H;
- Financial support for grass-root organizations;
- Cooperation with the institutions involved in rural development.

All of the activities implemented by the Rural Development Network are focused on their main goal which is improvement of the livelihoods in the rural areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



CROATIAN
Rural Development Network

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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Balkan Rural Development Network

HMRR
HRVATSKA MREŽA ZA RURALNI RAZVOJ

Croatian Rural Development Network - HMRR is an organisation and a network of organisations that promotes sustainable development of Croatian rural areas since 2006. By working together, networking, partnership and knowledge transfer we aim to improve conditions for sustainable development and high-quality life in rural communities. At this moment, the Network counts 46 members..

The Network advocates an evenly developed Croatia, in which residents of rural areas actively contribute to developing their communities through their social and economic activities. HMRR's areas of activity are: (1) advocating interests of rural stakeholders in creating and implementing public policies, (2) networking and informing our members and contributors to rural development, (3) education, exchange of knowledge and experiences and (4) organisation development.

Goals of HMRR are to

- Encourage the development of rural communities, strengthen their abilities and contribute to the development of participative democracy in the rural area of Croatia
- Advocate interests of local stakeholders from rural area in the process of drafting, adopting and implementing policies and regulations
- Cooperate with organizations from different sectors and on different levels in order to contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas in Croatia and in Europe
- Encourage the exchange of opinions, knowledge and experience and disseminate information relevant to the development of rural areas.

HMRR vision:

Balanced development of Croatia, in which inhabitants of rural areas contribute through their social and economic activities and take active part in care, preservation and protection of the areas where they live.

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Albert Varga,
President

Julia Bakota,
Programme Associate

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Croatian Rural Development Network**

In 2006 HMRR organised First national conference on rural development "Rural development of Croatia - possibilities and challenges" and in 2008 International gathering on rural development. Together with Slovenian Rural Development Network HMRR 2009 organised PREPARE gathering in Croatia and Slovenia.

Advocating LEADER / Community Led Local Development method

Ever since participating in the establishment of the first LAG in Croatia in 2008, HMRR has been intensively advocating the LEADER method, and lately its new development phase, CLLD. Through help with creating and preparing the implementation of local development strategies; co-creating LAG regulations in association with Managing authority; research; spreading and informing the public about LAG activities and mapping all 56 Croatian LAGs, HMRR encourages the development of rural areas - Croatian LAGs cover more than 90% of the whole area of the country! Also, through our membership in rural umbrella networks ELARD and PREPARE, and our projects focused on LEADER implementation in some South East European and Black Sea countries, HMRR participates in LAG development on a European level.

- 2011 Discussions on LEADER approach in Croatia and LEADER Ordinance
- 2012 Conference "How to plan rural development"
- 2013 National conference "What can rural areas expect from the programming period 2014-2020"
- 2014 Workshop "Territorial and demographic characteristics in the new definition of LAG according to the new RDP 2014-2020"
- 2015 Round Table "How to achieve high quality of LDS/CLLD Strategies?"
- 2016 Workshops "Development of LDS"
- 2017 "Future of LEADER approach in Croatia"

Networking, exchange of knowledge and information

HMRR regularly conducts consultations with members and other interested parties about public policies on rural development, publishes them, presents them at meetings etc. Active participation in meetings, conferences and study trips was used as an opportunity for spreading information on the Network, on the achieved level of implementation of LEADER, IPARD and PRR in Croatia and for advocating international cooperation on rural development projects. We inform our members and the general public about rural development activities through our web site, the Facebook fan page, the E-Newsletter HMRR Info and the HMRR Messenger.

HMRR is a member of the European network PREPARE - Rural Development Partnership since 2010, the European Network ELARD - European LEADER Rural Development Association 2011, Rural Development Network of Republic of Croatia since 2012 and the BRDN - Balkan Network for Rural Development from 2014.

Shadow report on implementation of the IPARD programme in Croatia 2010 - 2012

The Shadow Report is based on the comments and suggestions made by users of IPARD measures in period 2010-2012, potential users and consultants. HMRR wanted to inform public on IPARD implementation, to encourage more applications thus increasing the IPARD absorption rate and to enlighten major obstacles, propose solutions, improve conditions and criteria, upgrade procedures and practices. It contains concrete opinions and recommendations based on practical experience. By publishing these comments, HMRR wanted to contribute to improving the implementation of the new rural development program 2004-2020. The report is available on: http://bit.ly/16oEuYu; http://bit.ly/2Dxgyw6

