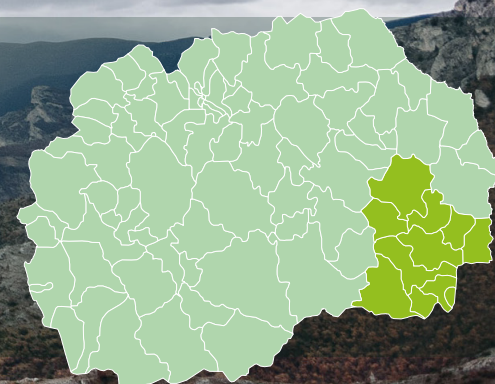




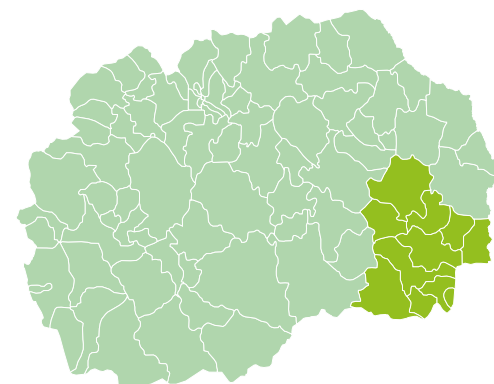
Gevgelija Strumica

North Macedonia



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Introduction

In North Macedonia in general and Gevgelija-Strumica in particular, a comprehensive extension service is lacking. The professional technical support in farming is very poor both in content and also in the process of delivery. Also, like in other pilots, the young population is leaving rural areas, seeking better future in towns or abroad. At the same time, North Macedonia is a transit point for migrants entering Europe, which presents both an opportunity and a challenge.

Besides investigating the impact of third country nationals on North Macedonia's agricultural sector, the pilot will introduce new measures to update extension services so that communication with farmers and support delivery is carried out using modern ICTs.

The Gevgelija-Strumica Region in the Republic of North Macedonia faces challenges of maintaining and achieving higher development of rural regions that requires a multi stakeholder approach in policy development and policy execution. Areas of required intervention for achieving higher attractiveness of the rural areas can be divided in several categories: economy, social inclusion, climate, young farmers, environment, awareness, technology, agricultural education, tax policy and market issues. Solving these challenges requires identifying horizontal streams that have an effect on all the above categories of challenges.

The main focus of the pilot in the Gevgelija-Strumica Region is to enable effective and efficient functioning of several horizontal streams that are creating enabling environment for tackling the above mention categories of challenges. One of the key horizontal streams identified prior to the project application is the system of agricultural extension service.

Additionally, supporting this approach considers also dealing with one more horizontal stream that is the entire system of supporting young farmers through all the above categories of challenges. Overall, the main priority issues in our case also called as horizontal streams of policy measures, will be treated through the prism of all above mentioned categories of challenges.

(Vision statement)

Developing policy measures that will ensure sustainable agricultural extension that will deliver high quality service on efficient and effective way, for solving all of the above categories of challenges. The pilot ambition will put a special attention on the needs and the role of young farmers in all relevant categories of challenges.

Priority issues

Overall ambition

Expected outputs:

- New model for agricultural extension service;
- New program for keeping and attracting the young population in the rural areas and agriculture as professional orientation ;
- Designed approach for effective integration of the above two outputs in the future rural development programs on a state level.

Expected impact (qualitative):

- Growth in the rural economy;
- Reduction of “push” migration and enabling of “pull” migration;
- Decreasing of the average age of the rural population;
- Enhancing the position of the farmers in the food value chain.

