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# Learning Area Western Stara Planina (Bulgaria) “Action Plan”

for brokerage activities on High Nature Value Innovation Projects



**From October 2017 to December 2018**

**Version V 2.0**



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## 1. Starting point

*This first section will be the reference point for each narrative of “HVN innovation process” at LA level. The aim is to briefly summarize the following three points:*

- *The HNV Vision: challenges & actors analysis (cf. for instance the discussions and results highlighted during session 1 of NM#2)*
- *The Innovation situation @ LA level: scoring (cf. for instance the discussions and results highlighted during session 2 of NM#2)*
- *The LA strategy: Innovation needs to be addressed as priorities (cf. for instance the discussions and results highlighted at the beginning of session 3)*

*This will be done using materials and conclusions from the Shaping Phase (Atlas, Compendium, Innovation Fair Workshops, etc.).*

*However, throughout the course of the Using Phase, some priorities can be re-assessed; the Vision can be improved and included new elements. Do not hesitate to keep a written record of all the events and information that contributed to the consolidation of the HNV Vision.*

### 1.1 HNV Vision of [Name of the LA]

Date	Your text – notes – pictures/tables, etc.
(29/01/2018)	<p data-bbox="371 788 465 828"><b>Slogan</b></p> <p data-bbox="371 831 1352 903">Unhide the HNV farming values of WSP Working together for the future of HNV (farmers, communities, consumers)</p> <p data-bbox="371 946 779 986"><b>Short Description of the Vision</b></p> <p data-bbox="371 989 2013 1137"><i>(short summary of the Vision explaining why it is challenging the Business as Usual scenario provided in you Baseline Assessment – what are the expected impacts or changes both from an HNV conservation perspective (evolution of semi-natural vegetation) on the LA and on the agricultural situation? keeping in mind WP1’s moto: “development in HNV areas in not the same as development for HNV in rural area” – you may want also to refer to the Atlas’s trajectories...)</i></p> <p data-bbox="371 1181 2013 1369">The HNV Vision for WSP is “Agricultural modernization taking into account natural and cultural heritage in the region” Farming activities and production methods reflect the specificities of the LA: pastoralism, maintenance of the landscape and nature values, protection of natural sites and protected areas, but also HNV farmland outside the protected areas; all farmers have access to grasslands near their farms. Long-term contracts for municipal pastures. Forests and grasslands routes and watering places are restored.</p>



Farmers (medium-size, family farms) are well informed, open to novelties providing better biodiversity conservation, using appropriate equipment, applying new technologies.

Cooperation and interaction between all stakeholders to increase social cohesion, rediscovery of local traditions and events that lead to joint initiatives for promoting and marketing local products: local brand, direct marketing and direct contact with consumers, better promotion and services linked to tourism development.

Stable and understandable legal framework and flexible administration both at local and regional, and national level.

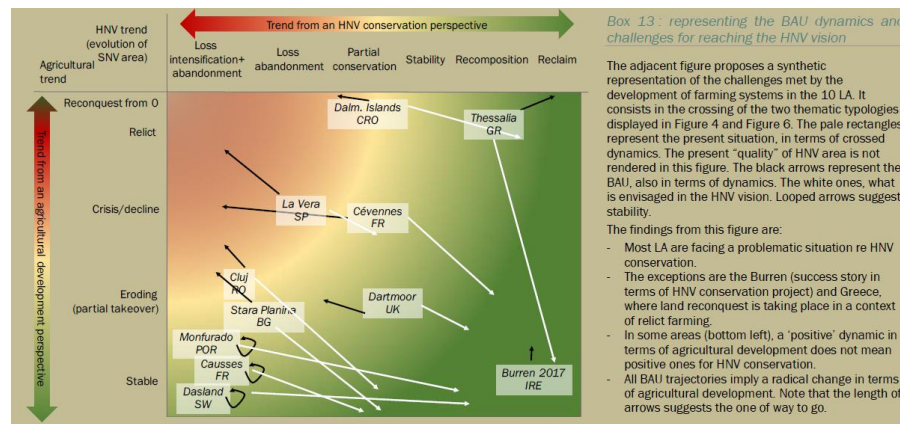
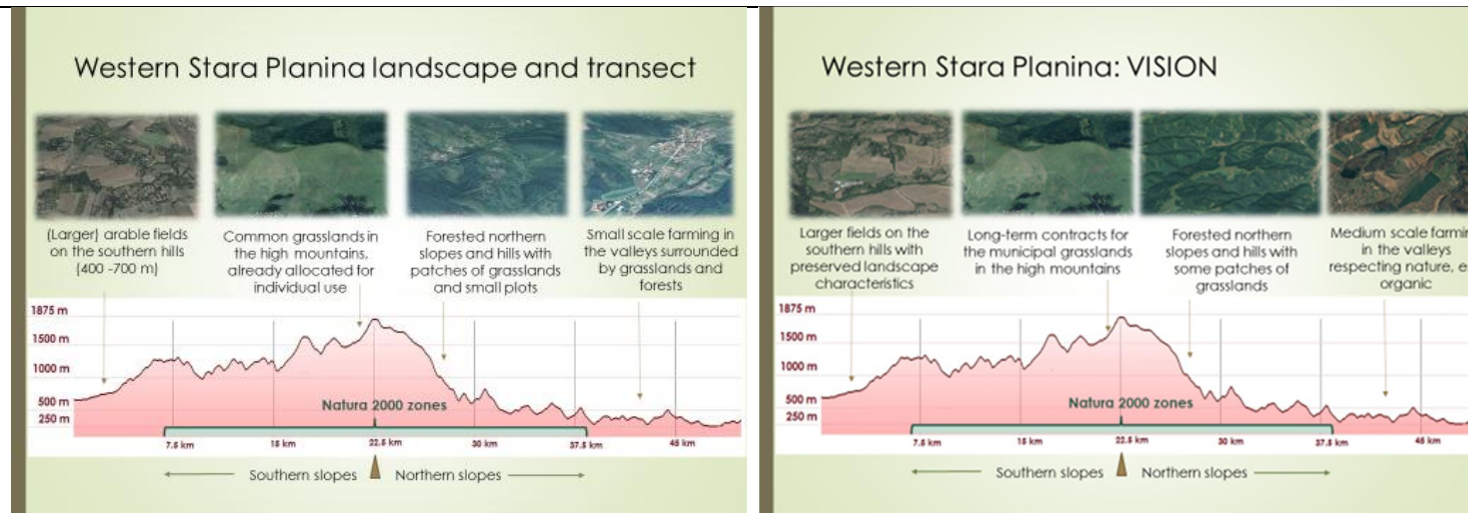