Initiating and organizing Croatian Rural Parliament with our local partners

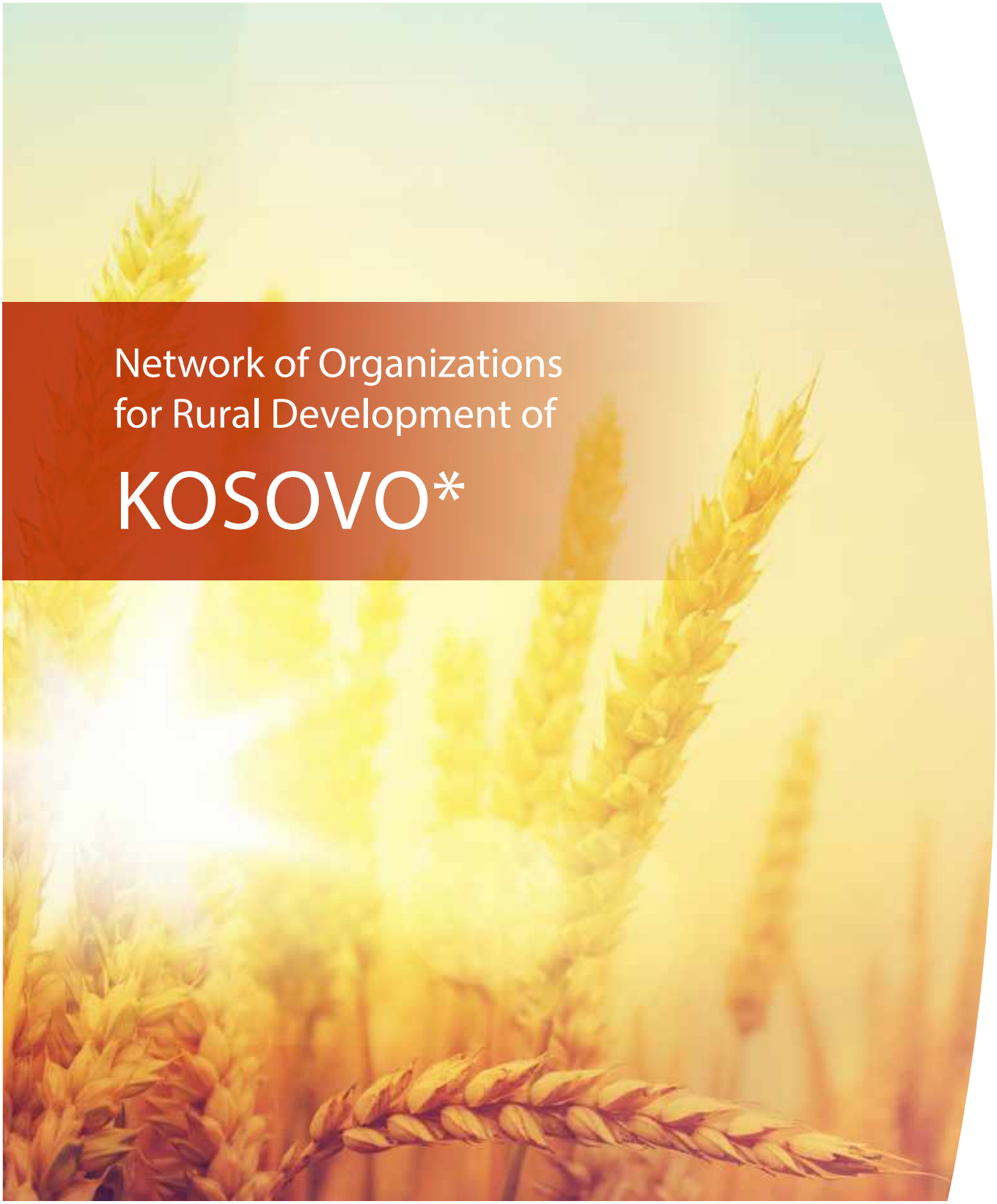
HMRR initiated and organized two Croatian Rural Parliaments so far, the first in 2015 with over 200, and the second in 2017 with 300 national and international participants. The goal of the RP - to hear and appreciate the voice of the rural communities - was achieved and presented in form of two Croatian RP Declarations. This is where Croatian rural stakeholders refer policy makers to most notable issues that rural areas are faced with and offer innovative solutions. The Declaration of the second RP held in Međimurje is available here: http://bit.ly/2DxwsGv

Platform for rural development of South East Europe & ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas

HMRR coordinated the Platform for rural development of SEE and, along with Latvia, has the role of sharing good practices as EU partner in the ALTER project. Both the Platform and ALTER gather rural networks and associations that deal with rural development in SEE countries with a mission to strengthen capacities, explore cooperation possibilities, strongly involve local communities, researching the current condition in rural areas and recommending future steps.

Other HMRR projects:

2007-2009 Sustainable Future of the Rural Areas of Croatia; 2008-2009 Sustainable development of the region through participatory processes; 2010-2013 Together for Sustainable Development in Croatia; 2010 PREPARE gathering; 2010-2012 Capacities of Inhabitants over 50s as a RD Tool; 2011-2013 Institutional grant; 2011 LEADER approach in Croatia - preparation of rural areas for EU; 2012 Building Sustainable Regional Communities in Today's World; 2013 Development perspectives of rural areas in the City of Zagreb - Brezovica settlement; 2014 Development cooperation through the support of NGO networks in the field of RD; 2015-2017 Institutional grant; 2014-2015 Women and sustainable development - new possibilities of employment; 2017-2021 Promotion of rural development and diversification in Khulo Municipality // More details please find on http://bit.ly/2DsLbP6



Network of Organizations for Rural Development of KOSOVO*

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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Balkan Rural Development Network

RURAL DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK OF KOSOVO

The Network of Organization for Rural Development of Kosovo*, established in 2013, is a non-profit organization which includes rural members from all resident ethnic groups (Albanian, Serbs, Turkish and Bosnians). Its membership includes organizations from rural areas, organizations from urban areas with the focus on RD sector, associations, non-formal groups and young farmers clubs.

The aim of the Network is to promote the development of rural communities and the relationship with various sectors of the rural community in Kosovo*; and to create better conditions for sustainable development of rural areas, in order to improve the quality of life. It stimulates advanced approaches, cooperation and exchange of ideas, information and experiences between its member organizations, and helps to organize activities in the field of rural development.

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."*

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Rural Development of Kosovo**

The thematic areas in which the Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo has expertise are:

- Advocacy and networking;
- Capacity building of women and youth organizations from rural areas;
- Developing and promoting of Rural Development Policy;
- Promoting the LEADER approach and activities;
- Advisory services for new partner organizations.

NORDK as a national organization supports the activities and implements campaigns especially in: empowering young farmers, empowering small farmers' associations, establishing local farmers' groups. Also it has established partnership and cooperation with forestry associations and viticulture associations.

Project title: **"Strengthening of the Network of Organizations for Rural Development"**

Objectives and activities: Primary objective of the project was to strengthen the structures of the Network based on mission of advancing the issues and interests of the members of the rural community.

Final project result is the consolidation and functioning of the structures of the network which consists of 55 members from rural organizations, farmers clubs, women's associations, young farmers and other rural active groups.

