

Experiences in introduction of the value chain approach in the beekeeping sector in the Western Balkan cross-border region of Pčinja-Krajshte

Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)

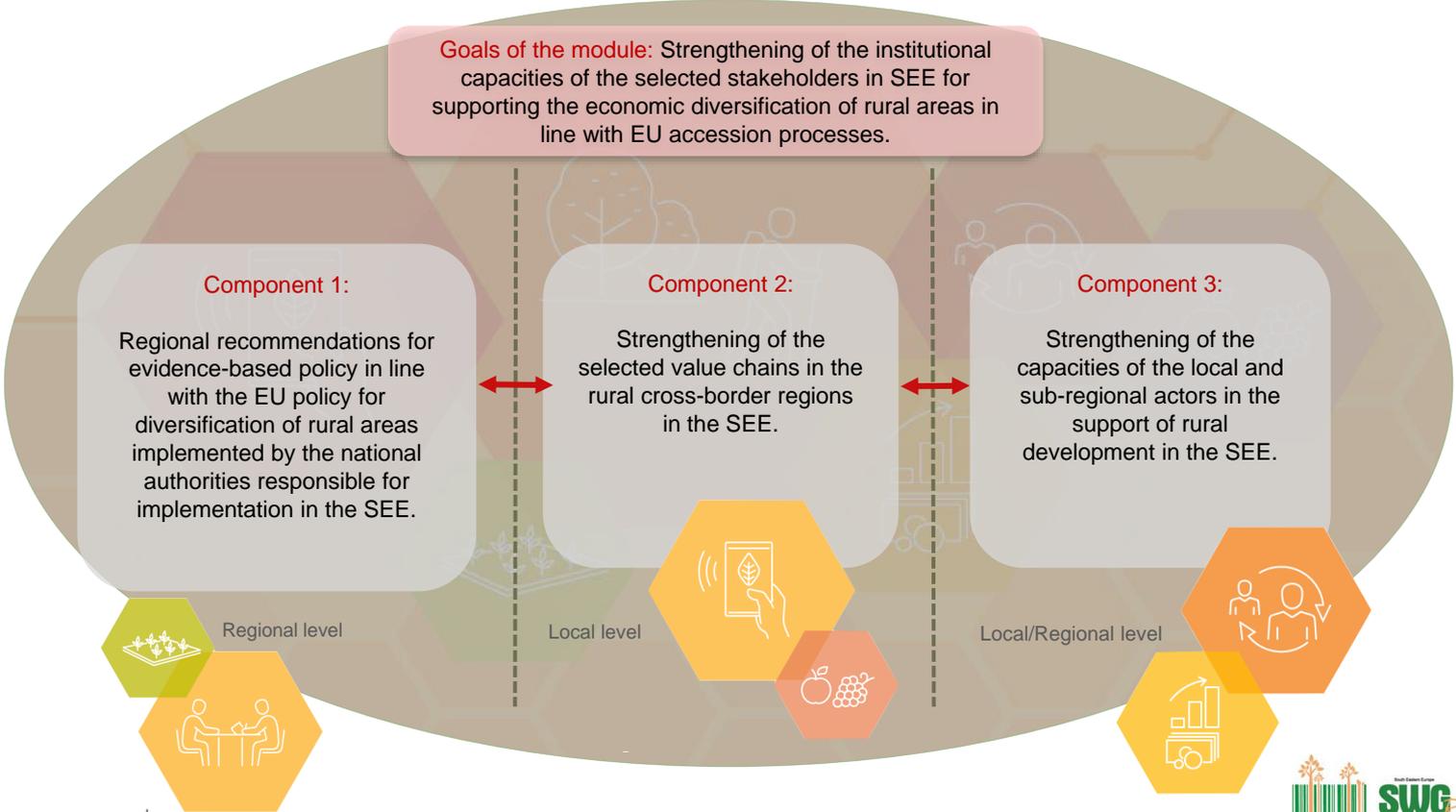
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Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)