Figure 1 : BAU dynamics and challenges for reaching HNV Vision, HNV-Link Atlas , p. 70

### Visual

(Different visuals have been displayed by the LA in order to show the possible dynamics in term of landscape and biodiversity conservation, please insert here the ones you are using with a brief comment).



### Actors' typology

*Who are the main key targets to engage in the LA HNV Vision? What are their relations to the territory? What are their interests in contributing to the Vision (Beneficiaries versus Attendees)? Etc. Below, an example of actor typology, but other strategic display can be better adapted to your situation. The aim is to have a first "strategic mapping" to show how the situations has evolved throughout the using phase.*

The main actors that need to be involved to reach the HNV vision of WSP are:

- ü HNV farmers, including young farmers and innovators,
- ü public bodies and NGOs,
- ü agriculture advisory services, local administration (municipal authorities),
- ü state administration (starting from their representatives at local level),
- ü consumers, society.

Internal

External



	Private	Farmers, local SME and business	
	Facilitator/Arbitrator	Municipal and local authorities	Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry and its regional offices, NAAS
	Private/ Facilitator	Local NGOs	National NGOs,
	Facilitators/arbitrator	Local communities/ Local touristic centres	Tourism centres and the Ministry
(dd/mm/year)	<i>Updates</i>		
(dd/mm/year)	<i>Updates</i>		



1.2 The Innovation Situation in [Name of the LA]

Date	Your text – notes – pictures/table		
(29/01/2018)	<p><b>Innovation scoring</b> <i>According the four themes – cf. Session 2 of NM#2</i></p> <div data-bbox="434 580 1263 1161" style="text-align: center;"> <p>LA innovations scoring and needs in WSP</p> <p><b>Social and Institutional 2</b> Cooperation of farmers have stated Needs: Improve the quality of live of HNV farmers, attract young farmers, change the social perception for HNV farmers, EIP operational group Mobile advisory teams Targeted and thematic workshops with all stakeholders Constructive dialogue platforms</p> <p><b>Regulations and Policy 3</b> AECM supporting HNV grasslands: Natura 2000 measure, direct sales legislation – but not for plant products and meat. Rules for use of municipal grasslands in favour of livestock breeders. <b>Needs:</b> Some adaptation of CAP rules for supporting schemes for HNV farmers (pillar 1 and coupled support)</p> <p><b>Products and Markets 2</b> Direct sales are becoming popular. Single initiatives for on-line sales <b>Needs:</b> Promotion of grass-fed livestock products and initiatives showing the well-being of grass-fed livestock can gain consumers confidence Diversification of products and processing technologies using the natural resources of the LA.</p> <p><b>Farming Management 2</b> Depend on the farmers skills and motivation Electric fences, but not for sheep and goats Limited use of rotational grazing <b>Needs:</b> Mobile dairies and abattoirs Access to RDP investment support for farm modernization New nature friendly technologies for scrub and health control</p> </div> <p><b>Innovation priorities</b> <i>According the four themes – cf. Session 2 of NM#2</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="412 1305 1982 1385"> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1305 1003 1385">Social and institutional - innovation priorities</td> <td data-bbox="1003 1305 1982 1385"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted and thematic workshops with participation of all stakeholders are needed for knowledge transfer and constructive</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	Social and institutional - innovation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted and thematic workshops with participation of all stakeholders are needed for knowledge transfer and constructive</li> </ul>
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		<p>dialogue between different actors for adaptation of the existing legislation to the regional needs of the HNV farmers and promotion of innovative solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ü Promote cooperation between farmers and processors – EIP operational group</li> <li>ü Raise public awareness and changing the current perception for the HNV farmers and their life</li> <li>ü Mobile advisory teams for HNV farmers (maybe a common initiative with NAAS)</li> </ul>
	Regulatory framework - innovation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ü Adaptation of the rules of Pillar 1 support schemes to the regional needs of the HNV farmers eligibility rules for HNV farmers, support targeted to the real farmers, criteria tailored to the needs of HNV farmers: duration of the contracts for the use of municipal grasslands, criteria for the coupled support schemes, etc.</li> <li>ü Direct sales legislation for meat and plant products</li> </ul>
	Products and markets - innovation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ü Promotion of the grass-fed livestock breeding products</li> <li>ü Training on diversification of products by using the natural resources of the area (herbs, bacteria, etc.)</li> </ul>
	Farm techniques and management - innovation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ü Demonstration of HNV farming practices, including promotion of rotational grazing and electric fences for sheep and goats</li> <li>ü Training of HNV farmers in food processing technologies.</li> </ul>
(dd/mm/year)	<i>Updates</i>	
(dd/mm/year)	<i>Updates</i>	



