Summary of Programme Document for Moldova, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina
2010-2013:

**Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas and Empowerment of Civil Society Organizations**

**Purpose and direction of the programme**
The SCC Programme in Europe aims to strengthen the capacities of rural cooperatives, farmer organizations and other civil society organizations to address the needs and rights of their members. The Programme supports the endeavours to strengthen farmer organizations and small farmer owned enterprises as well as support their efforts to comply with EU rules and quality requirements on agriculture production.

In **Bosnia & Herzegovina** there are over 500,000 farms with an estimated average size of 2 ha. The agricultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is organized on several levels - entity, canton and municipality – but for political reasons there is no sectorial policy endorsed at State level. The result of the situation is a fragmented agriculture lacking a sense of direction and a sound coordination. BiH has good potential for agricultural production. The climatic conditions favor agriculture production, there are ample natural resources and the cost of labour is low compared to neighboring countries. 47% of the arable land is not being utilized. The low production volume and the low productivity compared to other European countries imply that there is room for considerable improvements and increased efficiency. The heavy deficit on food trade where food imports have gone up steadily over the past years, whereas the food export has remained at a low level, means that there is space for substituting food imports with domestic food production as well as room for increased food exports.

Approximately 20% of the population is employed in agriculture today. A critical mass of cooperatives is active and thriving and there are unused resources and agricultural infrastructure present that, if the legal issues were resolved, could boost the production and productivity of the cooperatives. The main challenges the farmers face are institutional. The complex and complicated state structure in BiH, which is a legacy of the Dayton agreement, have contributed to a large number of institutional layers with costly, inefficient bureaucracy, contradicting legal frameworks and increased transaction costs.

In **Albania** the farming sector is dominated by household farms with the average size of around 1 ha. Cooperation among farmers in rural Albania is very small although there are many small local organizations created with the support of international NGOs as well as multilateral and bilateral donor organizations. A national farmers union does not exist. In the Albanian rural areas, women are still very affected by a deep lack of equity in power structures and relations.

The situation in agrarian **Moldova** is also dominated by small scale farmers. The land distribution after the breaking up of the kolkhozes was done with a social orientation. The absence of development criteria for the distribution of the land led to the formation of very small plots. In many cases the land is only enough for subsistence farming.

The situation of women in Moldova is very different from that of Albania. In a recent analysis presented in Newsweek, and considering 5 measures that affect women (justice, health, education, economics and politics), Moldova gets an overall score of 86.3% and the 16th place among all countries in the world.
Given the favorable geographic location and secular farming traditions, agriculture continues to be the most important sector in Moldova with up to 30% of GDP and 53% of exports and employing 30% of active labor force. Still 69% of poor live in rural areas due to low productivity in the sector and limited opportunities for employment elsewhere than agriculture. Moreover, the rural poverty in Moldova has worsened due to an increasing sharp inequality of income distribution that reached the maximum of Gini coefficient of 0.42 in 1998. During 2001-2003 a slight recovery was registered (Gini 33.2) and in 2007 the poverty indicators are again rising (37.4). In these conditions, the tasks to faster growth in agriculture supported by fair policies aimed to diminish inequalities become essential conditions to sustained and accelerated growth in the entire economy and poverty reduction.

In the Ukraine, the Programme is focused on the Donetsk region and is not farmer based. Donetsk is a former mining district which now faces high unemployment and social distress as a consequence of the removal of state enterprises. The focus is on socially oriented civic organisations to defend the interests of poor people living in the region.

In Kosovo 60% of population live in the rural areas. Rural families in average consist of 8.3 members (urban 6.3 members). Unemployment in the rural areas is 54.5% compared to the urban 44%. Illiteracy in the rural areas is 8.4%.

While some cooperatives and associations exist in a number of crops and areas of Kosovo, there are less than 15 associations in operation and these represent only a small percentage of farmers. The capacity of existing cooperatives is weak and few focus on the full value chain of activities (i.e. bargaining & services, asset sharing, labor sharing, knowledge for value-added crops). Services are limited and no effective extension service exists.