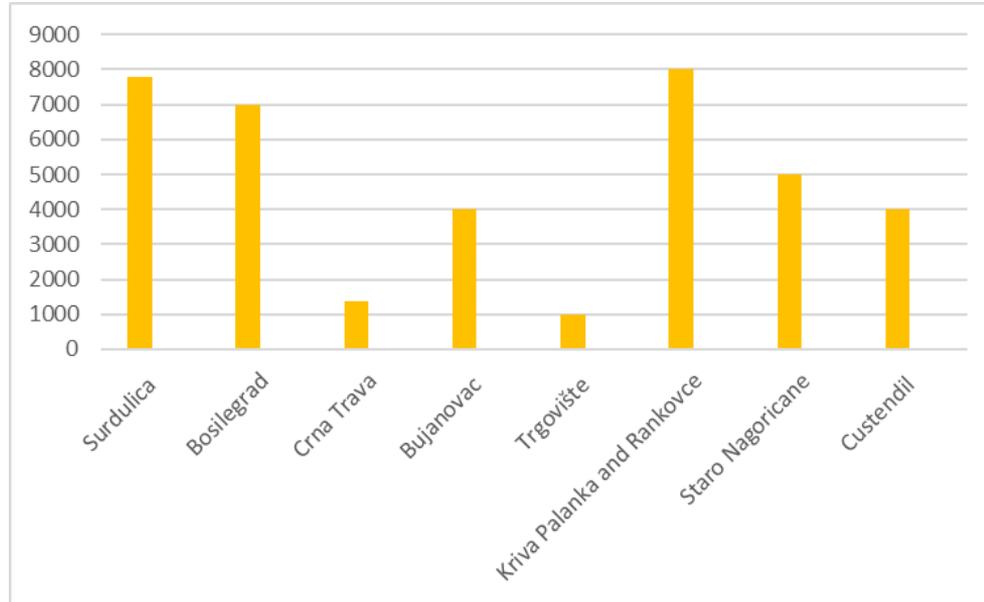
Challenges of the rural areas in the Western Balkan countries

- Trend of rural depopulation,
- Lack of interest for farming among the youth,
- Ineffective policies,
- Favourization of larger market producers and exclusion of small holders from state budgetary support.