Project title: **" Capacity building and promotion of the role of NORDK"**

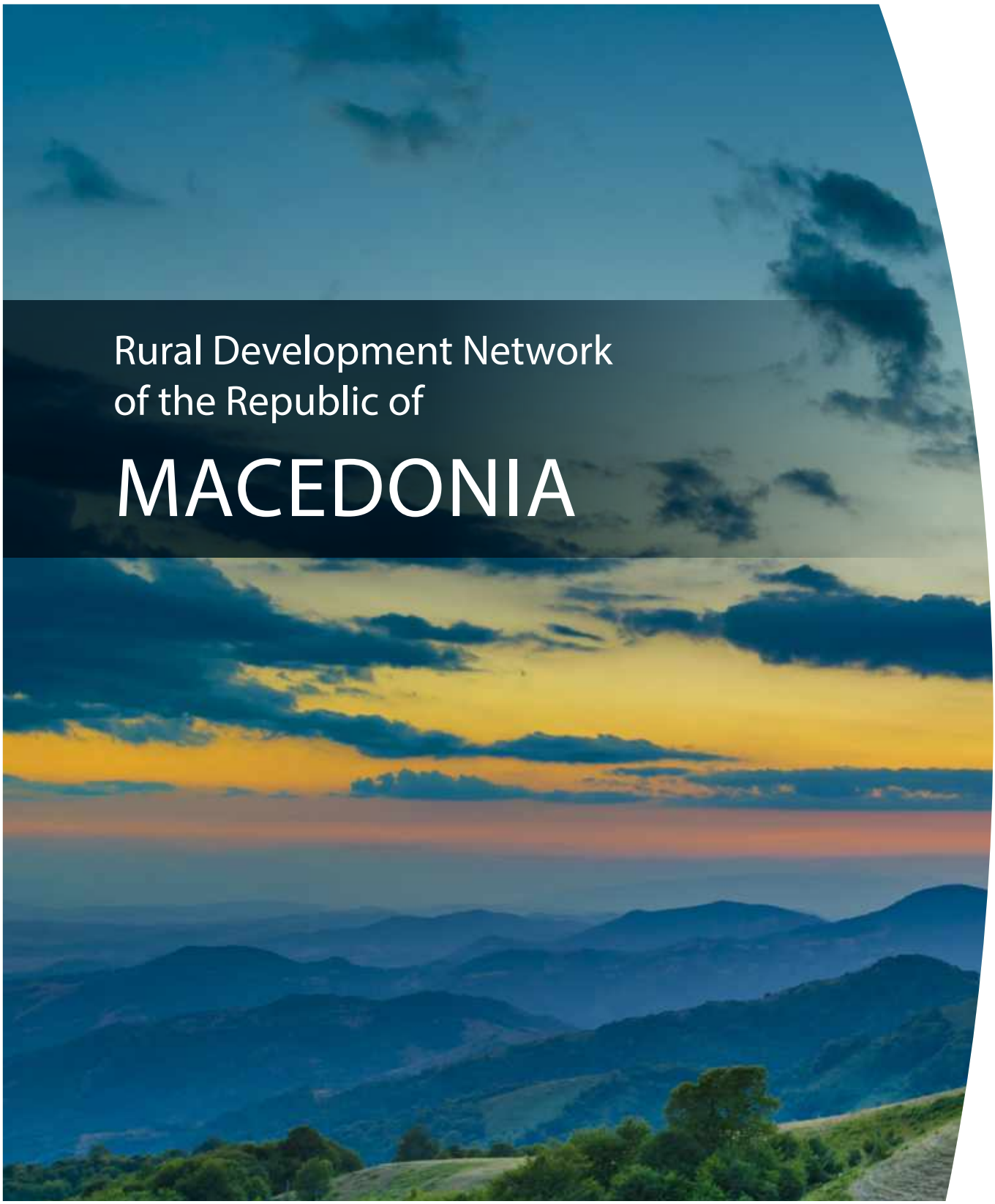
Objectives and activities: Activities implemented on behalf of this project were aimed at promotion of the role of the network, including the promotion of institutional objectives related to rural development.

Also through these activities we have taken the recommendations and the needs of rural communities which are summarized in the framework of the National Report of NORDK.

Another project goal was promotion of the European Rural Parliament and other regional mechanisms for rural development, in which NORDK takes active participation.

Project title: **"Active Local Territories for Economic Development and Rural Areas – ALTER"**

Note: NORDK is partner organization in implementation of the ALTER project together with the rural development networks from Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Croatia, Latvia, Turkey and PREPARE network.



Rural Development Network of the Republic of MACEDONIA

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia was established in 2010 as a national union of civil associations to provide a voice for rural communities in the Republic. The RDN of the RM is an umbrella organization that currently allies 83 citizen organizations, members, dealing in the area of rural development. RDN represents the only rural development movement in the country whose membership increases continuously. The RDN represents the needs of its members at local, national as well as at international level. Working at local stage, the member organizations empower people, creating a decision level below the municipal authorities, and contributing in vitalizing the local democracy. At national level they provide inputs and recommendations addressed through the RDN to various types of organizations, government bodies, involved in the decision making process with issues related to rural development. At international level, member organizations are represented through the RDN - member of international organizations (PREPARE, ELARD, BRDN).

The aim of the Network is to demonstrate a structured approach in mobilising rural communities to become stronger agents of local development and to participate in rural policy at local, regional, national and European level. This includes establishment of effective cooperation and mutual help among individuals and organisations from the rural areas, in order to ensure effective representation of the needs, the voice and interests of the rural population and provision of flow of information between government and non-government bodies on all levels.

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia**

The work of the RDN is focused on seven priority areas. These priority areas were identified and determined on the basis of situation analyses, the ideas advanced by Network members and other relevant stakeholders.

