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# Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo (HPK)

Project funded by  
the governments of Switzerland and Denmark

## Promotion of Interest Groups Mission Report Annet Witteveen

Implemented by



December 3-11, 2008

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## Summary

In December 2008, a short support mission took place on the promotion of interest groups. Its main purpose was to review the objectives, strategies and implementation of HPK's 'Promotion of Interest Groups' component and to provide guidance for the component's further development. The main outcomes of the mission were to:

Project role & responsibilities:

- Prepare a map of stakeholders/actors and their relationships to better understand the role of the project and its position for the coming years.
- Clearly separate the facilitating services from the actual support services to the sector; (1) innovation and technical services, (2) business development services, and (3) organisational strengthening services.
- Develop, as a project team, a vision on the sector, including the roles of different actors such as farmer groups, private service providers, government, etc.
- Possibly integrate the promotion of producer organizations & development of business capacity as key elements in the strategic planning with MAFRD
- Work with an integrated approach to give better leverage to group promotion, and to work more efficiently; IG officer joins the business development group in order to increase the capacity of IG promotion, to reach out to more groups, and to offer a focused support.

### Working with groups:

- Facilitate vision development and planning by groups. Do not apply a blanket approach to all groups, but collaborate based on capacity and needs.
- Prepare a short information leaflet on formal ways of organising (association, cooperative).
- Identify factors for success, define economic viability to assist groups in monitoring group performance, identify factors that contribute to success in Kosovo, and use them for the promotion of groups.
- Create a contract of collaboration and partnership between the group and the Project.
- Involve more groups in a more efficient and effective manner; sharing of experiences between groups in a more systematic way, meet with different groups together, work cleverly with HPK.
- Promote future development with young professional farmers who take leadership roles, and with women that are active players in the sector.
- CFI offers interesting innovation opportunities to producer groups and agri-business associations. What can the project do to promote innovative best practices of groups/associations that are still in their infant stage? This is a question to keep in the back of the mind during the year.
- Federation idea; given the current stage of the sector and the producers groups, it seems best for HPK to go slow and let the idea simmer for a while. It would be useful to look at some examples of federations outside Kosovo and how they function.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the colleagues of HPK for a constructive and enjoyable week including a great Christmas party. It was a pleasure to be in Kosovo. I especially enjoyed the very good discussions and exchange of ideas with Ali and his excellent driving. We saw and learned a lot together (groups, language, and history!). Thanks to Lumnije for the excellent work and relations with the groups and I do hope that we can work together next time! We enjoyed a good exchange of ideas and experiences during field visits different workshops. Thanks to all these groups and persons for their hospitality with farmers, partners, staff, and with all participants of the and willingness to take time for us. Plus, a special thanks goes to Neil and Faton for the excellent planning of the mission and for having me.

Annet Witteveen

## 1. Mission objectives & approach

Collaboration between actors in the horticulture sector in Kosovo is still in an initial stage. The “Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo” (HPK) project considers that collaboration among actors is one of the essential ingredients to a thriving horticulture sector. Therefore, a separate component has been included in its 4<sup>th</sup> phase (2007-2009) on the promotion of interest groups. After 2 years of first experiences with the promotion of interest groups, the mission has as its main purpose:

“to review the objectives, strategies, and implementation of HPK’s ‘Promotion of Interest Groups’ component as an integrated part of the objectives and strategies of the project and to provide guidance for the component’s further development in the context of the situation in Kosovo”

The mission consisted of a series of field visits and open discussions with different actors in the horticultural sector, discussions with other actors outside of the sector but involved in farmer organisations, exchange with the project staff, and 2 small workshops with groups of producers. The TOR and programme for the mission can be found in Annex 1. The tasks and respective outputs achieved during the mission were as follows:

