



Municipality of Boljevac

**Agricultural Development
Strategy
Municipality of Boljevac**

2010 – 2015



Mena Group

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INTRODUCTION

Overall project objective *“First step towards environmental-friendly agriculture” is improvement and intensification of cooperation in a wider region. It also provides*

possibilities for the population to take an active role in the cross-border processes through joint activities of introducing organic production, acquiring and applying EU environmental standards and promoting cooperation of individuals with the aim of providing the basis for a sustainable economic development”.

The objective of this assignment is provision of technical and professional assistance in the development of an Agricultural Development Strategy for the municipality of Boljevac for the period 2010-2015.

According to the objectives which have been set, and the need to formulate a joint agricultural development strategy, the municipality of Boljevac has engaged Mena Group Ltd, a consultancy company from Nis whose principals have several years of experience in strategic planning, especially in the field of agriculture. By using highly participative methods and including all the relevant stakeholders, Mena Group Ltd has facilitated the process of defining strategic goals and designing a logical plan which will lead to a sustainable environmental-friendly agricultural development and which will simultaneously encourage a faster economic development of the municipality and agricultural producers. The data in the Agricultural Strategy represent a synthesis of documents which can be found in the agricultural department of the municipality of Boljevac, relevant documents from national level and data collected on the field. This Strategy has as its objective to provide guidelines and contribute to the economic development by creating new employment possibilities and improving the living standards for its citizens.

I FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

1. Framework

At the moment of designing the Agricultural Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac there were already defined policies and strategies on the levels of EU (EU Rural Development Policy 2007-2013), Republic of Serbia (National Agricultural Development Programme 2010-2013 (draft)), and the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Municipality of Boljevac. All these strategies and policies make up the framework for the

design of the Agricultural Development Strategy for the municipality of Boljevac 2010-2015.

The EU Rural Development Policy 2007-2013 is focused on three areas (known as “Axes”). They are:

- Improving Market Efficiency and Implementation of Community Standards
- Preparatory Actions for
- Implementation of the Agri-environmental Measures and Leader
- Development of the Rural Economy

The draft of the National Agricultural Development Programme 2010-2013 says that the National Policy of the Republic of Serbia will be based on memberships in the EU and World Trade Organizations (WTO). Therefore both the agricultural sector and producers in Serbia are preparing for marketing and survival on a uniform, competitive, developed EU market, and national self-sufficiency can no longer be used as an argument for the protection of domestic products: „In 2006, Serbia replaced the existing bilateral agreements on free trade with neighbouring countries with one within the CEFTA (*Central European Free Trade Agreement*) agreement. By signing the CEFTA agreement, Serbia did not only become part of a market with around 27 million inhabitants, but also accepted the responsibility, as the largest country within this agreement and the country with highest export rate of agricultural products, to implement it in a way that will promote, and not prevent, free trade in the region. The benefit the Serbian agriculture will have from signing the CEFTA agreement is huge. Serbian interest is to eliminate all, still existing, non-tariff barriers in the exchange of agricultural products.”¹

This National programme starts from the fact that Serbia has a lot of potentials in the agricultural production sector, owing to the favourable climate conditions, good natural characteristics and available water resources, but it also emphasizes that the potentials have not been fully used. Agricultural sector is recognized to be the biggest development opportunity for Serbia and one of the basic strategic development directions of both municipal and regional development strategies. This role of agriculture has assumed a re-definition of agrarian policy objectives and measures on national level:

Agrarian policy objectives and measures

Objective 1: Establish a sustainable and efficient agricultural sector, which will be able to compete on the world market, contributing to a growth in the GDP.

Objective 2: Secure food that will satisfy consumers’ needs in regards to safety and quality.

Objective 3: Secure support to the living standards of the people depending on agriculture, but are not able to follow economic reform through their development.

Objective 4: Secure support to the sustainable village development.

Objective 5: Environmental protection from negative effects of agricultural production

¹ *Serbian National Agricultural Programme 2010-2013*, draft, May 2010, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, pp. 5-6, excerpt from:
http://www.minpolj.gov.rs/index.php?stranica=komp Clanak&naredba=lista&id_kategorija=130&id=862,
webpage visited 09.09.2010.

Objective 6: Prepare Serbian agriculture for EU integration
Objective 7: Adjust the policy of domestic support and trade in agriculture to WTO regulations

Table 1 Agrarian policy objectives and measures according to the draft National Agricultural Development Programme

The Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac 2010-2020, relies on the UN framework plan „*Millennium Development Goals*“. On the national level, it has been harmonized with the *National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia* and other national strategies related to sustainable development of local communities. Sustainability requires that people use natural resources in an affordable way and that these resources are naturally renewable.