### 1.3 The Bulgarian strategy as HNV Learning Area: making choices

*Within the time frame of HNV-Link project, there is a need to narrow the innovation needs and priorities raised up in the “innovation situation analysis”, in order to realistically target activities and means that can make the difference for HNV challenges. Making explicit such strategic choices is a pragmatic posture, which is building both on a strategic understanding of the situation and the wise use of windows opportunities, favorable circumstances, and sometimes unexpected events, etc. It is expected that this section may evolve during the course of the Using Phase.*

Date	Your text – notes – comments - pictures/table
(29/01/2018)	<p><b>Overall Objectives</b> Describe the goals to be achieved by the end of the project, in terms of promoting innovation in the LA and beyond</p> <p>The overall objective is to enable the future development of HNV farming in WSP by sharing the social, marketing, technological and regulatory innovations.</p> <p><b>Priorities</b> <i>Describe the priorities you picked up among the “innovation scoring and priorities” and explain why they are important and should be addressed within HNV-Link project</i></p> <p>We will focus on the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation and collaboration at local and national level</li> <li>- Training and exchange of experience at national, local and EU level</li> <li>- Promotion of products from HNV grazing systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific Objectives</b> Describe the specific objectives under each chosen priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1. To enable the cooperation on national and local level for innovative actions in favor of HNV farming practices</li> <li>- 2. Organization of workshops and cross-visits of the relevant HNVF stakeholders</li> <li>- 3. Attract farmers and consumers in favor of HNV farming</li> </ul> <p><b>Main Actions</b> Explain the main actions you plan to realize to achieve these objectives (meetings with authorities; public workshops, mass media communication, etc.)</p>



Specific objective	Action	Level
To enable the cooperation on national and local level for innovative actions in favor of HNV farming practices	Participation in the WG for RD measure 16. Cooperation and enable participation of HNV operational groups	National
	Meeting with LAG Berkovitz –Godech and discuss the possibilities for creation of HNVF Operational group	Local
	Explore the possibilities for transnational projects and exchange visits for HNVF stakeholders	National/Local
	Participate in local and traditional festivals and open days	Local
Organization of workshops and cross-visits of the relevant HNVF stakeholder	Study visit / training in food-processing technologies (?)	
	Cross visit to Sweden	International
	Cross visit to Romania	International
	Cross visit to Greece	International
Attract farmers and consumers in favor of HNV farming	Regional workshop	Local
	Produce factsheets of the most relevant HNVF innovations from other partners and publish them on STEP website	National
	Create a working group with UNWE and NAAS experts to discuss the needs of advisors and farmers about HNV innovations and hold 2-3 meetings	National
	Develop the necessary tool-kits for advisors and farmers	
	Interact with NAAS PLAID Horizon 2020 project for promotion of the benefits of the HNV farming both for farmers and consumers	National



### Actors

*Present the different actors that you are going to engage in the realization of each priority. Please make the difference between the direct beneficiaries (specifying what is their direct benefit) of the action and the attendees (people you have to engage, but who are not directly benefiting from the action)*

Main actors are:

- Farmers;
- Local communities;
- Local administration;
- Local experts / advisors/ NGO;
- National administrations;
- National experts/ advisors/NGOs.

### Risks

Identify and describe the potential risks of the LA Action Plan strategy's implementation, the analysis of their possible consequences on the expected achievements, and make a list of proposed risk mitigations measures (actors interest, means, etc.)

### Best Practices

Describe what already works in your LA strategy that may be transferred to other LA strategies:

- Single farm-initiatives for HNV farming practices e.g. Linbul farm - extensive livestock breeding and on-line marketing of HNVF products;
- Cooperation between farmers for marketing and direct-sales of their products, plans for creation of an EIP operational group and common touristic product;
- LAG "Berkovitzha- Godech";
- Mobile HNVF advisory services form past BSPB (Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds) project;

### Timeline

Establish a LA action plan calendar (or Gantt Chart) for the Using Phase of the project to show the proposed schedule of activities



(Cross-Visits, Regional Meetings, etc.)																
Action	2018												2019			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
1.Enable the cooperation for HNV innovative actions																
1.1. Participation in the WG for RD measure 16. Cooperation																
1.2. Meeting with LAG Berkovitz – Godech																
1.3. Explore the possibilities for transnational projects																
1.4. Participate in local traditional festivals and open days																
2. Organization of workshops and cross-visits																
2.1. Organise the hosting programme and visit to WSP																
2.2. Crossvisit to Sweden																
2.3. Cross visits to Romania																
2.4. Cross visit to Greece																
2.5. Regional workshop																
3. Attract farmers and consumers in favor of HNV farming																
3.1. Produce factsheets of the most relevant HNVF innovations																
3.2. Create a working group with UNWE and NAAS experts																
3.3. Produce videos of most relevant HNVf innovations for advisors, farmers and students																
3.4. Interact with NAAS PLAID																