Priority areas for actions

1. LEADER activities in creation of links at local level;
2. Women Economic Empowerment in rural areas;
3. Agriculture and forestry;
4. Cultural heritage as tool for development of rural areas;
5. Sustainable management of the environment;
6. Diversification of economic activities in rural areas; and
7. Entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Projects implemented:

- **Simulation of LEADER Approach in Southeast and East planning regions of Macedonia**

RDN of RM has a leading role in the affirmation of the EU LEADER methodology at national level, as a tool that promotes participatory approach and active involvement of all relevant stakeholders in processes that can influence their own living conditions and development of their rural communities.

RDN worked to develop capacities of LAG constituents in the East and the Southeast Planning Region of the Republic of Macedonia, for participatory planning and decision-making as foundation of LEADER methodology.

As a result, the stakeholders from 21 municipalities from the East and the Southeast Planning Region have strengthened the capacities regarding LEADER approach specifics. Five Local Action Groups (LAGs) initiatives, were established under the principles of the EU LEADER approach. These public-private partnerships have finalized five (5) Local Development Strategies incorporating actions to improve stakeholders' inclusion in the decision making process for issues with relevance to their local community. According to their strategic priorities, the LAG stakeholders implemented 3 project initiatives.

The implemented activities enabled simulation of the entire process of rural development projects' implementation which provided a tangible, practical experience to future LAG constituents. They will be the pioneers in putting LEADER methodology into practice and ready to act as soon as LEADER measure is launched by the Ministry of Agriculture.

- **Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture**

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia worked to develop and disseminate affordable climate change adaptation technology and practices in the agricultural sector, by conducting comprehensive public awareness and outreach campaigns combined with capacity building programs tailored to the needs of farming operations. This four-year project, financed by USAID focused on implementation of measures in the Mediterranean zone, including the Vardar region and parts of Strumica and Sveti Nikole.

- **Reducing Vulnerability of Agriculture to Climate Change in the Republic of Macedonia**

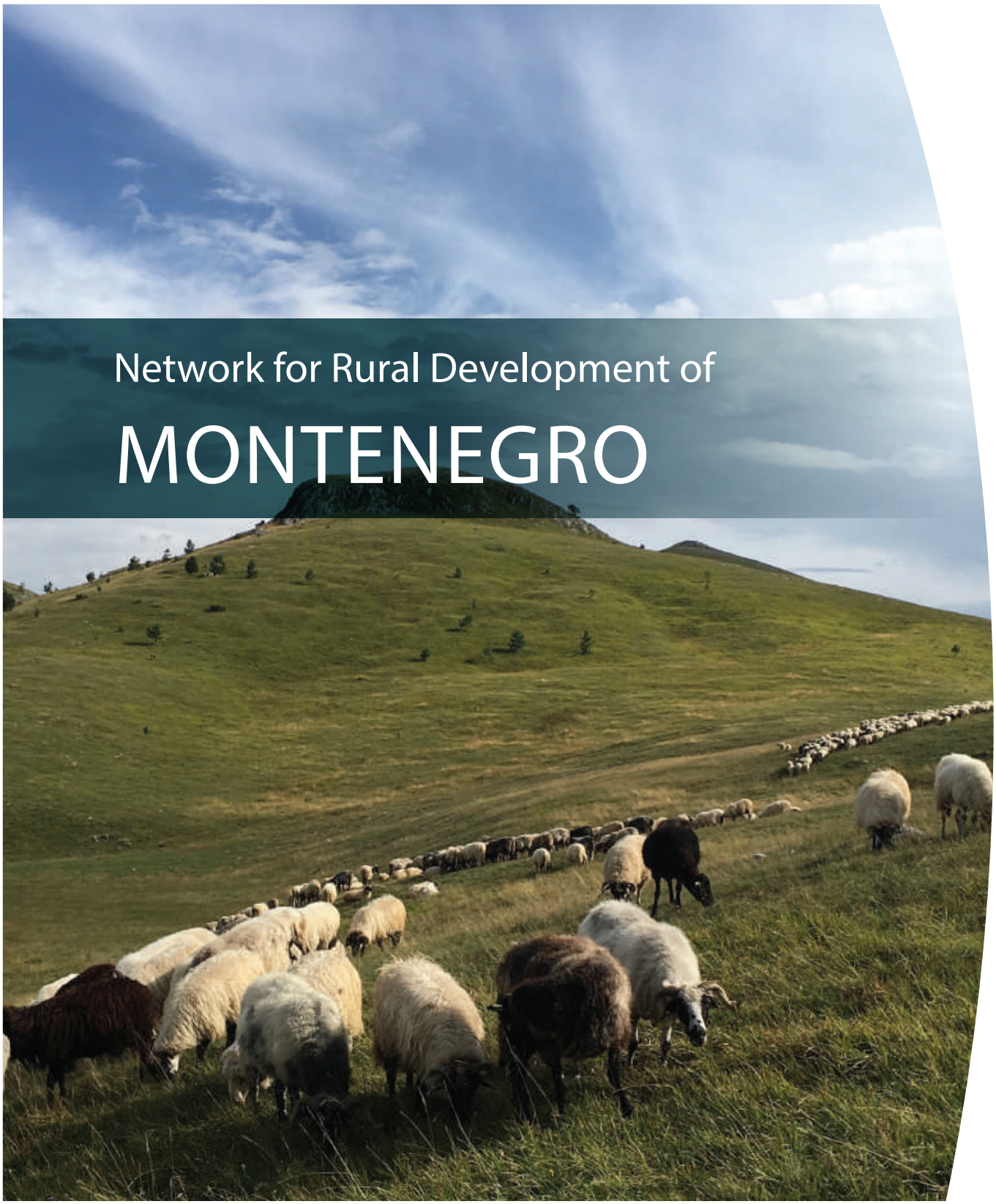
Within the FAO Project for Technical Cooperation: "Reduction of the vulnerability of agriculture to climate change" in the Republic of Macedonia (TCP / MCD / 3503), the Rural Development Network was engaged to build the capacities of the teachers from secondary agricultural schools and NEA (National Extension Agency) advisers, by addressing a number of issues related to climate change. The project activities aimed to increase the capacity of the entities within the Republic of Macedonia to transfer relevant climate change knowledge. Ultimately the project activities empowered the relevant transitions to adapted and resistant to climate change agricultural production systems.