Tasks	Outputs
<p>Reach an understanding of the major characteristics of, and challenges facing, actors in the horticultural sector in Kosovo</p> <p>Review the objectives, strategies, and implementation of the Project’s ‘Promotion of Interest Groups’ component within the overall vision and role of the project in the horticultural sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 days of field visits consisting of discussions with members of 12 different groups</li> <li>• Different discussions with other actors involved in farmer associations</li> <li>• Individual discussions with project staff</li> <li>• An understanding of sector, history and present situation of farmer organisations in Kosovo</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitate a brainstorming session amongst selected members of HPK on the future strategy of the component</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of ideas on the component and possible future directions (refer to annex 2 for summary)</li> <li>• Review of component, see chapter 2</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitate a workshop for members of interest groups to understand their experiences and visions and to share experiences from other contexts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two workshops, each with 3 groups of producers (refer to annex 3 for agenda and workshop pictures)</li> </ul>
<p>Recommend any steps necessary to develop the capacity of the Project Officer and, if applicable, other members of the HPK team</p> <p>Provide guidance for the component’s further development in the context of the situation in Kosovo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A set of recommendations and ingredients for the component’s further development, described in chapter 3 and its next steps in chapter 4</li> </ul>
<p>Debrief the HPK team and discuss whether further backstopping missions would be desirable and feasible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to mindmap in annex 4</li> </ul>

## **2. Component review**

### **Context**

The present horticultural sector in Kosovo can be described as a weakly organised sector with a lack of supportive frame conditions, consisting of mainly small scale family farms. For most of the farming families, the war destroyed their livelihoods and almost destroyed the entire agricultural sector. At present, most farming families operate on small plots of land that are often scattered in an area. They are engaged in

many different jobs to rebuild their family farm assets, not necessarily with strategies that focus on agriculture or horticulture. The revitalisation of the private cooperative sector after the war has, so far, not been successful. Farmers operate mostly as individuals with little collaboration amongst each other. The main reasons can, to a certain extent, be found in the history of the former socialist system and the failure of state-owned cooperatives.

When informal or formal collaboration between farmers takes place, they organise themselves mainly in order to access donor funding, to improve their own economic situation or, to a lesser extent, to access markets and related opportunities. During talks with some individuals and groups, a tendency, though not yet very distinct, was felt towards the latter objective, accessing markets and related opportunities.

### **Project role & approach**

The project is an important actor in the development of the horticultural sector in Kosovo. During the past 3 phases, the project's approach evolved from a focus on introducing innovation to the sector and working with best farmers towards the promotion of business development services towards a business-enabling environment for all actors in the horticultural sector.

This suggests that the project is playing the role of facilitator in the sector. It facilitates, through linkages between farmers and service providers, capacity building, extension or informational services, but it also facilitates the development of service provision, especially for services that not yet function well. Here are some recommendations regarding the role and approach of the project, which are important to the IG component:

- To properly play a facilitating role, the project needs to clearly separate the facilitating services it offers to the sector from actual support services. Presently technical staff is still offering free services to individual farmers, while at the same time, the project is subsidising private services to farmer organisations. There are different ideas within the project team on how to deal with this in the coming 3 years. It would be wise to rapidly come to a consensus based on a common vision for the sector and, in particular, for the private service provision. Based on a common vision, suitable mechanisms for service provision can be developed and supported during the remainder of Phase 4.
- A map of stakeholders/actors in the sector and their relationship with one another should be prepared to better understand the project's role in the sector. The project can be positioned on the map at its present role and where it would like to be positioned in the future in order to gain more clarity on best project practices for the coming years.

## Component approach

Many people in the rural areas in Kosovo lack capital or access to capital and have limited vocational or technical skills. Collaboration amongst farmers in the form of associations or cooperatives can be an effective mechanism for individual farmers to pool their resources and skills toward a common economic goal. It focuses on collaborative efforts to achieve something that they could not have done individually.<sup>1</sup>

'A farmer interest group is a self managed, independent group of farmers with a shared goal and interest. The members work together to achieve this goal by pooling their existing resources, gaining better access to other resources and to share in the resulting benefits.'