	Horizon 2020 project
(dd/mm/year)	Update
(dd/mm/year)	Update



## 2. Innovation exchanges – Cross Visits

*Peer learning exchanges between LA will be implemented through Cross-Visits. These cross-visits/operational study tours will involve key actor groups. They will discuss the innovations in their real agro-ecological and socio economic context, to better understand the possibilities of transfer. They will be organized according a common methodology.*

*This chapter of the “LA Action Plan” will take stock of the different innovation exchanges that have been organized during the Using Phase: objectives, implementation, results, through: A Visit Report (from the Visiting LA), A Host Report (if the LA is hosting some Cross Visit), Next step and follow-up activities: a follow up of the innovation transfer process.*

### 2.1 Visit Report(s)

*A more detailed Cross-Visit methodology will be issued in the first months of the Using Phase. It will specify and enrich those general guidelines. However, the following core questions should be addressed in the Visit Report(s):*

- Date, Place, Innovation Cases visited and participant list
- Reasons of the choice of the cross-visit
- Expectations of the participants
- Expectations for the Learning Area
- Narrative: who, when, where, what?
- Lessons learnt: for the participants – and at the scale of the Learning Area
- To what extend those innovations / good practices contribute to the HNV Vision? What type of innovation needs or gaps are they answering to? How do they contribute to solve the bottlenecks and challenges for HNV farming in your area (in line with the Business as Usual Scenario) (1) from the HNV conservation perspective (2) from a socio-economic perspective?
- If it was possible to do it again.... What would be the same? What would be different?

#### 2.1. 1. Cross visit to Sweden

The cross visit of a Bulgarian farmer to Dalsland, the Swedish Learning Area (LA) took place between 6th to 10th June 2018. The Bulgarian farmer joined the Dartmoor LA (UK) team cross-visit to Dalsland.



The main reason for visiting the region was to visit the Mobile abattoir described in the Dalsland Innovations Report and innovations linked to livestock farming.

The agenda was the following:

Day 1

- Gyltungebyn –Kingebol - Larsson family - Extensive beef farming, direct sales, diversification;
- Svanängen, Köpmannebro - Naraine Family - Community Supported Agriculture, marketing;

Day 2

- Gyltungebyn - Knut Per Hasund - Results based and value based approach within AE;
- Hillingsäter - Hillingsäter community – FOCLUM;
- Stockelanda - Andersson family mobile abattoir - Extensive beef production.

Day 3

- Bräcke ängar, Åmål - Bosse Sanderberg & Börje Pettersson- FOCLUM –Land use plan & grazing nature reserve;
- Närsidan, Bengtsfors - Jesper Johansson & Hanna Strutz - Semen sex selection, HNV-grazing & organic robotic dairy production;

Day 4

- Stenkas, Bullaren - Gustafsson Family- Extensive cattle grazing, restoration of pastures.

Lessons learnt and possible replication in Western Stara Planina.

The most interesting innovations that can be useful for Bulgarian Learning area are the following:

- ü The role and the activities of the HNVF advisors - the momentum they create to push all other participants to action;
- ü The level of automation and mechanization in the branch – inevitable for the most of our farms; (especially the automated farm for 120 dairy cows)
- ü The negative example of where we can get with our abundant HNV areas if we don't pay attention;
- ü The negative example of overgrazing – the local farms were totally not prepared for a little draught period;
- ü The organic certification will become a must for Bulgaria too;
- ü The “togetherness” of the neighboring farms;
- ü The payment for the solid electric fences by the state;
- ü The “automated pasture door”;
- ü The sexed semen could be used for both sexes – breed the best dairy cows with female dairy semen (for reproducing) and the worst – with beef male semen for slaughtering;





- ü From our British colleagues – bracken bruising;
- ü The diversification – mixing of farming and tourism, especially our hosts were remarkably good at it;
- ü The overall attitude of the farmers – they do not complain and they do not have problems with the CAP support payments;
- ü The use of all side-products, especially sheep furs.

### 2.1.2. Cross visit to Greece

The cross visit of the Bulgarian team to Thessaly Learning area (LA), Greece, took place between 13 to 15 June 2018. The hosting team of Thessaly Learning area organized a visit in the region where HNV innovation and farmers were visited.

The reasons for visiting the region were to see the following innovations, which are of interest for the stakeholders in Western Stara planina (WSP) Learning area (LA): Terra Thessalia Territorial cluster; Terra Thessalia Participatory Guarantee System (PGS); GPS-Tracking for monitoring and certification of extensive livestock-farming; Tzoumerka National Park; visit to livestock holdings in order to exchange ideas.

The Bulgarian group consisted of 15 stakeholders from WSP LA: five farmers, three representatives of Municipal agricultural offices in Varshets, Godech, Chiprovtsi municipalities; two representatives of Godech municipality; a representative of the NGO “Local initiative for Varshets”, four STEP experts.

The main expectations of the participants were:

- ü To meet with Greek livestock farmers from HNV region and learn about their managing practices;
- ü To understand more about the GPS tracking and territorial cluster;
- ü To see the practices and innovations related to the development of HNV farming and development of rural areas;
- ü To see new technologies and how the HNV livestock farmers are meeting EU hygiene requirements;
- ü To see how direct sales are working for HNV farmers.

