

Joint German-Danish “Support to Agriculture and Rural Economic Development of Disadvantaged Mountainous Areas” (SARED)

PN (number): 12.2061.5-002.00

Implementing partner:

Albanian Association of Marketing (AAM)



Capacity Development Initiative:

Raise incomes of MAPs producers and collectors in Shkodra areas (2 groups, respectively in Shkrel and Tamare)

1st Report

31. July, 2016

1. Background information

The Albanian Association of Marketing (AAM) is contracted by SARED program to improve the situation of MAP value chain in Shkodra area.

In this context, AAM has been engaged in the identification of MAP VC actors in the region of Shkrel and Tamare to form the groups and together with the groups have developed a project proposal for the development of MAP value chain in the local market, which is supported by SARED.

AAM has a wide experience in rural development initiatives and MAP approaches, by supporting farmers' groups and producers' groups to increase capacities in upgrading production and market access and improve their economic and social situation. On the other side, Shkodra is well known for the properties of the wild medicinal plants, asset which is offered from the geo-climate specifics. Considering factors of the region like low income situation, the available working force, the highest qualitative and quantitative potential on wild MAPs and the scarce offer of Albanian MAP by-products in the local market, an initiative to develop such value chain in Shkodra was taken into account. Through this intervention in both areas, in Shkrel and Tamare, some important impact is expected to be achieved. The main

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results will be the income generation for the MAP producers of these areas and the diversification of qualitative MAP by-products and herbal teas in the local market. The proposed activities plan to build also capacities for the involved beneficiaries (pickers of MAP, processors, traders, etc.) by impacting significantly the quality of the final products, having besides social impact in the region, environmental impact and also complementary results in developing agro-tourism and promotion of regional values.

2. Specific situation

Shkrel and Tamare regions are among the poorest areas in the region. In these areas some of the agriculture produce is used for family consumption, while the rest which is a substantial quantity, is wasted, because of their difficulty to reach sales market (poor market infrastructure) and lack of processing capacities (medicinal herbs, fruits, etc.) as well as difficulties to access market. The processed produce available for market is almost inexistent in Shkrel, while in Tamare there are only few initiatives supported by development organizations, but still lacking market focus and products promotion.

In both areas, the target groups where the project is focused are: medicinal herb pickers, processors of different products MAP based like jams of forest fruits, herbal teas, etc., MAP consolidators, traders and others who add value to the MAP value chain; potential target are other farmers groups and association located in these regions; agro-tourism operators (especially restaurants and points of sales where local produce will be promoted), other groups are Albanian consumers and supermarkets.

So, in Vrith village, there were 16 women who agreed to cooperate for developing the MAP value chain. All the women are habitants of Vrith village and have signed the Memorandum of Understanding. No consolidator or wholesaler (who might support the group with storing, drying, grading, processing, packing activities) is part of this group, but women are open to cooperate with nearby processors. Recently, 2 more women have joined the group, triggered from the innovations and from the expected outcomes.

The group of Tamare has 20 women who signed the MoU and agreed to cooperate for this project. The women are from areas of Selca village, Tamare village and Broj village, which are part of Tamare region. There have not been any changes so far at the number of the women composing the group.

Part of the group is also the wife of the herb consolidator located in Tamare village, who will act as collection point and might act also as the group representative for the management of product orders,

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herbs storage and processing and distribution infrastructure. The other members of the group represent farmers/pickers and 3 of them are teaching at the Tamara Village School.

The groups have already received some technical training issues on wild MAP harvesting and processing (drying, grading, etc.) and some topics on processing forest fruit jams and liqueurs from local MAP by products, as new developed products with high potential in the domestic market, promising income generation for the involved actors. Furthermore, capacity building on quality schemes (i.e. Albanian Guarantee standard) through relevant training have increased women awareness for the importance of producing high quality products and on the benefits of promoting regional values and opportunities (related with agro tourism, on farm sales etc).

During the training sessions women participation has been very active especially on the discussions on best practices and requirements for qualitative products, focusing on the potential benefits that might be generated from the group (like adding value to the final products, development of new processed products and sales; etc). . Improving harvesting methods by using the appropriate tools and equipment's, utilization of the proper techniques for MAP drying process, adapting innovative technologies for jam and liqueurs product processing will lead to reduced processing time, higher product quality, diversification of the product portfolio, increase product quantity and as consequence it is expected the impact on final prices. All these interventions are expected to influence incomes increase for the women working groups improving in this way their economic and social situation and promoting the area.

3. Results according to the Log Frame

Objective	Verifiable indicators	Comments
Component 2: Increase MAP productivity and income by 30%	Production increased by 30% Income increased by 30%	This result is planned to be achieved at the end of the intervention. The improvements through planned activities in different levels (technical, marketing, promotion, etc.) will lead to achievement of these results. First training sessions on technical issues have already started and considered as valuable from the actors in improving the quality of the new developed products, environment protection

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		and regional promotion.
Results (per step to be implemented)	Verifiable indicators	Comments
R1 - 34 MAPs farmers trained and instructed to obtain quality MAPs	34 MAPs adjust their productions according to their agreed standards	Up to now 38 participants attended the trainings delivered in both areas. According to the experts advises the women groups are analyzing opportunities regarding different standard schemes (typical products, organic etc). Currently this is ongoing process.
R2 Investments applications for farm and processing improvement.	The involved group agreed on a number of investments and procedures to be followed by the group in order to support the applicant	The technical trainings developed on MAP processing improvement identified the necessary investment for producing qualitative MAP by products, preservation of wild MAP and environment protection. These investments include tools/equipment/materials such as: simple cutting tools, harvesting gloves, proper collecting and harvesting bags, nets for selecting and drying herbs, pots for steaming the forest fruit jams, stove for the preparation of the jams, simple tools for the jam preparation etc. Furthermore, along the training sessions the VC actors demanded support for packaging, labeling and branding their products. The process is ongoing.
R3 Market identification for MAPs	The VC-group is producing according to the defined market requirements	Market related training topics are planned to be implemented in the upcoming months. Such trainings are expected to increase knowledge of the participants regarding concrete market

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		<p>demand and respective requirements related with quality in terms of harvested MAPs as well as processed products.</p> <p>However some trainings have delivered information about market requirements for harvested MAPs necessary to start negotiations with MAP exporters, collectors and processors. Other market requirements trainings are expected to provide information as well as on processed MAP by products.</p>
R4 Identification of most profitable distribution channels	The VC-group is using the given channels	<p>The information offered during the training sessions on how to process high qualitative MAP by-products (together with the marketing sessions as well) will identify the opportunities to offer these products in new distribution channels like collection points, consolidators, restaurants, tourism initiatives, guesthouses, etc, as some of the most interesting local markets for the region. In some training related with MAP processing, the experts have shared information as well on the available distribution channels and logistics of some key consolidators and MAP processors. In the upcoming trainings will be further elaborated and potentially lobbied with such actors to cooperate regarding distribution channels for the women groups.</p>
R5 Market testing	<p>Participation in fairs</p> <p>Direct distribution resulting in buyers/consumers increasing demand.</p>	<p>No impact yet on this result. Related activities are planned to be implemented in the coming months.</p>
R6 Marketing	The VC-groups	Related activities are planned to be

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strategy is implemented	integrate the marketing strategy into their production processes on farm. The VC-groups reached a level of a sustainable producer group of a homogeneous quality.	implemented in the upcoming months. This topic is strongly related with marketing concepts that should be developed for the products, organized and standardized production, etc. However preliminary discussions on the potential representative of the groups have started, for facilitating group activities in the local market.
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