Photos by Sasha Janevski

Pchinja-Krajshte cross-border region characteristics and honey production

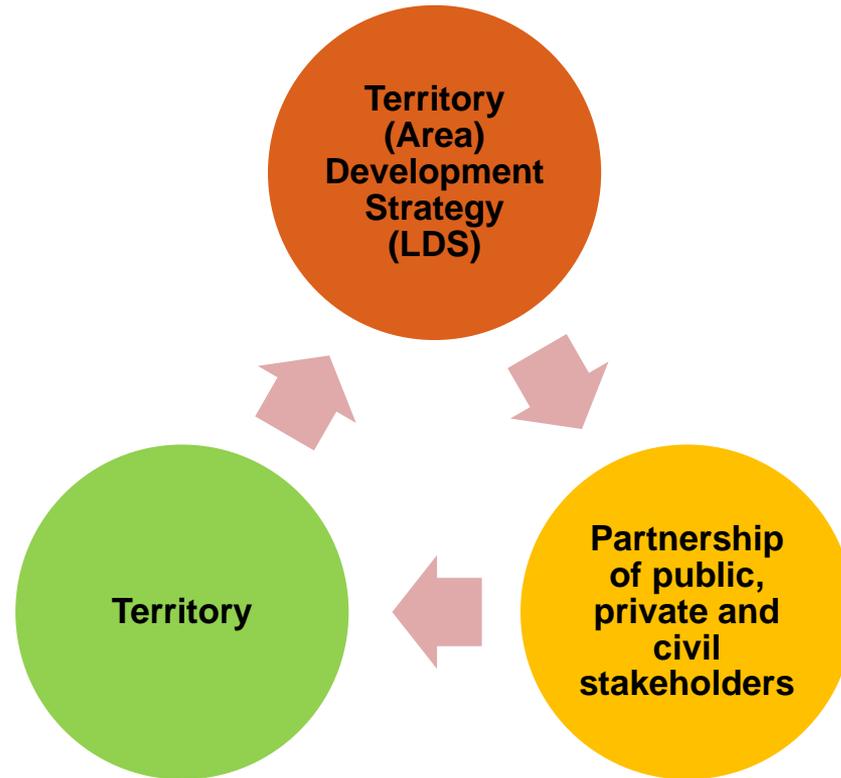


Total 38.000 honey bee colonies and average annual honey production of approx. 500 t