The agenda was the following:

#### Day 1

- Presentation of LA Thessaly, LA WSP, Terra Thessalia, Participatory Guarantee System - Conference room of Environmental Centre

#### Day 2

- Visit to Galista goat Farm, Ellinopirgos Village (LA Thessaly) and demonstration of GPS- tracking in practice, homemade cheese in practice;
- Visit to beekeeping Farm, Ellinopirgos Village;



- Visit to Ellinopirgos Village Cultural centre - Brief information about a goat farmer activities and Introduction to 3D-Mapping GIS, 3-D visualisation GIS, technical aspects;
- Visit to HNV site: Lake Plastira and Plastira's lake Environmental Centre;
- Presentation of National Park of Tzoumerka and Touristic label case Discussion about the Greek – Bulgarian Rural Development Program.

### Day 3

- Visit to bovine farm;
- Meeting with the Mayor of Mousaki;
- Visit to organic sheep farm;
- Debriefing – Mouzaki Environmental Centre.

### Lessons learnt and possible replications in WSP LA

- ü All participants in the crossvisit appreciated very much the practical value of the visits and the possibility to meet Greek farmers with similar activities.
- ü The majority of the participants (63%) think that the most interesting and useful visit for them was the calves fattening farm. They were very impressed by the cleanness and the hygiene of the farm. The young farmer shared his knowledge and experience with enthusiasm and answered to all the questions regarding the food and the nutrition of the calves. One of the interesting things in the farm is also the optimization and the combination of livestock breeding and plant growing.
- ü A very interesting approach/innovation that was discussed between the BG participants is the way the diaspora is used for marketing and adding values to the products from the region. Since Western Stara Planina Learning area is also suffering from migration and depopulation of the area it was discussed that the approach of creating a certifying a local brand from the region could be interesting for the WSP diaspora in the big cities in Bulgaria.
- ü The participants think that the HNV innovation that can be replicated in Bulgaria is the GPS tracking and monitoring system for sheep and goats. However, some of the farmers expressed concerns that if everyone can see where the flock are grazing – this may increase the thefts of the animals.
- ü The cooperation between farmers, processors, municipality and other relevant stakeholders and the local community in Terra Tessalia Cluster is also a very important HNVF innovation example. However, a lot of efforts are needed to achieve this and our experience shows that without a long-term project this cannot happen on the territory of WSP.

### 2.1.3. Cross visit to Romania



The cross visit of the Bulgarian team to Romania (Tarnava mare region) took place between 25th to 27th June 2018. The hosting team of Eastern Hills of Dealurile Cluj organised a visit to the Tarnava Mare region, where the HNV innovation in the region were visited. The main initiator of the HNV innovations was Adept foundation, which organised the cross- visit.

The reasons for visiting the region were to see the following innovations, which are of interest for the stakeholders in Western Stara planina (WSP) Learning area (LA): The overall efforts of Adept foundation in Tarnava Mare to sustain the future of the HNV farming in the region; SES Fruleco community food processing enterprise and marketing scheme; Green Infrastructure Sheepfold Model; Farmers association and milk collection unit; Angofa farm and nature school.

Bulgarian group consisted of 12 stakeholders from WSP LA participated: three farmers, owner of a small food processing unit, a representative of the regional advisory office; a representative of the local Initiative group, a researcher, a representative of the local municipality, a representative of a local association of mountain farmers and small food processing units, three STEP experts.

The main expectations of the participants conclude in the following:

- ü To understand how the visited innovations, contribute to the biodiversity conservation in HNV farmland in Romania;
- ü To meet Romanian farmers and see how they rear their animals, how they meet the requirements of livestock breeding, how they market their products; to see how the common /municipal grasslands are used by the livestock breeders;
- ü To see the similarities and the differences of the EU RDP measures and how they are applied;
- ü To exchange information and experience for the HNV farming practices and to meet new people from the HNVF area.
- ü To see how farmers are working: setup of the production process, legislation, what advisory services are offered to the farmers – private or state ones, to learn about the legislation regulating the relations between the state and the farmers.

The agenda was the following:

#### Day 1

- Presentation of the goals of the cross visit, activities of Adept foundation and Tarnava mare area;
- Visit to the LAG and Tourist Information Centre, Saschiz Pottery Workshop and SES Fruleco, Food Processing Unit: Community processing / marketing scheme

#### Day 2

- Visit to the green infrastructure model sheepfold



- Horseshoe making and blacksmith;
- Meeting with Viscri livestock association, milk collection point and the common grazing system;
- Visit to the Viscri Medieval fortified church.

### Day 3

- Presentation of Angofa farm and school;
- Debriefing and visit of the old town of Sighisoara.

### Lessons learnt and possible replications in WSP LA

- ü The majority of the Bulgarian participants in the cross-visit (78%) think that the most interesting innovation was the community enterprise for fruits and vegetable processing as well as the trading of the products under a common label and certificate. We need to discuss with our regional and national authorities (Food safety agency) and to change the existing legislation if we want to replicate the community enterprise for processing of fruits and vegetables in Western Stara Planina Learning area. The other issue is securing funding for the enterprise, which can be done under different donor's programmes in the area;
- ü The existing partnership and cooperation between farmers and between Adept and the farmers is a good practice that takes time to happen but is worth the efforts;
- ü Another interesting HNV innovation is the Green infrastructure sheepfold. The solar panels improve the living conditions of the shepherds and help them to meet the food safety requirements. 22% of the participants find this as the most interesting innovation that may be replicated in Bulgaria;
- ü The livestock association in Viscri is also an interesting innovation example. However, this was tried in Bulgaria, but was not very successful, because Bulgarian legal acts do not allow for a NGO/non-profit organization to be a registered agricultural producer eligible to EU funds.