Agriculture is an important economic sector which generates a considerable level of output and employment, however, Kosovo spends less per capita in this sector than any country in the region. Agriculture contributes with 25% of Kosovo’s GDP.

Consequently, small scale farmers face many difficulties in all areas included in the Programme. In many cases they lack good skills in farming and they are constantly short of capital, which makes it very difficult to develop a market based agriculture. It is aggravated by the fact that the price of inputs has increased much more then the sale prices.

Moreover, most of the Governments in the “Programme countries” make important efforts to develop agriculture and agribusinesses. On the other side, the internal markets of these countries are overloaded with agricultural products coming from neighboring EU countries that create unfair competition for the local farmers on their own markets.

In Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are still important ethical and/or religious tensions among different strata of the population. The Programme will take into high consideration the situation on the ground making all efforts “to do no harm and do maximum good”.

Theory of change
The working hypothesis of the Programme is that people should be organized in order to promote change and achieve a sustainable development. That is mostly done by promoting the
organisation of farmers and other low income rural inhabitants that are members or will become members of the participating organisations.

At **grass root level** the low income farmers and members of the participating organisations will become empowered as their voice will be stronger by the increased capacity within their organisations. They will have an increased ability to lobby and network on common issues and their incomes will be increased though the strengthened organisations.

At **project level** the interventions are directed towards the organisation’s managerial, productive and business capacities. This is done by strengthening the administrative and financial capacity, improving leadership and governance as well as the ability to carry out lobbying and advocacy activities, contributing also to a more lively and vibrant civil society.

Although women in most Programme countries have a better status than in many other rural societies, this is not reflected in the leadership of their organizations. The programme aims to address this issue and contribute to a more equal access to leadership and senior management positions between men and women in rural organizations.

At **programme level** the aim is to promote the development of policies as well as strategic planning practices above that of the individual projects, creating synergies between countries, strengthening the voice of farmers through strong farmer organizations that are able to effectively influence and impact policy environment as well as to increase the presence of national farmer organizations in national, regional and international policy fora on climate change, agricultural production and trade.

The number of organised farmers together with an increased number of farmer cooperatives and other member-based organisations will contribute to a positive change at the countryside providing better access to market, increased productivity and consequently household’s income.

The adoption of sustainable agriculture methods and the emergence of stronger farmer organizations have a critical role in increasing smallholder’s productivity, improving competitiveness and increasing bargaining power for markets, services and improving the policy environment. It is, therefore, imperative to mobilize farmers into associations able to provide efficient services to smallholders.

The legal framework of farmer organizations in the region varies from country to country, however there is a common need to strengthen them to become truly representatives of their members, to be able to provide equal opportunities and benefits to the members; play an effective role in influencing agricultural and other related policies that impact on their ability to effectively respond to the effects of the liberalization of the economy.

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1 A Farmer Organization is (according to SARD Policy Brief, 2007) an association of farmer families with common interests, with the purpose of increasing food production, family income and quality of life. It involves the idea of companionship, fellowship, and partnership in accepting new technologies, methodologies, ideas, and concepts regarding family food production. Also, Farmers’ Organizations (FOs) refer to independent, non-governmental, membership-based rural organizations of part or fulltime self-employed smallholders and family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, landless people, women, small entrepreneurs and indigenous peoples. They range from formal groups covered by national legislation, such as cooperatives and national farmers unions, to looser self-help groupings and associations.
Farmer organisations have a vital role in mitigating the impact of natural disasters and climate change on rural people. As democratic, participatory organizations, based on the principles of social cohesion, self-help and equity, FOs can be highly effective in preparing the rural poor to respond to the threat to life, property and livelihoods from natural disasters and climate change.

