

COMMUNICATION PLAN

BalkanROAD

Towards farms with zero carbon-, waste- and water-footprint
Roadmap for sustainable management strategies for Balkan
agricultural sector

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1. BalkanRoad and its objectives

The project under the title *“Towards farms with zero carbon-, waste- and water-footprint. Roadmap for sustainable management strategies for Balkan agricultural sector- BalkanRoad”* is being implemented under the “Transnational Cooperation Programme Interreg Balkan - Mediterranean 2014-2020” and is co-funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries.

The Project Partnership includes seven partners from five countries (Greece, Cyprus, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria):

Lead

Partner

Benaki Phytopathological Institute

"Macedonian" Organic Producers Federation

Agricultural University of Tirana

American Farm School

Partners

Association of Agri-Environmental Farmers

Foundation for Research & Technology - Hellas (FORTH), Institute for Mediterranean Studies

Open University of Cyprus

Balkan agricultural sector faces strong challenges in terms of unsustainable resources management and GHGs emissions. Although some countries show positive development indicators, however the continuous economic crisis, the low level of participatory/initiatives undertaking by local/regional authorities and the lower capacity and educational level of Balkan farmers in comparison to other European farmers, inhibit the adoption of innovative approaches and conformation of Balkan agriculture to EU policies, mainly at farm/local level. The project conception shares deeply the willingness of the farmers to protect the environment but also their deep concern to develop their skills, modernize and increase the profitability of their enterprises by reaching EU and international markets. Hence, BalkanROAD will provide tools and policies for economic development, through the adoption of environment protective practices, which is a strong motivation for farmers to adopt and implement project's outcomes.

BalkanROAD has two orientations, which will be combined and integrated into a Balkan Roadmap and are anticipated to open new trade horizons for Balkan agricultural products, boosting also local and national economies; namely:

- to improve Balkan agricultural environment by developing strategies, methodologies and technologies for natural resources conservation (soil, water, air), reduction of GHGs, reduction of waste generation/disposal and increase recycling/reuse ratio in farm systems;

- to develop a common Balkan Protocol for the production of eco-labeled agricultural products, by putting in force sustainable practices throughout the entire production line (i.e. from the field to the market) so that the final products will have measurable, comparable and ultimately the lowest possible environmental footprint.

A fully automated, robust but also flexible system (the ROAD tool) for recording, calculating and reporting the environmental footprint of the marketable products will be tested and demonstrated in 3 agricultural pilot enterprises in Greece, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Stakeholders have a strong participatory role. A multidisciplinary group of 15 stakeholders from all five participating countries, operating in agricultural sector will be involved in the project's actions and cooperate in order to:

- identify problems, gaps and propose most appropriate solutions;
- provide the consortium with data for the development of the Roadmap and
- identify the appropriate policies and governmental instruments for Roadmap adoption by national policies and implementation at local/regional/national level.

To ensure sustainability of project's outcomes, a broader stakeholders' network has already been established, namely "ROAD for Balkan Agriculture", who are ready to follow project's outcomes, express their point of view during transnational dialogue events and diffuse data and information to the wider agricultural, market and societal networks, in which they belong.

2. Project communication main goal and objectives

The project foresees a well-organized information and communication strategy to transmit a particular message to the targeted audiences. The overall objective of the communication activities is to be open and secure that the BalkanRoad key messages reaches all relevant stakeholders and foster their commitment to the project in the long term.

The Communication Plan is based on the following files:

- "An Integrated Communication Guide for Projects" of the Balkan – MedProgramme;
- The BalkanRoad Application Form – Roles of the Partners, Communication Tools and Activities, Project objectives;
- The BalkanRoad Project Work Plan – Duration/Timing of the activities.

The objectives of the BalkanRoad communication plan are:

- To disseminate project results and activities to the target groups and to assure a high visibility of project results and activities.
- To inform and draw attention at agribusiness and institutions from Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to implement project's outcomes in the agricultural sector.

- To promote and increase the visibility of the project activities and results to the public.
- To establish practical communication-information system among project partners.

2.1 Target groups

The success of Project communication depends on establishing and developing continuous relations with the key audience (target groups previously selected) during the whole project duration, engaging some of them to contribute to the project implementation and reaching all of them when informing about the project achievements.

