Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

REDUCING DISASTER RISKS AND STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE OF FARMERS TO NATURAL HAZARDS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Western Balkans region is prone to natural hazards, such as floods, landslides, droughts and forest fires, as a result of its geological structure, climatic and topographic characteristics. The agriculture sector is negatively impacted by these hazards, with damage caused to agricultural infrastructure and equipment and losses in crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries. Agricultural sector actors had only limited knowledge, awareness and capacities to prevent, reduce and prepare for the adverse impacts of natural hazards in the short and long term. In this context, the project was designed to strengthen institutional mechanisms with improved technical capacities, tools and methods in the Ministries of Agriculture and among related stakeholders in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project promoted the institutional mainstreaming and strengthening of capacities in the agriculture sector with regard to Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Climate Change Adaptation at regional, national and municipality/community levels. Awareness was thereby raised, capacities enhanced and information and knowledge shared among the different stakeholders. Specifically, this was achieved by (i) developing technical capacities and tools for better planning and implementation of risk reduction measures in agriculture, (ii) harmonizing the post-disaster needs assessment methodology, including assessment of damage and losses, with international standards and (iii) identifying, testing and validating good practices for Disaster Risk Reduction in agriculture that can help to reduce the impact of floods, landslides and droughts, such as the use of crop rotation, intercropping, agroforestry, mulching, drip irrigation, as well as landscape and ecosystem interventions.

IMPACT

The project helped to enhance and facilitate the exchange of information and experience between the country representatives to discuss different Disaster Risk Reduction topics, as well as to exchange views on future collaboration according to needs, requirements, challenges and constraints. This significantly increased awareness of the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction for the agriculture sector, in particular within the context of climate change and the anticipated increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events. In addition, specific methodologies and practices have been identified for practitioners and agricultural communities. The update of post-disaster needs assessment methodology in line with international standards has helped to improve preparedness to better respond and recover from natural disasters. Furthermore, the demonstration of various good practices through Farmer Field Schools has increased the resilience of farmers and their communities to natural hazards in the target countries.

KEY FACTS

Contribution
USD 435 000

Duration
April 2016 – December 2017

Resource Partners
FAO

Partners
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Albania), Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Montenegro), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (Serbia)

Beneficiaries
Farming community in the five target countries, Ministries of Agriculture, extension officers and agents from agricultural offices in municipalities

RESULTS

- Comprehensive analysis conducted of the institutional Disaster Risk Reduction system for agriculture in each of the five countries, including recommendations for further strengthening of the systems.
- Regional learning exchange visit to Ljubljana, Slovenia organized in March 2017 for representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydrometeorological Service of each of the five countries.
- Capacity-building training organized by FAO in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites on the use of satellite products for drought monitoring and agrometeorological applications.
- Assessment conducted of existing post-disaster needs assessment methodology and improved guidelines prepared for municipality staff, based on international standards. Stakeholder workshops organized in Albania and Serbia and eight trainings conducted on post-disaster needs assessment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Sixty-two Farmer Field School meetings, 13 demonstration meetings, five field days, two study tours and 14 organizational group meetings held in Serbia.
- Scoping report drafted, containing comprehensive regional and national socio-economic, environmental, hazard and risk profiles for each of the five countries concerned.
- Drought risk management planning guidelines prepared for the Western Balkan region.
- Two brochures developed with good practices to reduce impacts of natural hazards on maize and soybean production in Serbia.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Project Code
TCP/RER/3504

Project Title
Enhancement of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management capacities and mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation practices into the Agricultural Sector in the Western Balkans

Contacts
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
REU-Registry@fao.org

Reuben Sessa (Lead Technical Officer)
Reuben.Sessa@fao.org

Resource Mobilization Division
Marketing, Outreach and Reporting Unit
Reporting@fao.org

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