In addition, FOs have and can play a crucial role in marketing information and promotion of farm practices that contribute towards economically sound and sustainable agriculture adapted to climate change and marketing fluctuations. Adaptation to climate change for small and medium-scale agricultural producers involves livelihood diversification. Farmer organisations can link smallholder farmers with larger urban/international markets through value-addition, thereby creating off-farm livelihood opportunities.

**Development of the civil society**

The SCC Programme in Europe complies with the SCC view on the strengthening of the civil society. It supports at first rural cooperatives, unions and/or associations in the programme countries. The programme supports the development of these organisations as democratic institutions and key players in the development of their communities and consequently in the development of civil society.

Partnership with national and local based Cooperatives, Farmer Organizations and NGOs in the Programme countries is foreseen to implement the initiatives sponsored by the Programme. The implementing organizations will have the responsibility to develop the capacities of the target groups in the fields of business development, marketing, sustainable agriculture, gender equity and development of organisations and new member services.

Capacity-building interventions will combine both internal capacity development of the implementing partners and the target groups, as well as attainment of knowledge and technologies in order:

- To strengthen the capacity of farmers organisations to effectively participate in local, national and international fora contributing to policy formulation processes focusing on the socioeconomic and productive resilience of local communities.
- To strengthen the productive and marketing capacity of their members.
- To assure good governance as well as to create capacity to cope with risks and opportunities.

The programme aspires for the creation and strengthening of local sustainable networks, in order to strengthen low income farmer’s access to markets and the social sphere of the organisations activities. The Programme will support efforts to join networks active within social and business sectors, as well as defence of rights, female empowerment and aid effectiveness.
D. Structure of the programme

The Programme has two long-term objectives: an overarching goal (that is, the same goal as for all other SCC Programmes) relating to poverty reduction and a Programme specific objective referring to the development of participating organisations. The Programme is at present organised around three strategic working areas – the clusters.

1. The overarching goal and indicators

The Programme Goal is Reduction of poverty and injustice in rural areas of participating countries. The programme goal is connected to the millennium development goal 1 and 3; Goal 1: Eradicate poverty and Hunger, goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women.

The indicators to monitor the achievement of this goal are shown in the Programme Logical Framework Matrix (Annex A).

2. Programme objective and indicators

- The programme objective is “Participating civil society organisations are strengthened to address the needs & rights of their members”. The indicators to monitor the objective are shown in the Programme LFA-matrix (Annex A).
3. Clusters and indicators

There are three clusters in the Programme.

- Organisational Development and Capacity Building
- Production and Business Development
- Advocacy and Networking

The Organisational Development and Capacity Building cluster is the uniting point for all projects and Programme initiatives. The outcomes under this cluster commonly refer to the strengthening of the participating organizations (see LFA-matrix).

The Production and Business Development cluster aims to support the market access for the farmers and the founding of various kinds of business networks and sales groups associations, with the aim to secure that the beneficiaries have a better access to gainful markets. Business planning, market adopted production and establishing of functional business structures will be subjects to be addressed in the Programme. Another strategy is to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable farming.

The Advocacy and Networking cluster addresses all rights based initiatives at local and national level. This cluster links the Programme to the civil society in the countries as well as to the authorities. The globalisation and liberalisation of the economy, in addition to the high regional dependence existing among countries demands the establishment of local, national, regional and international synergies. This cluster will address the production of these synergies. The cluster can also address issues related to the demands of the European Union for farmers’ product access to that market.

Gender equity initiatives will be integrated into all three clusters and become a cross-cutting issue.

4. Operational Strategies

In the Organisational Development and Capacity Building cluster the main operational strategies are the good governance of organizations and their internal democracy, the training of leaders and staff, the adoption of feasible strategic plans, the promotion of active participation of beneficiaries, the organisation of CBOs, and the promotion of self-sustainability of business oriented organisations.

In the Production and Business Development cluster the strategy is to develop the business possibilities of small scale farmers by assisting them in different ways such as develop business plans, finding access to the market and increase productivity and quality of their products. Another strategy is to promote environmentally friendly farming.