- **National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens**

RDN of RM is implementing partner in the project „National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens" which aims to enhance the impact of rural CSOs' and involvement in development of public policies and decision making processes. In that direction, RDN works on developing the capacities of rural CSOs in advocacy, lobbing, networking and knowledge on policies and processes relevant for their field of work, in order to influence local decision making processes.

- **ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas**

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia as a partner in the project "ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas", organized many activities at national level, aiming to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and CSOs networks to participate actively in policy planning and implementation, as well as to build partnership with public institutions.



Network for Rural Development of

MONTENEGRO

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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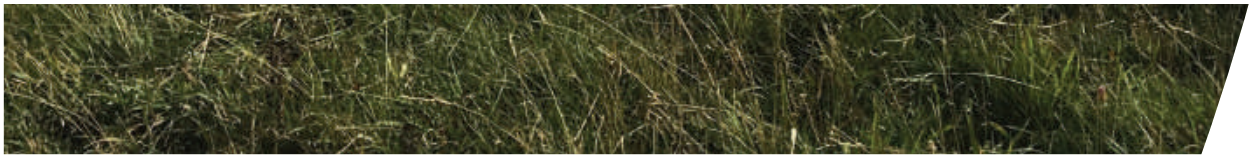
Balkan Rural Development Network



NETWORK
FOR RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
OF MONTENEGRO

Network for Rural Development of Montenegro (NRDM) was established following the example of the countries in the region: Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, in order to promote rural development measures with the objectives of transferring data on rural development, exchange of ideas and the implementation of best RD practices in Montenegro and the EU. It has 24 civil-society member organizations. It is committed to sustainable development of rural areas, especially in the northern parts of the country. It seeks to promote good understanding among rural actors of the concept of rural development in Montenegro and the EU; to mobilize resources towards sound rural development; to promote the exchange of information, transfer of ideas and good practices in the implementation of rural development in Montenegro and the EU; and to strengthen the capacity of its members.

The Network's activities are mainly focused on the LEADER approach. It supports the formation of local action groups, and programs of training and capacity-building for these groups. The aim is to develop partnerships, strengthen regional cohesion, achieve economies of scale and prepare for the implementation of the LEADER approach.

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Network for Rural Development of Montenegro**

NRDM works to improve the ability of local communities and individuals, small farms, craftsmen and processors to come up with timely information on the opportunities to gain support for their development initiatives.

Apart from the national level, the Network for Rural Development of Montenegro is also active at the regional and European level, as one of the founders of the Balkan Rural Development Network and a member of the PREPARE partnership.

Photo from the establishment of the Balkan Network for Rural Development in Skopje

Photo from BRDN presentation at EXPO in Milan

Representatives of the Network are members of various working groups at the national level, such as: Working Group for Negotiating Chapter 11 - Agriculture and Rural Development, Working Group for the Development of the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development and IPARD Monitoring Committee.

Photo from the IPARD monitoring committee meeting

NRDM has organized several international conferences of a great significance for the rural development in Montenegro, such as:

- "Role of the civil sector in the rural development of the Western Balkans", held in June 2012, at hotel Marshal in Niksic,
- "The role of the family farms in the rural development of the Balkans", held in June 2014, at hotel Ramada in Podgorica in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development,
- "First National Conference on Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro", held in December 2017, at IEC Tehnopolis in Niksic.

The NRDM had an active role in the organization of the traveling workshops within the event "Empowering Rural Stakeholders in the Western Balkans" (http://seerural.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/Report_Empowering-rural-stakeholders-in-the-Western-Balkans_SRB.pdf) which was co-initiated by PREPARE, SWG and the European Commission. Three of the

BRDN networks, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia organized travelling workshops in their countries. The final conference was held in Brussels.

NRDM organized another successful two-day travelling workshop for representatives of the diplomatic community in Montenegro (25 ambassadors), decision-makers (ministries and local administration), civil sector and media. Taking the rural tourism as a theme for this workshop, the Network aimed to promote the economical and touristic potentials of the municipality of Niksic.

NRDM is organizing the Regional Rural Youth Camp, in Montenegro, every year during the last week of July. The camp gathers 50 young people from the Balkans and Southeastern Europe, as well as several lecturers who are experienced in the rural development process.

Photo from the opening of the II Regional Rural Youth Camp

The Network is the establisher and editor of the first portal on agriculture and rural development in Montenegro www.ruralportal.me which has a large number of visits and provides information which is shared by regional media.

The Network is the organizer of the gathering called "AGRO VEČE" (Agri Night), which brings together all stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development. The event is enriched with different cultural program and the results achieved in the previous year are being promoted.

