



Rural development

"Garden of Serbia" - Helping Serbia's Agriculture Sector

"The Fruit drier managed by the Association is currently in trial mode and next year it will be fully engaged in new packaging and product placement in foreign markets, thanks to the project Garden of Serbia."

Dragan Pavlović, "Zlatno brdo" Fruit and Wine Growers' Association



Project Partners

The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of Serbia

The districts of Branicevski and Podunavski

The cities of Pozarevac and Smederevo

The municipalities of Zagubica, Petrovac na Mlavi, Veliko Gradiste, Velika Plana, Smederevska Palanka

150 agriculture producers from the region

Facts and Figures

- Total budget: € 435,338
- EU contribution: € 391,804
- Duration: 17 months, 2010-2011
- Beneficiary: the Regional Development Agency Branicevo-Podunavlje
- Trainings and mentoring in the area of new products development organised

Context **Lack of support to help producers maintain new quality standards**

Even though it is one of the oldest industries in Serbia, agricultural production still faces several weaknesses and gaps in its value chain. Producers are constantly facing new requirements for food safety and quality standards in the processing sector yet there is a lack of demonstration centres for training and support for new initiatives. "Garden of Serbia" addressed the common problems of fruit, vegetable, flower and beekeeping sectors related to the production quality, added value, marketing and overall organisational capacities. Thanks to this project, this region now has two demo centres for fruit drying, new packaging for three food products, laboratory for honey quality testing and a better promotion of the region's potential and human resources.

Objectives **Increase competitiveness and employment opportunities in the agriculture sector and related services in the Branicevski and Podunavski districts**

- Help agricultural producers strengthen their cooperation within the region in order to improve access to regional and international markets.
- Improve the quality of existing agricultural products and make them more competitive on both the domestic as well as international markets.
- Help the producers to develop new products with increased added value so that they can extend their product portfolio and increase their market share.
- Develop solutions and business plans for packaging, promotion and product placement in order to improve marketing towards major agro-food producers.

Impact

Higher competitiveness and more jobs in the agriculture sector and related services in the region

- Business plans prepared for three associations: flower-growers association “Smederevski Đurđevak”, fruit-growers association “Požarevac” and newly founded association “Povrtari Tribroda”.
- Improved communication and information exchange between agricultural producers - eight associations of agriculture producers from Petrovac na Mlavi and Smederevska Palanka received computer equipment and were offered computer skills training.
- Better planning of protective measures against bad weather conditions provided by the agro-meteorological station installed in Smederevska Palanka in September 2010.

Garden of Serbia - Helping Serbia's agriculture sector

Improving competitiveness and employment in the agriculture sector of Serbia's Branicevo and Podunavlje region Let the flowers grow... Flower production is a relatively young activity in the agriculture of Braničevo-Podunavlje region and it is mainly centred in Veliko Gradište, Požarevac and Smederevo. The number of nursery gardens and new producers who find flower growing their main source of income is increasing. One of these entrepreneurs is the Živić family. They have been growing flowers since the year 2000. Under the umbrella of the Garden of Serbia project, Zoran and Jasna decided to join the regional efforts to boost this segment of agriculture. “The two of us have started flower production together and the family business will now be passed on to our daughters – a landscape architecture student and a student of horticulture course at the Agricultural High School”, explains the Živić family. The most significant types of plant grown in this region now are annuals (petunia, begonia, impatiens and others), perennials (armeria, aubrieta, delphinium, etc.) and ornamental grasses (carex, festuca, etc.). “We enjoy watching them grow throughout the year and waiting for the first blossoms to appear until the moment when we can proudly take them to the local markets and flower festivals. It fills our hearts to see our own flowers decorating balconies and yards, as well as city squares and parks in the region. We are grateful to the project of Garden of Serbia under which this beautiful segment of agriculture will receive a more prominent place in both our minds and our economy”, explain Zoran and Jasna from “Nursery Živić” in Mihajlovac.