In the Advocacy and Networking cluster the main strategies are oriented towards the promotion of small scale farmers and their families’ basic rights, the promotion of legislation, policies and strategies connected with environment, agriculture, cooperatives as well as female empowerment. The cluster will liaise with relevant civil society organizations and networks, as well as government agencies.
Description of the participants

The main target groups of the Programme are the following:

- **Small scale farmers and their families** - they operate their farms mainly on individual or family basis.
- Farmer apex organisations.
- Small and medium scale farmer organisations.
- Cooperatives and community based organisations.
- Low income people living in coal mine areas of Donetsk region in Ukraine.
- Partner organisations.
- Relevant networks.

Rights based approach and perspective of the poor

The Programme will focus on the perspective of poor people living in rural areas as well as on the rights perspective for the participating citizens. In most cases they are small scale farmers affected by poverty or on the threshold of poverty.

The Programme encourages its partners and constituencies to participate actively in all rights issues that influence their situation. To build a concept of citizenry with a democratic flavour is not easy in new democracies. People do not trust the authorities, the political parties or the organizations. To talk about cooperatives, trade unions, civil rights etc, is negatively connected to the past and to give new life to old disrupted concepts is a difficult task. In this sense the programme has a challenge when it comes to changing the mindset of people and old patterns.

The strategy to support democratic organizations and self-help groups also reflect the way by which the Programme intends to institutionalize the right to development. By strengthening the capacities of the organizations, the Programme envisions that the target groups will be able to collectively articulate their positions on certain rights issues and take positive group action.

Power relations and gender equity

The programme looks at gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for promoting gender equity. Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself but an approach to achieve gender equity.

- Women are underrepresented at decision making levels and leadership positions.
- Women have less access to economic opportunities.
- Women have less control of the family economy.

To fight the consequences of current discrimination, gender-specific activities will be considered, whenever women or men are in a particularly disadvantageous position. Gender-specific interventions can target women exclusively, men and women together or only men, to permit them to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts bringing the experience, know how, and interests of women and men that have a bearing on the development agenda.
As a consequence of their subordinate position, women encounter larger difficulties than men in the daily life. In addition, household and family responsibilities assigned to women mean that the experience of poverty is different for women than men. Community gender imbalances are skewed to the disadvantage of women. This requires the programme to elaborate and initiate a long-term strategy for women’s empowerment, including removal of the factors that particularly constrain women, as an essential step for poverty alleviation.

The programme relates gender, household and community power relations to the equal access of women and men to economic opportunities, finances and marketing. The programme focuses on the removal of hindrances which prevent women an equal access to those opportunities. The creation of new gender oriented business opportunities, as well as the inclusion of elements which allow women to share control over its benefits are important in the programme

**Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change**

Climate change continues to threaten the future survival of most farm families and would compromise any gains made in empowering farmers. According to FAO (2008) the risks and vulnerabilities of the poor who live in insecure places and need to build their resilience to cope with climate fluctuations are among the most important challenges in adapting to climate change. However adaptation to climate change is not only compatible but complementary to any other initiatives to reduce poverty and the sustainability and resilience of rural livelihood will depend in high degree on the capacity of the local communities to cope with those changes.

The programme understands that climate change adaptation is much more than the introduction of technologies and new practices in agriculture and natural resources management. The effects of climate changes have a strong socioeconomic connotation and must, systematically address the links between livelihoods and climate. The importance of climate change will lead to intensification of activities to take advantage of alternative risk-coping productive livelihood opportunities for income and employment generation.

Any intervention must rely on the community and/or individuals’ adaptive capacity to those changes. The effects of the development work should relate to the livelihood resilience rather than to the technical efficiency of the intervention. Therefore, context-specific activities are required to enhance the adaptive capacities of communities, enabling them to cope and combat the adverse impacts of climate variability and change.