SNV, 2005

In 2007, HPK employed an Interest Group (IG) Officer responsible for the promotion of interest groups. Initially the project contacted municipalities to make contact with groups of producers, after which, working relations with six groups were established. On a monthly basis, the IG officer supported each group with visits focusing on capacity building for the different groups. In collaboration with other technical staff of the project, technical support and training were organised based on the different problems of the respective groups. During the past year, the project has facilitated private services to the groups by subsidising 75% of the costs of service providers that provided extension and capacity building services. In addition, the project supported the groups with study tours in the region and other exchanges with actors from the sector.

The continuous and regular support of the project to the farmer groups is very appreciated by the members of the different groups. A number of times it was mentioned that the project support is so valuable because it is not just a one time support or grant, but it continually looks with the members into further development of the group. The project support so far has resulted in increased capacities, both technical and organisational, and in a number of linkages between the groups to other actors in the sector.

It was obvious that the interest groups were all interested in continuing to work with the project. What was sometimes less obvious was the ground for their interest in working together as a group, beyond the project support or the support by other donors.

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<sup>1</sup> Gisela Ervin-Ward, Creating and managing a farmer interest group, SNV, Hanoi, 2005

### **3. Ingredients for further development**

Based on knowledge of the horticultural sector, the present status and performance of the farmer groups, and the actual role of the project, a number of ingredients to further develop the project component are described below. The description begins with observations followed by recommendations.

#### **Promotion of private sector investment**

Groups can take advantage of economies of scale by collaborating in areas such as marketing, finance, sale of produce, logistics, etc. Farmers, who organize themselves simply for the sake of organizing or because it is requested by outside projects/government, will often not have expected results. The HPK project has a limited amount of resources, both in human and financial terms. Therefore in its present role as actor/facilitator in the private sector, it must be selective and result-oriented in the work it does with farmer groups.

- For the development of the horticultural sector in Kosovo, it is important to invest project resources in farmer groups in order to promote private sector investment on the short-term and in justified cases on the long-term. In further collaboration with the present groups, it will be important to develop a clear idea (possibly criteria) for further support; what kind of support, frequency, by whom (SP or project staff), etc.

#### **Vision development**

In order for a group to organise, it needs planning, reflection and careful consideration as to its purpose. It is important that a group has a clear vision of where it is going and what it wants to achieve. Of course this vision can be later adapted. Forming a shared vision is an essential step in group, association or cooperative building. In the two workshops held during the mission, the participating groups were asked to formulate a vision for their group for the coming 5 years. The results varied, but what was striking was the long list of ideas about the future. It was not often clear whether the lists were a real vision for the future or more the sum of the individual dreams of the participating group members.

- Developing a vision and clear objectives is an important basis for a group enabling it to set priorities and to plan joint activities. It is recommended that the project facilitates such a process of reflection and planning by groups by sharing examples and ideas of other groups. Learning about the success and failures of other groups can be of great assistance in thinking about group development.

Amongst the different HPK staff members, there is the shared idea that it is important to work with groups and that collaboration between farmers is essential for further development of the sector. It is, however, less clear what HPK's vision is for the sector in general and the role of farmer groups in particular.

- It is recommended to develop a project/team vision on the sector, including the roles of different actors in the sector such as farmer groups, private service providers, government, etc. A vision exercise would allow HPK staff to create an image that can help guide the change that the project would like to achieve in the sector. The outcome of such a vision exercise is a long-term plan, generally with a certain timeline, which could assist the project in determining work for the next 3 years. Such an exercise also provides the framework/strategy for achieving the vision.

## Key questions for the groups and for the project are:

- What is the purpose of the Groups? (Farmer experimentation, locally improve techniques, jointly represent interests at a national level or even an international level, jointly market produce, receive benefits from the project, etc?)
- Who can the Groups partner with once they are organised? External linkages to input supplies, markets or capital are facilitated by combining supply and demand, which provide the group with a bargaining power greater than that of each member individually.