Following all the above mentioned development strategies (National Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, and the Sustainable Municipal Development Strategy of Boljevac), the objective of the Agricultural Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac is to define strategic development directions which are according to the National Agricultural Development Programme, but also emphasizes the characteristics of the area defined through the Sustainable Municipal Development Strategy of Boljevac. By defining these objectives, Municipality of Boljevac recognizes its place in the continuous and sustainable development of the region, respecting, at the same time, the diversity of the Municipality, and using it for the benefit of a faster economic growth of this less developed municipality of Zajecar district.

During the definition of the framework of this Strategy, it has been recognized that the main objective will be formulating an agricultural development plan which will respect the environment, provide opportunities for economic development and equally include all its citizens in the development processes.

2. Methodology of Strategic planning

The process of strategic planning which has been used for the design of the Agricultural Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac includes the following steps:

- Analysis of existing documents
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Participatory process of strategic planning
- Preparation of the Strategic document

In order to harmonize the Agricultural Development Strategy of Boljevac with existing strategic development directions, on both municipal level and national strategic directions for this region, an analysis of existing documents was performed. The objective of this analysis was to collect and prepare the basic documents for further work on the design of the Strategy. The basic data collected through reviewing and analyzing the before mentioned documents was used in defining the key stakeholders of the strategic planning process, as well as in preparing the interviews with key stakeholders.

The process of participatory strategic planning comprised of four individual workshops. As the basis for the workshop the facilitators used the Strategic planning by ToP methodology (Technology of Participation, Institute of Cultural Affairs, USA). The aim of the workshops was to define the following parts of the Strategy:

- Practical vision;

- Underlying blocks;
- Strategic directions;
- Focused implementation.

3. The strategic planning process with contribution from relevant stakeholders

With the aim of including all the relevant stakeholders in the process of strategic planning, several meetings with key stakeholders were held. During that process, the actors that will be included in the process were defined, in order for the Strategy to encompass the visions of all stakeholders as well as their ideas for the improvement of agriculture in the municipality of Boljevac. By including all the stakeholders and defining the common vision and activities for its implementation, one can achieve greater commitment from all stakeholders for a successful implementation of the Strategy and promotion of results that are considered as the fulfilment of the joint development vision.

The process of preparing the strategy started with **formulating the “key question”** of strategic planning. This focused question represents an inspiring and clear focus of the planning process itself. The key (focused) question for the work process on this strategy asks the following question:

During questio clearer	<p><i>How and in what way can we, in the next five years and through constant cooperation, contribute to the initiation and sustainability of agricultural production which is in accordance with the environment in Boljevac?</i></p>	the defined key itself would be the Strategy.
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The following step in the planning process was the workshop for **defining the practical vision**.

Visions are hopes and dreams that are real to a group of people. Practical vision is not a “mission”. It is not the goal. Practical vision is not a fantasy or a collective desire about the future. It comes from the experience that is just outside our reach. This vision already exists within a group – but needs to be stated.

The second workshop, for designing the Agricultural Strategy for the Municipality of Boljevac, was aimed at gathering all the views and defining a common vision. The outcome of this workshop is the group vision statement. The vision was defined in the form of a practical statement, as a clear and inspiring definition which is in direct correlation with the focused question.

The workshop for defining the common vision comprised of the following parts:

- Brainstorming ideas – a process which allows the group to list its immediate thoughts and ideas related to the defined question;
- Organizing ideas in clusters – enables for individual thinking of the group to be organized in a form that will be easier to handle
- Naming – naming the clusters through the process of achieving group consensus.

During the workshop for defining the common vision, each participant brainstormed their ideas on understanding the vision which was shaped in the form of the following question:

„If, in five years time, we wake up on the same day (date), what will we see as results of our activities?“

In order for a Strategy to be implemented, it is necessary to define the most efficient vision which is shared by all stakeholders and with which most of them agrees. It is, therefore, extremely important to recognize and **define the key underlying contradictions** which hinder or could, to a large degree, hinder the implementation of the Strategy and the achievement of good results.

Underlying contradictions are barriers that prevent us from realizing our vision. They are the hinder in our path to the future. Underlying contradictions are not problems – problems can be fixed. Underlying contradictions can be responded to, impact upon or one may go around a contradiction. They are not lack of something, they exist, like a firm belief, and they can endanger the progress or introduction of novelties for the purpose of sustainable development.

During the workshop for defining the underlying contradictions, each participant listed 1-2 of the most difficult underlying contradictions for achieving the vision. After brainstorming the contradictions followed clustering them according to their relationships and naming each cluster based on the key words for a specific cluster, as well as based on its meaning. The naming process made it possible for the group to think within the framework of underlying contradictions, using brainstormed ideas, but at the same time considering the deeper analysis of given ideas and defining applicable activities on the field.