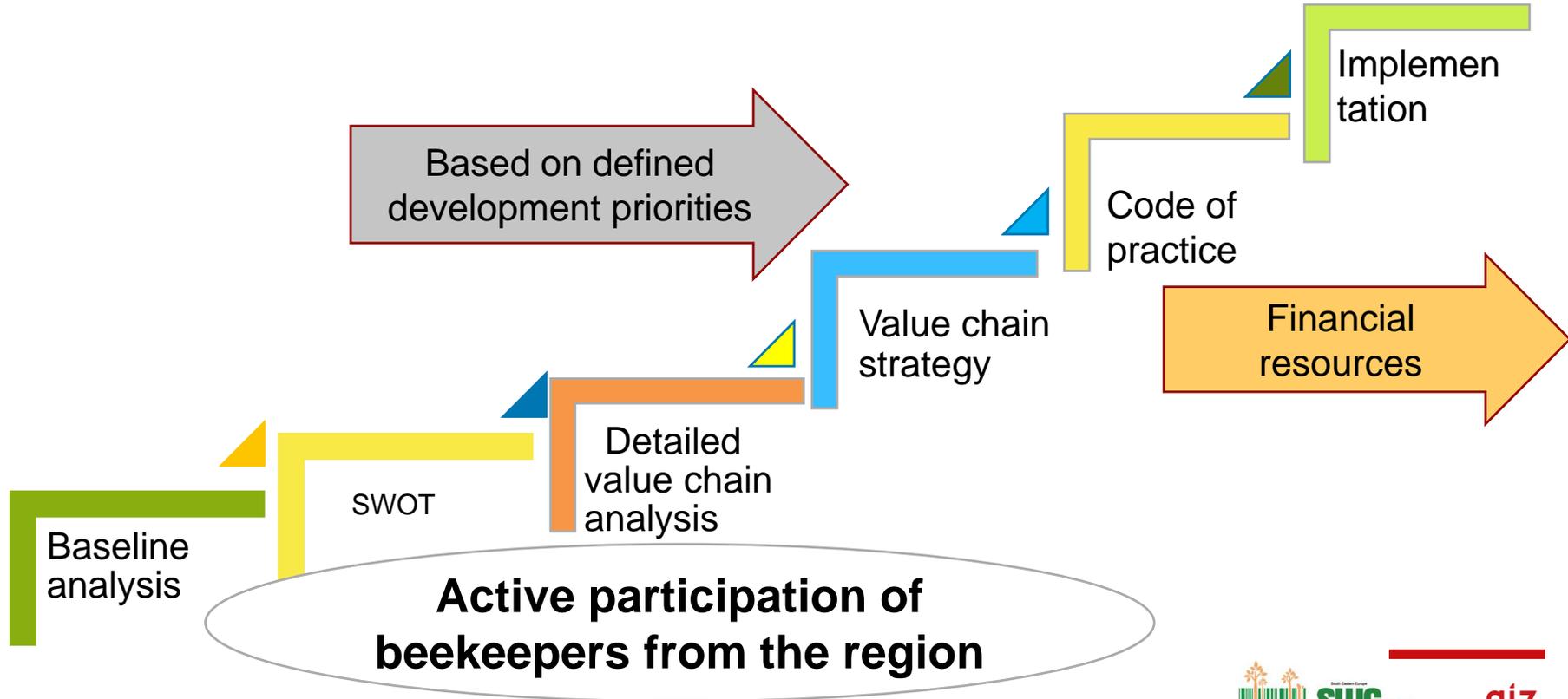


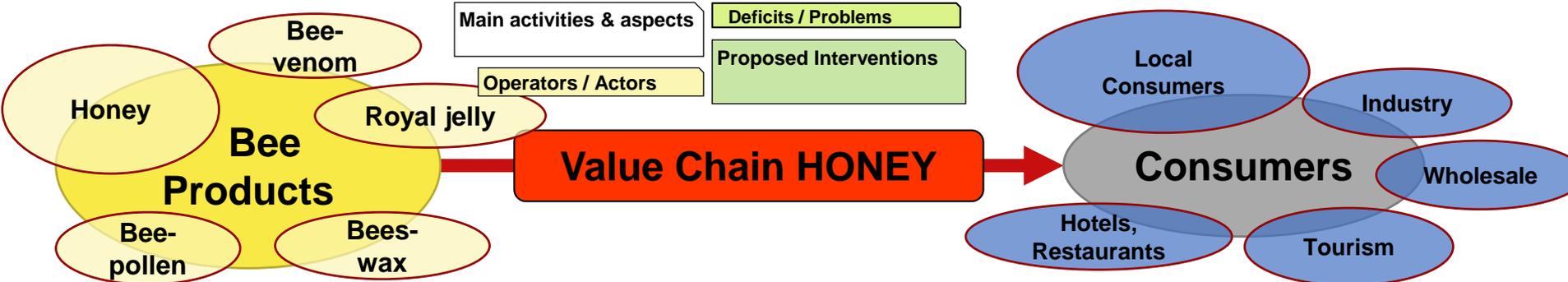
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The local development “trinity” as a basis for value chain development



Value chain development - major steps





Inputs **Production** **Processing & Logistic** **Marketing & Sales**

Equipment, Labor; Know-How, experiences, queen bees, food (meadows, sugar), pharmaceuticals	Supervision of bee colonies, sanitary protection, feeding, moving of bee hives, reconstruction of bee hives, collection of honey	Packing of honey; processing of other bee-products, production of honey-based products, transport; storages; distribution;	Branding; Promotion; Certification, (direct/ on-farm) sales to final consumers or to intermediaries
Beekeepers and Beekeepers associations, Agri-producers, sanitary and veterinary services, Pharmaceutical industry	Beekeepers, Agri-producers, sanitary services	Beekeepers, Beekeepers' associations, beekeepers' households, logistic companies, food safety authorities	Beekeepers, Beekeepers' associations, Tourism industry, wholesaler, Nat. politics / admin.
Lack of sanitary know-how, availability of legal medication, Age and gender structure of beekeepers, high costs for equipment and medication	Sanitary problems and medication, illegal pesticides on farmland, low production capacities, Lack of interest and knowledge of veterinary services, Lack of communication and information exchange	Hygienic conditions at outdoor installations, very demanding food safety standards, lack of quality production and processing facilities, lack of diversification of bee-products	Low local market prices, lack of branding, regulatory limitations for direct sales to tourism facilities, strong competition from cheap adulterated "honey", low consumer awareness and appreciation
Initiatives to attract women and young people for bee keeping, training on basic knowledge related to beekeeping, financial support for investments into equipment	Enforcement of pesticide restrictions, Initiatives for organic honey production, Coop initiatives with fruit farms, enhance cooperation and communication flows among beekeepers	Support to introduction of food safety and quality standards and certificates, capacity building and technical advice, support to quality production installations	Revision of over-demanding food safety regulations, awareness campaigns on importance of bees and value of good honey, direct sales initiatives on farms, local markets and to tourism industry,

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Long beekeeping **tradition**
- Strong beekeepers` **associations** in Serbia
- **High quality** products
- Honey (and the other bee products) from the region are considered to be high-quality products with **sufficient market demand** (in the region)
- Production in a **clean un-polluted environment**
- **Humane treatment of bees** – “no kill approach” suitable for vegan consumers