## How to organize different groups

During the brainstorming session with project staff, a lot of discussion took place on what is a cooperative. Most farmer groups are currently registered as associations. As mentioned before, it needs planning, reflection and careful consideration as to shape in which to organise. Groups will need guidance and advice while considering all options. Given the goal and the circumstances, what would suit a group best? Some groups might be resolved because they will achieve their common objective and no longer need to work as a group. For these it is possibly best to stay informal unless registration is required to receive certain support. To select the most appropriate type of organisation,

its internal management needs to think about to how to achieve objectives and take into consideration the skills and experiences available amongst the members. The following 3 options on how to organise a group are available:

- a. Associations
- b. Cooperatives ([www.copacgva.org](http://www.copacgva.org) for publications and links on cooperatives)
- c. Informal

- It is recommended that a short information leaflet be prepared about the 2 formal ways of organising, namely as association and as cooperative, explaining the differences in terms of organisational possibilities as well as a list of advantages and disadvantages that illustrate the consequences under each registration. This leaflet could be shared with all groups and used for discussion and reflection about their future.
- Take into account the different goals and objectives of each group. The project cannot apply a blanket approach to working with groups. The vision and planning of each group should serve as a basis for the type of support the project gives to each individual group.

“Agricultural cooperatives enable producers to realize economic benefits that they could not otherwise achieve alone. Groups of agricultural producers improve their bargaining power in the marketplace, reduce costs by pooling capital and resources through cooperative enterprises, and make expensive services, such as marketing, that are unavailable to individuals accessible. Through cooperatives, farmers can achieve economies of scale, by reducing the unit costs of inputs and services, enabling farmers to focus on producing goods rather than finding buyers and suppliers. Cooperatives also enable farmers to improve product and service quality and reduce risks. Agricultural cooperatives can allow farmers to address common problems, develop new market opportunities or expand existing markets. Agricultural cooperatives empower farmers and improve their position in the marketplace.”

International Federation of Agricultural Producers  
[www.ifap.org](http://www.ifap.org)

## Identify Factors for Success

What is a successful farmer group and what are the factors that contribute to success? Viability of a group, especially in economic terms, is one form of success that meets the individual objectives of group members in Kosovo. This implies that benefits need to outweigh costs for group members. The case from Chile, briefly described in the text box, illustrates how economic viability of producer organisations was measured after surveying 3000 members of producer organisations.

- Economic viability can be defined and used by the project to assist groups in monitoring their performance.
- In Kosovo, HPK can identify factors that contribute to success and use them for the promotion of groups. Possible factors are:
  - a. Groups can act as vehicles of change for farmers/members
  - b. Dynamism (thrust) amongst (at least some) members - mentioned by different groups
  - c. System of rules and incentives to allocate costs & benefits; have clear rules and responsibilities, hold meetings, communicate effectively; this is important criteria for success
  - d. Networking competencies
  - e. Ability to secure adequate support

These factors can also serve as indicators whether to continue support to groups (or to withdraw) and help to assist in deciding on further support.

## Groups as a project partners

During the debriefing session it was mentioned that viewing farmer groups as partners would enhance their capacity and enable the project to better play a facilitating role. While I write this, I am not sure whether the term partner is correct, but a partner relationship which would promote equality in terms of collaboration, instead of a more dependent relationship.

- Partnership with a group can be agreed on in a contract between two parties, the project and the group. In such a contract, expected inputs from both sides are agreed upon. In this way it will also be easy to distinguish between the demands/needs of different groups because each contract is group specific. The vision and planning of a group could serve as a basis for the contractual agreements.

Case from Chile:

A producer organisation (PO) was considered viable if, after three years:

- its income could cover its costs
- if the proportion of the organisation's income derived from subsidies, donations and external grants was less than 60% of total income
- if its liabilities were no higher than 60% of its assets

About 45% of the POs had annual expenses that were higher than their revenues, 33% had extremely high debts relative to their assets, and 33% were dependent on subsidies and grants for more than 60% of their total income! It has been easier to form these organisations (government promotion) than for them to become viable and sustainable.