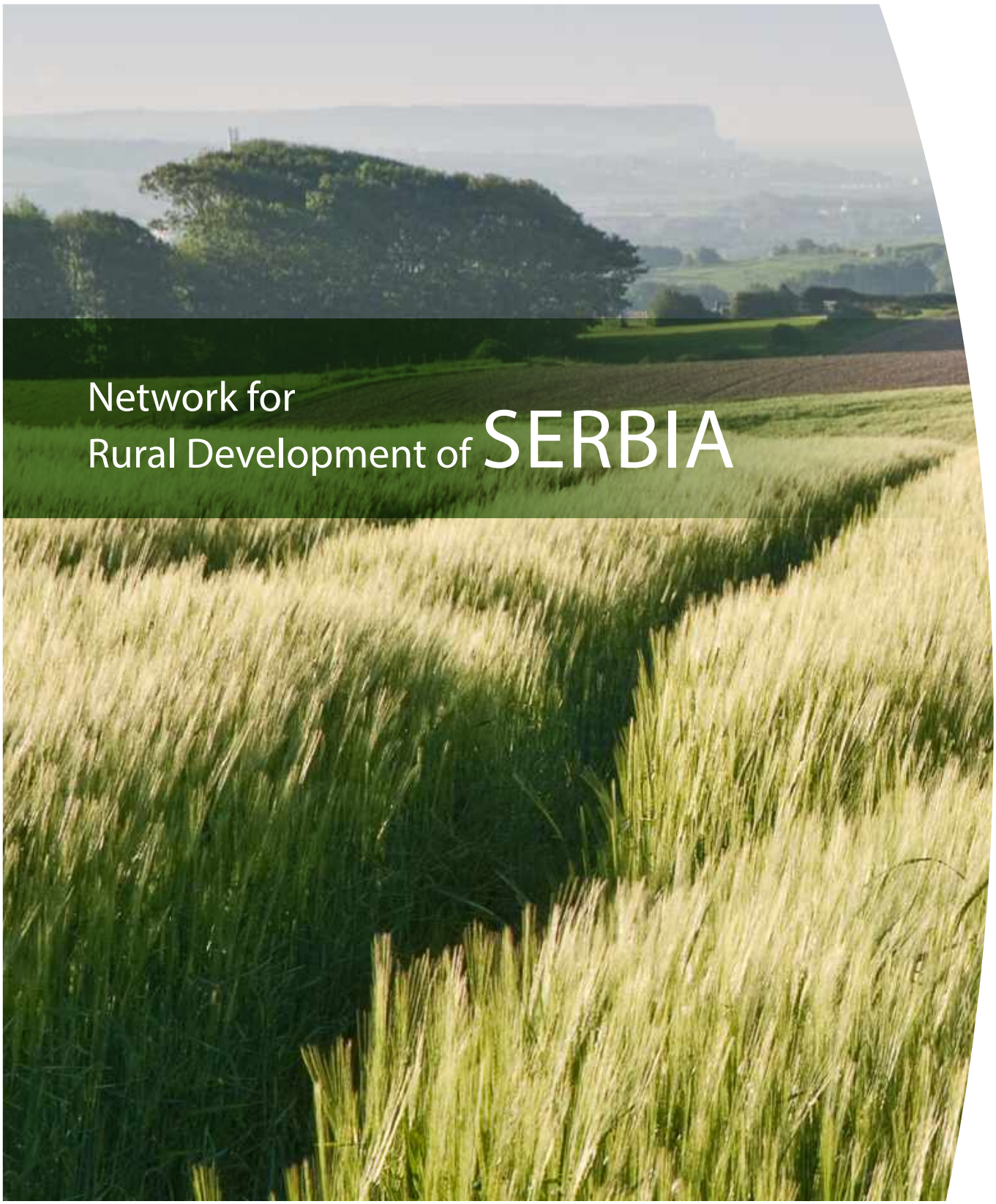
The Network also established the annual award "MOBA", which is awarded to prominent individuals, civil society organizations and institutions for their contribution in the rural development, as well as the best host and acknowledgment for life work.

Projects implemented:

- NRDM, as partner in the project ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas, is implementing activities at national level for strengthening the capacity of CSOs and CSO networks which contribute to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas.

- NRDM was implementing partner in the project "Platform for Rural Development of Southeast Europe" http://desa-dubrovnik.hr/projekti/razvojni-projekti/platforma-za-ruralni-razvoj-jugoistocne-europe/

- The Network organized the activities at national level as partner in the project "No BoRdEr" which was financed by Visegrad Fund: http://mne.ruralportal.me/ruralno-samo-ruralno-bez-granica/.



Network for Rural Development of SERBIA

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia was established in 2010 as a network of associations active in the field of rural development in Serbia. Its members are 16 regional associations, which together cover the whole of rural Serbia and which have significant collective experience and remarkable results in development work.

The main mission of the Network is to work towards an evenly developed Serbia in which rural areas are a desirable place to live, where people contribute, with their work and activities, to the conservation, development and improvement of all the potentials, values and advantages that rural communities have. In pursuing this mission, it cooperates with registered agricultural households, entrepreneurs and companies, local governments and Ministries. Its work program is focused on sustainable development of rural communities of Serbia, support marginalized groups as rural youth and rural women, enhance activism in local communities, socio-economic development based on the tradition and natural resources and all other activities relevant for wellbeing of rural areas and communities.

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Network for Rural Development of Serbia**

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia (MRRS) actively works in the field of rural development in Serbia, but also in the Balkan and the European Union.

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia coordinates the work of the working group 7 of the National Convention. This group is focused on the negotiating chapters 11 (Agriculture and rural development), 12 (Food safety) and 13 (Fisheries). The working group coordinates all activities of the civil society sector related to the key phases in the negotiation process. The National Convention is recognized by the Government of Serbia as consultation mechanism between decision makers and civil society. Among the key activities was the implementation of the consultation process related to the Action plans for chapter 11 and also to the screening reports for chapters 12 and 13.

The MRRS is a member of the Monitoring Committee of the IPARD Programme of Serbia with voting right. This Monitoring Committee has periodical meetings within the framework of monitoring the IPARD Programme implementation and deciding about the key issues related to the Programme.

The Network for Rural Development of Serbia coordinates SEKO mechanism for Agriculture and Rural Development as a consultation body for planning EU funds and other funds in Serbia. The consortium consists of: Association for the Development of the Ibar Valley "IDA", European Project Center Belgrade, Educational Rural Center Subotica and Network for Rural Development of Serbia.