## 2.2 A Host Report(s)

*A more detailed Cross-Visit methodology will be issued in the first months of the Using Phase. It will specify and enrich those general guidelines. However, the following core questions should be addressed in the Visit Report(s):*

- Narrative: who, when, where, what?
- Lessons learnt: what did we learnt from the visitors and their questions? Did they raise some blind spots?
- If it was possible to do it again.... What would be the same? What would be different?



Between 4th -7th July 2018, a group of 12 stakeholders from the Dealurile Clujului Est Learning area, Romania visited Western Stara Planina (WSP) Learning area. The group consisted of 3 researchers, 2 advisors and 7 farmers. The visit was hosted by the STEP team, farmers and NGOs from Western Stara Planina, some of which also attended the cross visit to Tarnava Mare region, Romania.

The objectives of the cross-visit were:

- Exchange experience, knowledge and best practices, between HNVF farmers and processors from Bulgarian and Romania Learning areas;
- Promote the HNVF innovations from WSP LA and share ideas for their possible replication in Romania;
- Create partnership between Bulgarian and Romanian HNVF farmers and stakeholders.

The agenda of the cross-visit was:

#### Day 1

- Arrival
- Presentation of the goals of the cross visit and WSP Learning area and innovations

#### Day 2

- 1st group : Visit to Linbul farm ( 7participants+ STEP representative)
- 2nd group (6 participants + STEP participants): Presentation of the activities of the NGO „Local initiative for Varshets”
- Visit to Varshetsz dairy – Degustation of local products and wine from a local producer
- Visit to a goat farm in Yagodovo village (very close to Slatina). The farmer has 60 goats grazing on HNV grasslands and produces Italian type of cheese cacciota and ricotta.

#### Day 3

- Visit to 4 members of the "Food from the mountain" farmers' association (<https://bg-bg.facebook.com/hranaotbalkana/>);
- Visit to the wood carving and old crafts museum in Meliane;
- Visit to „Replianka“ demonstration farm in Chuprene (500 sheep from Repliana autochthonous breed, grazing on HNV and Natura 2000 grasslands; traditional production of yogurt and cheese; direct sales);
- Visit to jam and lutenitza producer (“Sinevka” ) in Prevala (gathering and processing of wild berries and fruits from HNV grasslands; guidelines for nature friendly fruit collection and personal conduct in the mountain; direct sales);
- Meeting with producers from the “Food from the mountain” association;
- Presentation of the establishment and management of the Mobile advisory teams (MAT);



- Reflections and networking.

#### Conclusions and lessons learnt

The cross-visit objectives were met. Connections between farmers and stakeholders were created and the debates and exchange of the ideas were very fruitful. The stakeholders that participated in both of the visits did benefit from peer learning and exchange of opinions for the situation in the two Learning areas and discussed the possible future actions and partnership for conservation and maintenance of the HNV farming systems in the LAs.

- ü Andrei Crisan, a custodian of Natura 2000 site Dealurile Clujului Est shared his opinion about what he learnt from the cross-visit: "I have learnt a lot of stuff and I took notes for a lot of things, especially positive things. I met farmers that were positive when it comes to nature, but also for their profession. The innovation that we found here were very interesting and we will try to implement them as soon as possible in our region, but the most interesting one was the one about the Mobile advisory teams, which were really great. ... What we found here is that there is a clear link between the proper management of the permanent meadows and pastures and the biodiversity conservation and also from the policy perspective, in Bulgaria exists the measure Natura 2000 payments, that in Romania is not still applied."
- ü Mugurel Jitea, the HNV Link coordinator for Romania, also shared his impressions: "During the visit we found several interesting innovations. The first one was about how a person can properly manage HNV meadows and pastures in the mountain area. Based on a very vigorous programme of grazing the person can graze 35 Angus cows and also is very inventive how he is selling his products - using 12 cows/year he can obtain enough money to sustain his family. Then we visited several innovations for milk processing and this is very interesting for our farmers, because by using not so big investment, they can process in a sustainable way their products. And finally, we saw a cooperative that developed a brand, a local brand and they are selling jams using a symbol for HNV pastures – the blue butterfly. So what I am suggesting is to visit our website where you can see all those innovations presented in more detail and also if you want more information about it, you can contact us using e-mails, Facebook and other social media."

One of the lessons learnt for the BG host team is that the fruitful visits to the farms depend to a great extent on weather condition, and it is important always to have a backup (second) plan.

### 2.3 Next steps and follow-up activities?

*In this section, the aim is to provide a follow up of the cross-visit and keep track of the Innovation transfer process: its achievements and its limits. Indeed, transferring HNV innovation which are context-based (as highlighted in the HNV-Link Compendium) into another context is a challenge in itself.*



*Please describe how you will follow and support the innovation transfer? What can be transfer? How? Who will be part of the transfer? What is the time frame (short agenda)? And what are the expected results?*

Date	Your text – notes – pictures/table
(dd/mm/year)	Our main aim is to continue the activities of the so called “Partnership group” consisting of the different stakeholders working together for the HNV vision of WSP.
	We will look for funding opportunities to organize demonstration of the HNV farming practices plus tasting of the local food HNV products thus promoting HNV products and practices.
	We will continue to facilitate /support the communication between HNV farmers and advisors;
	We will consider the opportunities to organize cross-visit between the different HNV regions in Bulgaria and to support the networking between HNV farmers; several farms can be visited in 1 day (2 hours per farm are more than enough).
	We will try to develop a long-term project and look for funding for strengthening the cooperation between the different HNV stakeholders: local community, farmers, municipalities, regional authorities, etc., for supporting the development of HNV farming in WSP.
	We will continue with organization of targeted and thematic workshops with participation of all stakeholders for knowledge transfer and constructive dialogue between different actors for adaptation of the existing legislation to the regional needs of the HNV farmers and promotion of innovative solutions,
	We will discuss with the regional and national Food safety agency representatives the possibilities for establishment of community processing marketing scheme and propose the necessary adaptation of the existing legal framework (Romanian SES Fruleco example)
	We will look for opportunities to organise farm to farm visits and demonstration of HNV farming practices, including promotion of rotational grazing and electric fences for sheep and goats and tasting of the local food HNV products thus promoting HNV products and practices.