[www.capacity.org](http://www.capacity.org),  
issue 34, August  
2008

"A **contract** is an exchange of promises between two or more parties to do or refrain from doing an act which is enforceable in a court of law. It is where an unqualified offer meets a qualified acceptance and the parties reach Consensus ad idem. The parties must have the necessary capacity to contract and the contract must not be either **trifling, indeterminate, impossible or illegal**. Contract law is based on the principle expressed in the Latin phrase *pacta sunt servanda* (pacts must be kept)."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract>

## **Promotion and Scaling up of Farmer Groups**

The project has invested many resources in supporting 6 farmer groups. How can these experiences be widened to involve more groups in more efficient and effective manner?

- Sharing of experiences between groups has been a method used by HPK and can be facilitated in a more systematic manner:
  - Successful groups can be used to promote their successful activities and share their experiences with other groups; farmers to farmer learning can be very effective because farmers learn from the experiences of other farmers and groups giving them insights into their own performance.
- Meetings with Groups:
  - Instead of monthly meetings with one group, meetings with several groups together can be organised (as with the small workshops held during the mission); set clear objectives and let groups prepare and share their experiences; let groups have their own monthly meetings with a set agenda, and only come when activities are planned accordingly.
  - Work with groups according a monthly plan; lend project support according to the specific monthly plan.
  - Work cleverly together in HPK; divide work with colleagues depending on the needs for support (and the agreed contract), discuss on a regular basis progress of groups with colleagues involved.

## **Promote involvement of young people & women**

During the field visits, most discussions were held with elderly men. No farming women were met during the mission and only a few younger men were present during some of the visits or meetings (e.g. sons studying agriculture). When there was a young person involved in a farm business or group, positive dynamics and fresh ideas were present. Especially with high unemployment in Kosovo and the migration of especially men from rural areas to cities or abroad, the involvement of young people and women in farmer organisations is crucial for a vibrant horticultural sector in the future.

- HPK could promote a vision for future development with young professional farmers that take leadership roles and introduce professional management and with women that are active players in the sector encouraged by elders. It is recommended to promote such a vision through farmer groups and be sensitive to trends and opportunities that arise in order to bring young people, women and their ideas and efforts to the forefront (e.g. study tours, fairs, forums, in the media, HPK website, etc).

## **Promotion of producer organizations & development of business capacity as key elements in the strategic planning with MAFRD**

HPK is presently involved in the strategic development for the sector with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD). Without knowledge of the contents of the draft of the strategic plan for development so far, the following recommendations seem logical. Promotion of interest groups by HPK is good but promotion of producer organisations in the sector by the ministry would possibly have more effect. Create an opportunity for public-private dialogue and create precedence in terms of concrete supportive action/public services.

- The involvement of HPK in the strategic plan could be an opportunity to look into the inclusion of strategic planning for the horticultural sector with market-oriented producer organisations. In such a sector, the development of business capacity of producer organisations would need to be a key element.

### **Innovation fund**

The Competitive Fund for Innovation (CFI) “is about creating an incentive for businesses to experiment with new ways of working, which if successful, could be replicated by others on a larger scale and become an example of best practice”. It allocates financial resources to private enterprises and other actors in Kosovo. According to the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the CFI, there are four categories of applicants who can propose projects to the CFI, namely producer groups, individual producers, private firms, and industry (agribusiness) associations.

There is no specification of producer groups, but possibly they need to be registered associations or cooperatives. In the criteria for the selection of proposals, the weight

given to the technical ability of an applicant is only 10%. If the applicant is a producer group, and given the organisational capacity of present producer groups, this percentage seems rather low. Successful implementation by a producer group will to a large extent depend on the capacity of the group, technical and organisational.

- The CFI offers interesting innovation opportunities to producer groups and agri-business associations. Project partners will feel attracted and encouraged by the fund, but might not necessarily come with proposals within the mission and goals of the CFI. They may, however, have potential. How is the project going to deal with this and what can it do to promote innovative best practices of groups/associations that are still in their infant stage? This is a question to keep in mind during the coming year.