MRRS implements the project "ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas" which started in December 2015, in cooperation with partners from the Western Balkan and Turkey. The key activities implemented by MRRS and the partners support the improvement of the national framework for inter-sectorial dialogue regarding rural policy in Serbia, by strengthening the capacities of the network and the members. Project's key activities are focused on strengthening the capacity of CSOs and CSO networks which contribute to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas in the Western Balkans and Turkey for their active participation in policy planning and implementation. By building strong civil society in rural areas the project aims to enhance regional development through networking and cooperation. In 2017 the project supported the development of partnerships between CSOs, CSO networks and public institutions, to increase the involvement of the civil sector in the decision making and governance processes, for the well-being of rural communities in Serbia. LEADER/CLLD methodology was promoted as part of other activities and call for sub-granting for CSOs and LAG initiatives was announced.

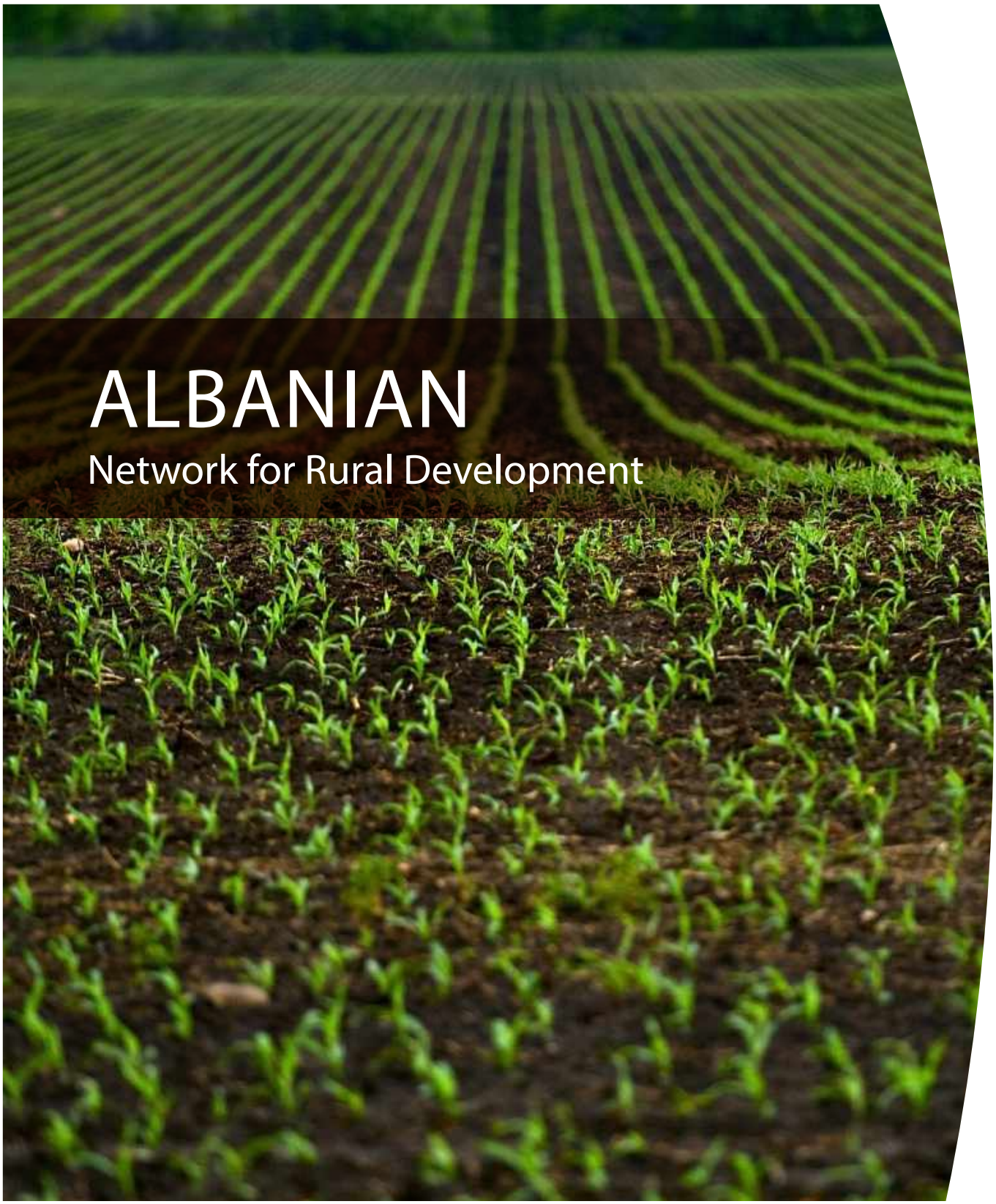
At regional level, Rural Policy Forum was organized in Montenegro with defined recommendations for LEADER implementation in Western Balkan region.

The project "Active Rural Youth, the potential for the development of rural communities" was implemented in partnership with the Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia and ELARD from 15/5/2015 to 14/10/2016. Project's main achievements are: 1) 350 secondary students educated for leadership in rural communities and 23 contemporary trainers certified for leadership; 2) Developed management capacities of secondary school students and activism councils of secondary school students, based on the EU networks experience; 3) Adopted measures for supporting rural youth at the national and local level; 4) Raised the public awareness in Serbia for understanding the rural youth needs and the civil society role.

The project "Building of Rural Development Resources in Balkan region - No BoRDeR" works to enhance the capacity of the members of the rural development networks and rural communities in the Balkan region for planning and implementing initiatives that contribute to the development of rural areas, based on the participation of all three sectors and the experience of the rural networks of the Visegrad countries. Following results were achieved: Enhanced capacities of 4 rural development networks in the Western Balkan for supporting rural community animation, building local partnerships, and creation of local development strategies in rural areas; Improved capacities of LAG initiatives in Western Balkan for development of their rural areas and established channels for knowledge transfer between Western Balkan and Visegrad countries; Improved management capacities of the networks for rural development from Western Balkan countries based on the Visegrad countries experience. MRRS implemented the project in partnership with the rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Network for RD of Montenegro, REDAH from Bosnia

and Herzegovina and Polish Rural Forum.