### 3. LA regional meeting(s)

*Objectives of the LA regional meetings::*

*Reaching the regional / national AKIS;*

*Sharing at the national/regional level the HNV Vision established through the Baseline Assessment and the set of HNV innovations collected using also the compendium of innovations collected in all LA;*

*Triggering a reflection on innovation process adaptation: the main pathways by which to improve the economic viability of HNV farming, failure factors/constraints, contexts which allow innovation process to take off;*

*Starting a larger regional network on HNV farming and innovation brokering,*

*Based on general guidelines, each LA Coordinator will propose to the WP4 leader a "Regional Meeting Action Plan": concept note, materials, participant list, and agenda, and work methodology, expected results and impacts, type of reporting. This section will keep track of the different steps of implementation.*

*The LA Regional Meetings will play an influential role in the local dissemination process (hundreds of people are expected to be exposed to the HNV Link findings.*

*Therefore, depending on each LA specificities, the regional context, and means, LAs may also consider the possibility of organize a series of Regional meetings / seminars / events addressed to different audiences, goals, and purposes. Moreover, the LA could also consider the organization of the Regional Meeting within the framework of global major regional event / meeting / seminar, developed under the form of round table / session / workshop, when the goals and audiences could be reached in a better way, with the best expected impact. In these cases, the LA regional activity should be individually identified.*

The HNV Link regional meeting in Western Stara Planina Learning area was held on 9 November 2018 at Todorini Kukli complex, Spanchevtzi village, municipality of Varshetz.

The meeting was focused on sharing the lessons learnt and the accumulated ideas from the cross-visits to Romania, Greece and Sweden and defining the possible approaches for implementing the HNV innovations in Western Stara Planina.

The meeting was also used for sharing the experience about the HNV Link innovations in Western Stara Planina with representatives of NGOs, farmers' associations, research bodies and projects outside WSP Learning area, supporting the conservation and maintenance of HNV farming systems.





Before the meeting the project team, the National Agricultural Advisory Service experts, and the University of National and World Economy published 20 brochures and short movies presenting HNVF innovations from the 10 Learning areas of the project. The brochures are published on STEP website at <http://www.step-bg.bg/bg/brochuresHNVLink> and on the National Agricultural Advisory Service website at: <https://www.naas.government.bg/bg/57/4040>.

The meeting was attended by 31 participants (including STEP team) – farmers, representatives of regional and national agricultural and environmental services and authorities, National agricultural and advisory service experts, NGOs, participants in the study tours, Local action group representatives, project team.

The agenda of the meeting was:

- ü Welcome and setting up objectives of the meeting
- ü Introducing the participants, the moderators and the agenda of the day
- ü Presentation of the HNV innovations visited during the cross visit in Greece and Romania LAs. Lessons learnt in the cross visits.
- ü Lessons learnt and HNV innovations from the cross- visit in Sweden LA
- ü Discussion on the possible approaches for implementation of the HNV innovations in Western Stara Planina.
- ü Sharing the views and the opinions of the participants in the cross-visits
- ü Short videos for HNV innovations
- ü Discussion : Lack of working force – approaches for solving the problem
- ü Wrap up and next steps

The presentations were very short and aimed to provoke a discussion and generation of ideas for joint actions in a follow-up period. The following ideas were gathered in the discussion for a follow up actions that can help achieving the HNV vision in WSP.

- ü To focus on the HNVF innovations for developing viable farms up to 60 ha;
- ü To organise demonstration of the HNV farming practices plus tasting of the local food HNV products thus promoting HNV products and practices;
- ü To facilitate /support the communication between HNV farmers and advisors;
- ü To organise cross-visit between the different HNV regions in Bulgaria and to support the networking between HNV farmers; several farms can be visited in 1 day (2 hours per farm are more than enough);
- ü To explore the possibilities for the use of the lamb leather;
- ü To explore the possibility of organizing school groups visits to HNV farms – one-day visits to HNV farms.

The regional meeting was also used as a platform for exchanging ideas and networking with stakeholders directly or indirectly working for the conservation of HNV areas in Bulgaria. Two EU funded projects that can be useful for HNV farmers and stakeholders were presented:

- ü LIFE16 NAT/BG/000856 Invasive alien free habitats – a project supporting the maintenance and conservation of three of the most valuable and threatened habitat types in Bulgaria and Europe as a whole: Habitat 9560\* Endemic forests with Juniperus spp.; Habitat 9180\* Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines; Habitat 6510 Lowland hay meadows.



- Ü NEWBIE Horizon 2020 network: New Entrant netWork: Business models for Innovation, entrepreneurship and resilience in European agriculture aiming to will facilitate the development and dissemination of new business models, including new entry models, to the full range of new entrants – from successors to complete newcomers to the agricultural sector.