### **Federation idea**

During various discussions, the idea of a farmer federation came up with a number of farmer groups. The main entry point was mostly the question of the government and how to make it listen to farmers. There are some examples of sector associations such as the Kosovo Poultry Producers and Feed Millers Association (SHPUK), which managed to play an important role in the poultry sector, including lobbying and negotiations with the government, thereby making use of their international linkages with the USA and Germany. The Kosovo Association of Milk Producers (KAMP) is another national association. It is presently looking into forming a federation as many other local dairy associations have been formed. The Alliance of Kosovo Agribusinesses (AKA) is an umbrella of 5 associations (poultry, import dealers, flower mills, beekeepers) that has been involved in policy matters, but lately changed its statute towards agri-business and its umbrella function to that of a change agent in agri-business. All 3 examples have received considerable support from USAID in their efforts.

For the horticultural sector, the question is: how large does a farmer federation or network of farmer organisations need to be to get the government to listen to them?

- Given the current stage of the sector and the producers groups, it seems best for HPK to go slow and let the idea simmer for a while. In the mean time, the idea can be further discussed with groups and during meetings with different stakeholders to let it find its own dynamics. It would be useful to look into some examples of federations outside Kosovo and their function (incl. initiation process & structure) in order to gain food for further thought.

## Capacity of the component

Under the promotion of groups, the following possible support by HPK is presently available and can be provided:

- Innovation and technical services to produce good products
- Business development services to improve the group business orientation
- Organisational strengthening services to improve group organisational capacity



The project has emphasized innovation and technical services to groups and to some extent, the project has strengthened the groups' organisational capacities (through the IG Officer in collaboration with technical staff). Working with an integrated approach gives better leverage to group promotion and enables them to work more efficiently.

- It is recommended that HPK works with groups in a more integrated manner, thereby including business development support. For example, technical support could go hand in hand with business development advice and/or organisational strengthening. Also, the CFI might offer opportunities as a grant for a certain proposals which could be supported or combined with business development services and/or organisational support.

Promotion of groups is a responsibility of the project. The organisational strengthening of groups is the responsibility of the IG officer or service providers.

- To better integrate support to groups, it is advised that the IG officer joins the business development group of the project to:
  - work more closely with business development staff
  - facilitate dialogue on progress and trends in group development for individual groups and in general in Kosovo from a business development perspective
  - support plans of groups by business calculations, sharing existing examples to better inform group members on the viability of their ideas, and facilitating decision making.

- Increase the capacity in IG promotion to reach out to more groups. In this way potential groups, such as 'Mamusha' and others, can be explored and supported.
- To work in a more integrated manner with groups, an assessment of a group, according to the above visualisation (organisational capacity, products, and business orientation), would assist the project and the group in agreeing upon specific support. This would mean that some groups will agree to a combination of different services (e.g. concrete activities to establish a system of working as a group and building capacity to manage the activity), while other groups require a different level of support.

#### **4. Next steps to the component**

Based on the different recommendations made in the chapters 2 and 3, the following next steps of the component are recommended:

- i. IG officer joins business development group.
- ii. IG capacity increased (consultancy support) to reach out to more groups.
- iii. Prepare a short informational leaflet on the 2 formal ways of organising as farmers, namely as associations and as cooperatives.
- iv. Continue vision exercises, as was initiated during the mission, followed by priority setting and planning with groups.
- v. Develop, as a project team, a vision of the sector, including private service provision. Develop suitable mechanisms accordingly.
- vi. Assess the capacities of different groups (old, new, potential); this could be done with the groups but needs preparation.
- vii. Based on these assessments, collaboration with different groups can be worked out, including preparing contracts.
- viii. A last step is to look back at this report and think about the recommendations:
  - Would it be useful to look into economic viability?
  - What are success factors and how are they used?
  - How to promote the involvement of young people and women?
  - What about the federation idea? Examples?
  - Can promotion of producer organisations and development of business capacity be included in the strategic planning with MAFRD?
  - Is the CFI an opportunity to promote group development?

