

Agenda for Round Table 4. Participatory approaches to rural development in the Western Balkans.

The purpose of the round table is to exchange views on the main challenges facing the rural areas in the Western Balkan countries and explore new approaches to address these challenges with a view to develop as far as possible some preliminary recommendations to policy makers and donors in the area.

1. INTRODUCTION (10 MIN)

- **Mr. Mortensen and Mr. Jehle**

- Recall objectives/expected outcomes of the Session

- Discussion of new approaches for rural development
- Lessons from programmes implemented in the EU e.g. Leader
- Possibility to apply some of these approaches to the Western Balkans and implications for investment projects.

2. DISCUSSION OF NEW APPROACHES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (TOTAL 45 MIN)

- **Mr. Jorge Nunez (15 min)**

- Outlining the approach of endogenous growth
- Elements for applying the concept (based also on the recent FAO/World Bank paper “Evolution and Impact of EU Regional and Rural Policies”).

- **Mr. Van der Celen, World Bank (10 min)**

- What could make a difference in the Western Balkans in developing rural areas and how to achieve this (based on the FAO-WB publication " Future of Agriculture and Rural Sector in Western Balkan Countries ")

- **Ms Meisinger, European Commission (10 min)**

- Pre-accession activities in the field of rural and local development and cross border co-operation.

- Brief discussion among the participants (10 min)

3. LESSONS FROM PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED IN THE EU E.G. LEADER (50 MIN)

Learning from Leader experience regarding the bottom up approach applied to implementation of local development strategies through Local Action Groups within the confines of rural development strategies at a larger (national/regional) scale, including experience in inter-action between the involved local actors and regional/national authorities (top down/bottom up).

- **Ms Weizenegger, Germany (10 min)**

- Successful implementation of Leader with reference to specific cases.
- Lessons learnt from Leader in general and experience in top down/bottom up inter-action.
- **Mr Wibmer Austria** (10 min)
 - Successful implementation of Leader with reference to specific cases.
 - Outlook to the Western Balkan countries, what could work and what would not.
- **Mr. Koles and Ms. Marzis** (15 min)
 - Experience from developing local partnerships in new EU and other countries.
 - Applicability of this experiences to the Western Balkan countries.
- Discussion among the participants (15 min)

4. POSSIBILITIES FOR APPLYING SUCH APPROACHES TO THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES (60 MIN)

- **Input from Standing Working Group (10 min)**
 - Main challenges and obstacles to the development of rural areas in the Western Balkan countries with focus on areas, including border areas, facing economic decline and depopulation.
- Discussion among the participants on how to apply the approaches.
- Introductory remarks on the way ahead, **Maria Donoso, World Bank** (5 min)

Participant will reflect on ways ahead in more practical terms: What actions should be taken by policy makers and donors to further implementation of new approaches. What is the role of, and actions to be initiated by the national/regional/local authorities to facilitate these approaches through identification of appropriate (area/opportunity based) strategies. Could these actions deal with issues in border areas involving two or more countries.

- Conclusion and Wrap up by the chair (10 min).