**Partners**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina Union of Cooperatives (BHUC)**
BHUC is an apex cooperative organization on national level. Its member organizations represent more than 800 cooperatives, out of which 543 are agricultural. It is estimated that there are 30,000 members in agricultural cooperatives and 150,000 farmers receiving or buying services from those cooperatives. The vision of BiH Union is to establish unified, strong and functional cooperatives which can contribute to rural development and support the low income farmers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Regional Development Agency (RDA Donbass), Ukraine**
RDA Donbass is a non-profit, non-government organization mainly focused on community development. Its mission is to support and promote the development of market reforms and to contribute to the alleviation of the negative social consequences of the deep economic crisis in
the coal mine region of Donbass. RDA Donbass promotes local development as well as people’s involvement in poverty reduction.

**National Federation of Agricultural Producers from Moldova “AGROinform”**
The National Federation of Agricultural Producers from Moldova (AGROinform) is a non-governmental organization uniting the interests of 21 regional NGOs. AGROinform’s network has 4170 small and medium size farmers out of which 28% are women and 72% men. AGROinform is a decentralized structure, where the regional organizations have an independent legal status.

AGROinform aims to create a favorable framework for sustainable rural development, support the empowerment of farming community and to enhance the capacities of rural entrepreneurs. AGROinform supports the sustainable economic development of rural communities through assistance in business development and marketing, promoting good agricultural practices as well as representing the interests of its members.

**AgriNet**
AgriNet is an Albanian NGO aiming at actively and directly participate on a sustainable social, economic and environmental development process of communities living in rural areas in partnership with the marginalized rural sectors, their communities and various stakeholders. AgriNet achieves its mission through different project implementation in rural development field financed by national and international institutions as well as through direct involvement with communities, local government and other NGOs. The main field of activities is farmer organisations, agricultural production and marketing and rural innovation support.

**Albanian Agribusiness Council (KASH)**
KASH is an umbrella organisation for farmers’ organisations in Albania. The identity of KASH is connected with the protection of its members’ interests and the development of agribusinesses. The main action instrument is its network of national organisations. The SCC funded project is directed towards small scale farmers in rural areas.

**Agropuka**
Agropuka is an Albanian farmers’ organisation active in the mountainous region of Puka, aiming at actively and directly contributing to the rural development in the region through marketing of agricultural and livestock products, training and advice to the farmers and implementing initiatives addressing the needs of its members and poor farmers. Agropuka was founded in 2001 and its philosophy has been “help people to help themselves”. Agropuka works to increase social and economic opportunities of women in the region.

**National Farmers Federation of Moldova (NFFM)**
NFFM is a registered Public Association established in 1995 with the objectives of promotion, representation and defence of organised farmers, through lobby and advocacy as well as the establishment of national and local institutional structures (informal groups, associations and Cooperatives) aiming to the provision of extension services, marketing and business development. The current membership embraces 28,325 members organised in 11 regional and 779 local organisations.

**Initiative for Kosovo Community (IKC)**
IKC, Initiative for Kosova Community was established in 2005 as a Kosovo local NGO. It was created as a spin-off organization of the Belgian non-governmental organization Balkanactie vzw, with the mission to improve the welfare of its population by strengthening the capacities of
the local communities, civic society and governments, promoting better representation of the rural community in decision making processes. IKC, mainly focuses in the fields of community building, economic development, gender equality, environment sustainability and EU integration.

**Forms of Cooperation and Synergies**

Synergies within the programme build not only relationship but real partnership between the participants. The specific competences and experiences become public good for individual as well as for collective use. The programme will facilitate synergetic contacts not only in the region but with other regions where SCC is present and will promote dialog and learning making use of global experience, including components of SCC international network.

Sharing of experiences in business and organisational development, production, marketing and technologies will enrich the implementing, monitoring and evaluation capacity of SCC as well as partners and target groups. Study visits, join training, exchange of documents, participation in workshops and conferences will be important part of the synergetic strategy.

For the management and implementation of the program, a Program Committee with participants from all partners and SCC has been formed.