As a last general remark, I would use the term, producer groups or producer organisations. I know I have not been using the terms but they seem to be the best description, especially because many of the group members are not really farmers even though they all produce fruits or vegetables. The term organisation would include informal groups and formal associations and cooperatives.

## **Annex I**

Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo  
Backstopping mission regarding the promotion of interest groups  
Elements for the ToR

### **Background**

[Context of collaboration between actors in the horticulture sector in Kosovo, the objectives and strategy of the component, the resources deployed, the activities undertaken, the achievements and constraints. To be done]

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the mission is to review the objectives, strategies and implementation of HPK's 'Promotion of Interest Groups' component as an integrated part of the objectives and strategies of the project and to provide guidance for the component's further development in the context of the situation in Kosovo.

### **Specific tasks**

- Reach an understanding of the major characteristics of, and challenges facing, actors in the horticultural sector in Kosovo;
- Review the objectives, strategies and implementation of the Project's 'Promotion of Interest Groups' component within the overall vision and role of the project in the horticultural sector;
- Facilitate a workshop of members of interest groups to ascertain their experiences and visions and to share experiences from other contexts.
- Facilitate a brainstorming amongst selected members of HPK on the future strategy of the component;
- Recommend any steps necessary to develop the capacity of the Project Officer and, if applicable, other members of the HPK team.
- Provide guidance for the component's further development in the context of the situation in Kosovo.
- Provide a debriefing to the HPK team and discuss whether further backstopping missions would be desirable and feasible.

### **Timing and Duration**

Wednesday to Thursday, December 3-11.

7 work days in Kosovo, 2 days travel, 1 day writing in Switzerland = 10 days.

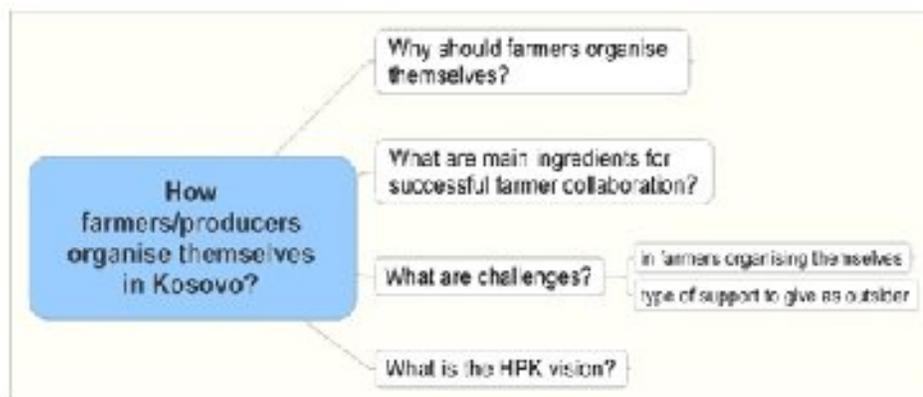
## Programme

Wednesday	3	08.30 Arrive Pristina Airport 10.00 Briefing at Project 12.00 Field visit to Malesheve and Gjakova fruit associations
Thursday	4	07.30 Field visit to Anamorava: - Kamenice Apple Club - Top-Fruit nursery (Koretin) - Zhegra Village Association, soft-fruit nursery (Zhegra) - Viti Apple Club
Friday	5	08.30 Meeting Mentor Thaqi (Pristina) 10.00 Preparation brainstorming 13.00 Brainstorming with HPK staff 16.30 Meeting Lumnije 18.00 HPK Christmas Party
Saturday	6	07.30 Field visit: Mamusha Association, soft-fruit nursery owner (Luka), Rahovec farmers
Sunday	7	8.30 Field visit Dukagjini: - Radosta Cooperative - Bllagaje Apple Association - Qyshk Cooperative - Kovrage Apple Association
Monday	8	KURBAN BAJRAM HOLIDAY - individual work
Tuesday	9	08.00 to Anamorava 10.00 workshop with 3 Anamorava Apple Clubs 15.00 Meeting Poultry & dairy association 16.30 Meeting Sylvain
Wednesday	10	08.00 to Gjakova 10.00 Workshop with 3 Dukadjini associations 15.00 Debriefing HPK team (Pristina)
Thursday	11	09.00 Departure Pristina Airport