#### Conclusions and next steps:

The participants in the regional meeting agreed on the following actions for reaching the HNV vision for the region:

##### Ü Social and institutional:

- Develop a long-term project and look for funding for strengthening the cooperation between the different HNV stakeholders: local community, farmers, municipalities, regional authorities, etc., for supporting the development of HNV farming in WSP. It is also very important to try to attract the diaspora from the big cities in the process
- Continue with organization of targeted and thematic workshops with participation of all stakeholders for knowledge transfer and constructive dialogue between different actors for adaptation of the existing legislation to the regional needs of the HNV farmers and promotion of innovative solutions;
- Support the process of establishing of EIP HNV operational group, if the rural development programme opens the respective RDP measure;
- Use all the existing networks to raise public awareness and changing the current perception for the HNV farmers and their live.

##### Ü Farm techniques and management:

- Organise farm to farm visits and demonstration of HNV farming practices, including promotion of rotational grazing and electric fences for sheep and goats and tasting of the local food HNV products thus promoting HNV products and practices;
- Organise cross-visit between the different HNV regions in Bulgaria and to support the networking between HNV farmers; several farms can be visited in 1 day (2 hours per farm are more than enough);
- To facilitate /support the communication between HNV farmers and HNV advisors;

##### Ü Policy and regulation:

- Continue working for adaptation of the rules of Pillar 1 support schemes to the regional needs of the HNV farmer's eligibility rules for HNV farmers, support targeted to the real HNV farmers, criteria tailored to the needs of HNV farmers: duration of the contracts for the use of municipal grasslands, criteria for the coupled support schemes, etc.
- Discuss with the regional and national Food safety agency representatives the possibilities for establishment of community processing marketing scheme and propose the necessary adaptation of the existing legal framework (Romanian SES Fruleco example)
- Discuss with RDP Managing authority the possibility to include solar panels for summer sheepfolds in RDP measure 4.4. Non-productive investments or explore the possibilities the electric fences to be paid by state for the HNV grasslands (Swedish experience).



Local media press releases:

In addition to STEP website and Facebook page the press release for the local media was published in Varshetz social media and newspaper on the following links:

ü <https://www.facebook.com/groups/150963898600561/permalink/756955651334713/>

ü <http://www.varshets.bg/index.php?option=news&range=news&id=1047>

ü <http://www.varshets.bg/>

Ü <https://www.facebook.com/discovervarshets/?eid=ARDWMzKQSXuBYBwmr84xqQD5TCkXTzT3ZG-AVnEye3KRWdmtkfSD8AMLp8dUaVNYASRyKe5Mr-dGuSot>

Information for the regional meeting and the brochures are also available at the National Agricultural advisory service website at:

ü <https://www.naas.government.bg/bg/%D0%9D%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8/4039>

Ü <https://www.naas.government.bg/bg/57/4040>



## 4. Dissemination & communication activities:

*In line with its HNV Vision and its “identified innovation needs” each LA will draft a “Dissemination and communication action Plan”. Those innovation brokerage activities will be envisioned in complementarity with the “Cross Visits” and the Regional Meetings.*

*This plan encompasses both the nature of the C&D itself (what kind of communication/dissemination methods can be used/what materials/what budget/what agenda) and the C&D strategic process (actors, successes and failures, etc.): What are ALL the key target groups that the LA should reach (in ideal world)? Which of these the LA reached at the innovation seminars? Which are still missing?*

*Three levels of dissemination:*

*Local/regional Actors – directly involved in the innovations transfers – grassroots*

*AKIS – go back to the AKIS*

*Broader Audience –*

Together with the National Agricultural Advisory Service experts, and the University of National and World Economy 20 brochures and 20 short movies presenting HNVF innovations from the 10 Learning areas of the project were prepared and published. The brochures and videos are published on STEP website at <http://www.step-bg.bg/bg/brochuresHNVLink> and on the National Agricultural Advisory Service website at: <https://www.naas.government.bg/bg/57/4040>

Communication & dissemination actions	2018												2019				
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	
1. Disseminate HNV Link innovations and recommendations at different national/international workshops and meetings																	
1.1. Workshop: Regulations on the table-: support the traditional production, Skopje, 31 May 2018																	





## 5. Conclusion: Strategic Innovation Brokerage to support HNVf

*At the end of the Using Phase, a short questionnaire will be sent to all LA coordinators and will be followed by an bi-lateral interviews with WP4 leader, to harvest their experience as "innovation brokers " for HNV area and assess the usefulness of the methodology proposed by HNV-Link network. These exchanges will be used to build the conclusion of the Action Plan.*

*Possibility of Cross Reviews?*

Innovation Brokerage for Western Stara Planina has taken the following main forms:

- ü Facilitating dialogue and problem solving between HNV farmers and municipal and regional offices of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, regional agricultural advisory services, local action group and regional authorities;
- ü Raising awareness amongst LA farmers, producers and potential producers of the different HNVf innovations;
- ü Promoting HNV Link innovations to the National authorities (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and forestry, Ministry of environment and waters);
- ü Promoting HNV Link innovations to the National agricultural advisory service, NGOs working for biodiversity and farming conservation inside and outside the Learning area;
- ü Developing cross border cooperation project (Bulgaria – Serbia) for enlarging the HNV Link network and gathering HNV f innovations and good practices in the cross-border area. Unfortunately, the project did not receive funding (it is in the reserves list).