Weaknesses

- Diverse **knowledge and equipment** among the beekeepers related to several aspects of production/collection, processing and marketing of honey and bee products
- Relatively **small production capacities** (on regional level, on the level of associations, as well as on individual level)
- Small producers have **limited access to the local and international market**, thus the honey is most often sold in bulk (in canisters)
- **Lack of knowledge among the resellers** related to honey (distinction between high-quality natural honey and adulterated honey)
- **Institutional ineffectiveness** of the veterinary services for timely notification of beekeepers of potential threats from diseases and pests
- **Insufficient support** for promotion of beekeeping by the local and national level

SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

- Opportunities for selling bee products through **tourism/catering**
- **Enlarging** the production in both quantity and assortment
- **Marketing and sales** on local, national, and international fair markets
- **Digital** marketing
- **Association** of the beekeepers on regional level for an easier access on the international market

Threats

- **Climate change** – unfavorable weather conditions, lack of quality food, all leading to lower yield
- Abandoning of the **traditional farming methods** and loss of biodiversity
- **Unfair competition** of the adulterated honey and bee products available on the market
- Inadequate **legislative framework**, not appropriate for the actual situation
- Uncontrolled **use of pesticides**
- High equipment **costs** due to high customs / VAT fees
- Low **collaboration** between the beekeepers in parts of the region (N. Macedonia)

Approach towards development of beekeeping value chain

- Capacity development with inclusion of academia and beekeepers
- Providing support to farmers in their enlargement and diversification of production, as well as fulfilling the required (sanitary) standards
- Discuss the barriers arising from the inadequate laws and regulations which are not in line with the actual situation of the beekeeping sector in the region
- Providing support for promotion for easier access of bee products on the markets



Cooperation approach

National
authorities

Local authorities

Producers

Involvement
of women

Involvement
of young



Photo by Sasha Janevski

Intervention Logic – Beekeeping value chain

Purpose
To improve the socio-economic conditions for rural population in the P-K region

Objective:
Making beekeeping an attractive and (more) important source of income for rural people in P-K region

Increasing revenues from beekeeping in the region

Increasing production and sales of honey and bee-products

Increasing sales prices for honey and bee-products

Improving marketing and distribution channels for honey and bee-products

Improve regulatory (legal / admin. / sanitary) framework for beekeeping

Improving working / production conditions for beekeeping

Provide support for beekeeping

Protect biodiversity

Strengthening beekeepers associations and cooperations

Capacity building

Technical Advice

Financial support

Political dialogue & Lobbying

VC Management support

Process management & coordination

Promotion

Expected results from the activities for support of beekeeping value chain

- Implemented **integrated approach** for beekeeping value chain in the Pcinja-Krajsishte region
- Increased **effectiveness and efficiency** in the beekeeping value chain
- Created **new job** opportunities
- Increased the **added value** of bee products
- Strengthened **cooperation** between the stakeholders: civil society, public and private sector through **networking and participation** in regional development partnerships
- Strengthened **business relations** between the operators in the beekeeping value chain
- Further development of the “**people2people**” approach for promoting regional exchange and strengthening of the diversification of rural areas



Photos by Irena Djimrevska
and Sasha Janevski

Conclusions

- The implementation of the value chain approach, **facilitates partnership creation and networking** among the value chain operators which contributes to strengthened regional cooperation;
- Capacity building measures **improve skills and knowledge** of the value chain operators on networking, cooperation, development of business plans, sustainable use of natural resources, as well as technical issues related to beekeeping;
- People-to-People actions contribute to **promotion of the cultural, traditional, natural heritage**, as well **cooperation and economic development** of the cross-border regions;
- The Value Chain approach through the SEDRA program and the investment support would further **improve the economic wellbeing of the involved rural smallholders by enhanced competitiveness, income generation and employment.**