The Target groups of the BalkanRoad projects are the following:

2.1.1 Primary target groups

The primary target groups, meaning the most important audiences, that BalkanRoad seeks to reach out to; are:

- SMEs from the BALKAN MED economic area, active in the agricultural sector (private agribusinesses, business associations, Chambers of Commerce's, and other public and private agencies, consultants, trade unions, and all other relevant stakeholders)
- National/regional/local authorities and policy makers (ministries of agriculture and rural development, ministries of environment, municipalities, regional authorities and centres, etc.)
- Farmers associations in BALKAN MED Region
- Educational sector (universities, institutions, laboratories, secondary agricultural schools, etc.)
- Employees or members of organizations and institutions who are part of the project but are not involved directly in it

2.1.2 Secondary target groups

Following the primary groups, less but still important groups that communication efforts of BalkanRoad target are:

- Consumers
- Environmental associations in BALKAN MED Region
- Media

2.2 Key messages

The Key messages of the BalkanRoad Project are kept as simple as possible in order to attract all target groups' attention. Moreover the key messages are carefully chosen so as to address the audience's interests. Under this framework, the key messages are the following:

- Produce and consume high value products with low environmental footprint
- Be trained-Reduce unreasonable resources use at your farm
- A Common Balkan Protocol to address common problems of Balkan agribusinesses
- Reduce-Recycle-Reuse at your farm

- Produce environment friendly Products-Protect the Environment-Increase your income

The key messages (all or some of them depending on the purpose and the target group) will be mentioned in all dissemination materials and also will be communicated through all other foreseen dissemination means.

2.3 Delivery tools (channels) for External communication

A variety of communication channels will be used for information availability and sharing to the wider audience. The choice and the type of the channels are considered in an overall way, because not only the project's content but also the target groups are varied and diverse. The delivery tools include all communication means and more specifically, are summarized below:

- Briefing for media journalists
- Press Releases
- Interviews, statements and TV shows
- Press Conferences
- Promotion Materials
- Template of Visual identity of the project
- Website of the project
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram)
- Media (magazines, newsletters, websites) owned by partners
- Email messages
- e-Newsletters
- Scientific papers in international journals
- National/BALKAN conferences
- National exhibitions/agro-events
- Workshops for national stakeholders
- Balkan 3-days Symposium in Thessaloniki, Greece

3 Tools and activities to achieve the objectives

3.1 Communication Tools

3.1.1 Project's website design and development

Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH will develop a dynamic informative website. The project's website will serve as an instrument for dissemination of the project and its results. It will contain the core elements: objectives, partners, activities, download section with main outputs. Moreover, the website will host the platform of the project and the ROAD tool, as well as will be the mean for the communication of the members of the project network, namely "ROAD for Balkan Agriculture".

The website will have adaptive interfaces design to allow the visualization of the project's scientific surveying data (data analytics visualizations).

Responsible partner: Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH.

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Development of the Project website. Number of visitors (2000/year)

Result indicators: Raised awareness about the BalkanRoad project and project outputs and results, BalkanRoad network expansion

3.1.2 Motion graphics animation video

MOPF will produce an animation video presenting the need for sustainable resources management under climate change pressure, explaining project strategy, the ROAD tool and the Roadmap in order to raise awareness and create expectation for the transformative potential of the project's outcomes among targeted audiences.

The video will be also published on partner's websites and social media channels.

Responsible partner: MOPF

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: A motion graphics animated video produced. Number of views of the video at Project website and Partner websites, Social media (at least 500)

Result indicators: Raise awareness and create expectation for the transformative potential of the project's outcomes among targeted audiences. Promote project's results.

3.1.3 e-Newsletters

BPI, in cooperation with the Communication manager of the project will produce e-Newsletters with information regarding the project activities and results. All partners will send these newsletters to recipients registered in already existing databases.

Responsible partner: BPI

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Four e-Newsletters produced and sent. Number of e-newsletter recipients (at least 1500 in the five countries)

Result indicators: Disseminate project through internet, increase the number of informed farmers and other stakeholders

3.1.4 Design of the Dissemination material

MOPF will create the "visual identity" of the project and elaborate ready for printing designs of all dissemination materials according to the project plan.

Responsible partner: MOPF

Target Groups: Project partners

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Visual identity of the project. Design for the Leaflet (Flayer), Brochure, Poster, Banner, T-Shirts, USB, Pen

Result indicators: Increase project visibility and visual identity of the project. Design for the Leaflet (Flayer), Brochure, Poster, Banner, T-Shirts, USB, Pens

3.1.5 Production of dissemination material sets

All partners will produce the foreseen dissemination materials using the unique design prepared by MOPF. The partners will distribute the dissemination material to stakeholders' participants of the foreseen events.

Responsible partner: All partners

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Dissemination material produced prepared and distributed in the foreseen period. In total 3000 leaflets, 3000 usb sticks, 3000 brochures, 1200 printed T-shirts for students/farmers, pens, posters and 3 metallic boards for the pilot area

Result indicators: Increase project visibility

3.1.6 A final video

A final video (duration of 5-10 minutes) to contextualize the main achievements of the project will be produced. It will present activities from the three pilot areas and provide guidance to the target audience on how they can individually/collectively adopt the innovative project's outcomes, thereby turning them into multipliers from within to beyond the project.

Responsible partner: MOPF, PERROTIS, AAEF

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Published final video. Number of media that will publish the video (At least one media per country), number of views (at least 1000).