The project "CSOs support to public administration in IPA Rural Development II with focus on Measure 202 contribute" to increase effective SECO cooperation with public administration in the programming and accreditation process of IPA RD II Measure 202 "Preparation and implementation of local rural development strategies". Main achievements were: Increased participation of 40 CSOs in policy development and accreditation process of rural development Measures for IPA II; National IPA RD Programme 2014-2020 adopted by 2014; National IPA RD II Measure 202 prepared for accreditation by 2015; Improved thematic cooperation of public bodies relevant for IPA RD II; Network of Local Action Groups (LAG) activated and professionalized; Increased capacities of 20 LAGs management and staff for civic actions.



ALBANIAN

Network for Rural Development

MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

brdn
Balkan Rural Development Network

ANRD
ALBANIAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
RRJETI SHQIPTAR PËR ZHVILLIMIN RURAL

The establishment of Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) on the 11th December 2015 crowns the efforts of many local stakeholders over the year to achieve this objective. The initiating members of the Network are fourteen organizations with long standing experiences and consolidated profiles in important activities in rural development area. They share the same vision and have agreed to jointly work to advance the role of private sector and civil society in the country's rural agenda. The Network has embraced a bottom up perspective and is applying a highly inclusive and national wide approach to improve societal capacities in preparing the country to absorb practices and models that will further integrate Albania into European Union.

ANRD represents a mechanism to lobby and advocate for effective rural policies, which are closer to residents of rural communities; designed with the participation of local communities, understood and implemented with the people in the ground.

Though a newly established organization, the Network has been very active in policy engagement with the objective to accelerate the country rural reforming process in approximating EU policy of Community Led Local Development (CLLD). To this end, ANRD is putting a lot of efforts in introducing LEADER approach, know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs from different European countries and of those in the region to a broad spectrum of stakeholder.

Currently, ANRD is member of PREPARE Network and Balkan Network for Rural Development.

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Activities/Projects implemented by the **Albanian Network for Rural Development**

1. First Albanian Rural Parliament

Kick-off event of the 1st Albanian Rural Parliament

The kick-off event of the 1st Albanian Rural Parliament 2017 was held on April 14, 2017 in the premises of Agricultural University of Tirana. The event had twofold purpose: firstly, to publicly announce the First Rural Parliament and objectives of this initiative and secondly, to provide an agreed platform to the country's challenges concerning rural development. It brought together academics, civil society organizations and ANRD members, representatives of Regional Development Agencies, other relevant actors and students of different study areas at the AUT.

Regional Workshops

During June – July 2017, the Albanian Network for Rural Development, in cooperation with respective regional development agencies carried out six regional workshops titled "Towards a new Rural agenda" bringing together nearly 220 participants. The workshops aimed to consult with local stakeholders the platform of rural development challenges and among others highlighting the regional differences and specificities of rural development.

1st Albanian Rural Parliament

The first Albanian Rural Parliament (1st ARP) which took place on 28-30 September in Tirana, represented an advocacy, capacity building and networking event dedicated to rural development in Albania. The event – a joint effort of the Albanian Network for Rural Development consisting of 22 local CSOs in partnership with the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) – welcomed more than 300 participants. The 1st ARP was successful in putting the rural development priorities into the government agenda and rural policies, meantime orienting Albanian rural stakeholders toward positive and functional models in local integrated development. The first two days

of the 1st Alb. Rural Parliament, were comprised of plenary sessions, guest speakers, discussion panels, networking opportunities, workshops and working groups, offered a great opportunity to discuss, network, transfer know-how and exchange ideas and best practices on rural development – locally, regionally and internationally. While the third day, held at the Albanian Parliament was important to address key messages from farmers, representatives of rural communities, grass root organizations and official government representative.

2. PREPARE Gathering: The First Multi National Thematic Meeting within ALTER Programme

Albanian Network for Rural Development on 14th -16th September 2016 hosted the first multi - national meeting in the frame of ALTER project. It served to ensure intensive dialogue on two key issues: 1) Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and CSO Networks to participate actively in policy planning and implementation, to build a strong civil society in rural areas, and to enhance regional development through networking and cooperation 2) Building the partnership of CSOs and CSO Networks with public institutions and their involvement in decision-making and governance processes, for the well-being of rural communities, particularly in the countries covered by the ALTER project. The Gathering was attended by 75 participants, which are members of the PREPARE partner organizations and the PREPARE Network and the partners of the ALTER project, and invited guests as well.

3. Survey on the current situation and gained experience with the LEADER approach in Albania

In the frame of "Support to Agriculture and Rural Development" (SARD-IPARD) project, financed by EU and co-financed by German government and implemented by GIZ, the ANRD was engaged to carry out a baseline assessment with regard to area-based rural development actions/ initiatives in Albania and extract the main results relevant for the programming of the IPARD LEADER measure. The survey aimed at collecting information on the current situation and gained experience with the LEADER approach and identifying capacity building needs for preparation of implementation of LEADER in Albania. It is also focused on identification of local organizations with experience in rural development and community-led local development.

4. National Conference "Albanian Network for Rural Development: Mainstreaming Non-public actors in to the National Rural Agenda"

The National Conference held on March 11, 2016 aimed at enabling national synergies between public and non-public actors which have a role in rural development to articulate clearly their commitment towards advancing the country's agenda on rural development. The panelists brought the issue of rural development from different perspectives emphasizing the cross-sectoral approach that rural development entails. The main issues of presentations and discussions were: the national agenda of rural development, the implications of its implementation, the role of civil society, the Government's efforts in advancing such agenda, the role of municipalities and their capacity for rural development, the incentives provided by the private sector and the role of ANRD as an actor of change in rural development. Senior representatives of central and local public institutions, civil society organizations, private sector and representatives of international organizations and foreign missions in Albania participated in the proceedings of the Conference.

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