## Annex II

### Brainstorming: How farmers/producers organise themselves in Kosovo?

The brainstorming took place according to the following questions:



#### Why should farmers organize themselves?

- To have a common voice that represents professionals
- Common interest to increase income
- To have a better approach on markets, inputs, common activities for economies of scale
- To share experiences, information, and knowledge on technical aspects
- To commonly use machinery
- To agree upon certain quality standards, payment for certification, and to access information
- To achieve together a certain quantity over a longer period of time
- Two main objectives are (1) to have a voice as producers and (2) common services for economy of scale

#### What are the main ingredients for successful farmer collaboration?

With the background of a communist system and cooperatives that have collapsed, after the war, donor driven promotion of cooperatives failed. Therefore, the project initially supported best farmers in innovations with the hope that other farmers would follow. But with so many worries and other priorities after the war, this did not happen. For this phase, it was decided to work with groups and have more outreach.

- Knowledge needs, gathering of knowledge
- Needs or interest comes from the farmers
- The members of VITI apple club mentioned that the presence of Lumnije brought us together, support from her brought a system in working together, it gave new ideas and fed the need for knowledge
- Empowering and sharing risks which individuals do not take on their own
- Small group is a solid base for the development of collaboration
- Trust in each other is a crucial ingredient, also take into consideration the

- experience of the old cooperatives
- Leadership, examples of success and engines which keep the group running/motivated
- Time needed to grow as an organisation, to mature, to learn about what the organisation can do and how it functions
- Common vision of the group
- Opportunity of capacity building and support from outside
- Own initiatives

Lot of discussion took place on what is a cooperative, what needs more attention in the project:

- What is a cooperative as per the law?
- What is an association as per the law?
- What would this mean in practice for farmers who want to legally register themselves as one or the other? What possible experiences have been made so far?

### **What are the challenges?**

#### **Farmers organizing themselves:**

- Good leadership
- People have an individual approach towards making money in the sector
- People have other jobs, sources of income, and horticulture is not necessarily the priority
- Role of the ministry of agriculture is still absent
- How to get farmers organised in order to apply pressure, i.e. lobbying efforts (there is not much difference between informal and formally registered groups)

#### **Type of support to give as an outsider**

- Role of the project: find a balance between facilitation and technical support
- Kosovo has no time! Development has to be quick! Luckily the donors are patient and there is a good trust relationship between IC and SDC)
- Differences in approach to work with different organisations; different speeds needed for different groups. Example of strawberry production which is scattered and has a short season so the strategy has to work more on a seasonal basis.
- Differences in vision between project (more sector focused) and farmers; how do you deal with this, more indirect, cannot be forced upon people
- Starting one activity as a group; which, how, when
- First question is often how to get money. How to organise in this case? How to start? Project started with contacting municipalities to call together apple growers and others, they met together and found by looking into their problems in production that there is a lot of need for technical support.
- Future: low level of advice at an individual basis but more on group basis
- Future: promotion of common activities, there is not much experience yet, risks are big. Example: selling together if the group finds a good buyer but those who want to sell individually will do so like many other small producers
- Ideas and experiences on cooperatives from a business perspective: by law and in spirit

**What is the HPK vision?**

- Make impact through working with informal and formal groups
- Without collaboration, the future development of the sector is difficult, groups can be instrumental
- Importance of lobbying, collaboration with government and municipalities
- Social structure of Kosovo asks for economy of scale through associations

## **Annex III**

Agenda workshops with producer groups in Gjilan & Gjakova

1. Opening/welcome
2. Self-introduction of participants and of associations
3. Success stories of the associations, less successful activities & why
4. Vision of the associations (work in groups per association)
5. Presentation of visions and discussion
6. Closure & lunch together