Result indicators: Dissemination of the project to the target audience and to the wider audience.

3.2 Communication Activities

3.2.1 Three-days Symposium

A Balkan 3-days Symposium will be organized in Greece during the last 6 months of the project in which all partners will participate. The event includes a 2-day educational program for Balkan students. The event will be advertised at national, European and international level to attract participants. Young farmers will be trained on projects outputs and on ROAD tool which will be organized by PERROTIS and BPI in cooperation with the Communication Manager from MOPF. Video of the event will be posted on You Tube channel and text will be sent to IMS-FORTH in order to be posted on the website. BPI will send Press Release and text to all partners to be published in local media and in their web sites. A press clipping will be created by PERROTIS and BPI and sent to Communication

Manager from MOPF to make a joint press clipping. Photos from the event will be uploaded on the project's website.

Responsible partner: BPI, PERROTIS and MOPF

Target Groups: All target groups of the project

Target areas: All Balkan countries and other Mediterranean and European countries

Output indicators: Successful organization and dissemination of the 3-days Symposium. Number of participants (ca 150), 10 media will publish the press - release at least two per country

Result indicators: Effective dissemination of the event in all participating countries and in Europe, You Tube video of the event; elaborated press release; drafted a text for the website, social media and media owned by partners, photos and other promotion material

3.2.2 Participation in two conferences in Balkan region for project communication

All partners will participate in national/Balkan conferences (two conferences per partner) where they will promote the project activities and outputs to National/regional/local authorities and policy makers, SMEs active in the agricultural sector, private agribusinesses, business associations, Chambers of Commerce, and other public and private agencies, consultants, trade unions, and all other relevant stakeholders, Farmers associations, Educational sector (universities, institutions, laboratories, secondary agricultural schools, etc.)

Responsible partner: All Partners

Target Groups: All target groups of the project and mainly the primary one.

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Participation in 14 conferences, in total. At least 14 announcements (oral or posters) in total

Result indicators: Dissemination of the project to the scientific community and other stakeholders

3.2.3 Organizing five one-day-workshops

Five one-day-workshops (one in each participating country) for national stakeholders will be organized during the last 6 months of the project to present project outcomes.

Responsible partner: All Partners

Target Groups: National stakeholders

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Five workshops - Dissemination of the project results to national stakeholders. Number of participants (50-80 for each event)

Result indicators: Establishment of future cooperation-project networking

3.2.4 Participation in agro-events and exhibitions

All partners will participate in agro-events and exhibitions at national level. The partners in cooperation with the MOPF Communication Manager will prepare press releases and posts

for the website of the project and of the partners' websites. This press release will be distributed in all countries involved in the project.

Responsible partner: All Partners

Target Groups: All target groups of the project and mainly agribusinesses and market representatives

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Twelve agro-events and exhibitions participation. Ten media will publish the press - release at least two per country; Number of kiosks visitors (at least 150 subscriptions for each event)

Result indicators: Establishment of future cooperation with agribusiness and market representatives, wide dissemination of the project to these stakeholders--project networking

3.2.5 Publishing the ROAD tool

Media campaign to launch, publish and promote the use of the ROAD tool (social media, TV and Radio stations, interviews, journalists days, open days at the pilot fields). Press release will be prepared by the communication manager of the project. All partners will disseminate the press release about ROAD tool to local media in all countries involved in the project

Responsible partner: All Partners

Target Groups: All target groups of the project but mainly the primary target groups (section 2.1.1)

Target areas: All Balkan countries

Output indicators: Dissemination of the ROAD tool. Ten media will publish the press releases, at least two per country, ROAD tool site visitors (200)

Result indicators: Increase ROAD tool visibility

4. Resources

4.1 Human Resources

MOPF will be responsible for the overall communication and dissemination of the project. An expert will be contracted by MOPF, the leader of WP2, in order to act as dissemination manager; however, all partners will provide data and assistance for the development of the material and implementation of WP2.

4.2 Financial Resources

The total budget of WP2-Project Communication and Dissemination is 316,245.49 EUR (24% from total project budget).

The following table presents each partner's budget for WP2 in absolute values and as a percentage of the overall budget for WP2.

Project Partner Number	Partner Institution	Partners' WP2 budget	Partners' WP2 budget as a % of WP2 budget
LP (PP1)	Benaki Phytopathological Institute	55,144.53 €	17.44
PP2	Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH	28,970.50 €	9.16
PP3	American Farm School Post -Secondary Educational and Training Association (PERROTIS)	47,715.28 €	15.09
PP4	Open University of Cyprus	61,091.68 €	19.32
PP5	Association of Agri-Environmental Farmers	34,120.00 €	10.79
PP6	Agricultural University of Tirana	36,398.00 €	11.51
PP7	"Macedonian" Organic Producers Federation	52,805.50 €	16.70