The third workshop with the participants of the strategic planning process encompass the definition of strategic directions or suggestions which make use of the strengths and possibilities, or that will impact the underlying blocks – moving it towards defining the practical vision. There is a clear flow from the practical vision workshop to establishing strategic directions, and it is very important that the ideas (from brainstorming ideas and naming the clusters) are directed towards the underlying contradictions, not the vision, since the respond to underlying contradictions is in the heart of change.

Each participant has, at this workshop, listed his/her suggestions for innovative, practical activities that will impact the underlying contradictions and move the group towards its shared vision. After brainstorming the ideas, participants were divided into groups, of which each group individually chose the most clear, most risky and the most controversial actions and placed them into 9 “boxes”. The clusters in these “boxes” were defined and named. The groups named the “boxes” with names that provide the practical vision with an operational focus and which focus on real answers to the changes and trends in an external environment.

In order for the Strategy to be implemented it was necessary to define the steps of the **focused implementation** for the period after formulating the Strategy which is the previously set timeframe (2010 – 2015).

The process of defining the focused implementation consists of three main parts:

- First-year accomplishments;
- First-year timeline and assignments;
- Six-month implementation steps.

The Strategy implementation plan starts from the fact that it is possible to define more detailed activities if their implementation is in the near future. The implementation plan, therefore, focuses on the early stages of implementation. Implementation plans require a regular revision. The process of focused implementation focuses on actions, activities and

the necessary steps to be taken for implementing each named cluster from the strategic directions workshop, and it also defines the timeframe for their implementation. Following the session on brainstorming ideas, the group answers the questions on the timing of each activity, during the planning process, but also considers the priorities, levels and the flow. Finally, the first-year plan and the details six-month plan include detailed steps and assignments which need to be fulfilled.

II CURRENT STATE OF FACTORS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOLJEVAC

1. Geographical position and natural characteristics

In Eastern Serbia, in the valley of Crni Timok in Timok borderland, between the ranges of mountains Kuca, Samanjac, Rtanj, Tumba, Slemen and Tupiznica lies the mountainous, insufficiently developed, extremely sparsely populated Municipality of Boljevac outspread. It is surrounded by the municipalities of Sokobanja, Razanj, Paracin, Despotovac, Bor, Zajecar and Knjazevac.

In spite of its dominating mountainous landscape, the area of the municipality of Boljevac is relatively well connected by road infrastructure. The main corridor Paracin-Zajecar intercepts the municipality in the direction east-west and across the saddle of Stolica (601 m) and connects the valley of Timok with Pomoravlje, i.e. the motorway Belgrade-Nis. Across the saddles of Lukavica and Rasinac, the outer limits of Mountain Rtanj, Boljevac is connected to the Sokobanja basin, and through the mountain range of Vlaska Kapa with Knjazevac region.

The relief is in its basis of mountainous character. A smaller part of the municipality, towards the north-east, across the valley of Crni Timok, is covered by low hills and surfaces which have influenced a better infrastructural connection of the territory with the Zajecar basin and other parts of the Timok basin. The valley of Crni Timok in the direction of southwest-northeast intercepts the municipality in two parts of which the northern part is higher and more spacious but sparsely populated (6 settlements), while the southern part is lower, smaller in the area but more populated (13 settlements).

A special characteristic of this area are the numerous water courses which spring out from strong fountains. There are also a larger number of underwater courses in the limestone terrains of Kucaj.

The geological structure of the soil represents a resultant of continuous, numerous and different tectonic movements (Paleozoic crystalline schist, Mesozoic limestone, andesite, sandstone and marl, sand, clay), of which lake water played a very significant role. According to Cvijic, the entire Crnoreka area represents the lake bed of altitude 300-350m.

The most prominent point in the relief of Boljevac is, certainly, next to Rtanj the composite valley of Crni Timok with alluvial plains along the entire course and preserved old terraces (Valakonje, Podgorac).

The elevation of the municipality of Boljevac ranges from 260 to 1.600 meters.

A diversified pedological soil composition has contributed to an abundance of plant species („natural laboratory“). Vast forest resources represent the most valuable natural potential.

The climate is mainly continental, with warm summers and harsh and long winters.

The entire area of the municipality of Boljevac is a true nature reserve with extraordinary natural beauties and rarity. Apart from the attractiveness of Rtanj, Kucaj, Malinik, Radovanjska river, Bogovina cave, hot Crni Timok in Krivi Vir, numerous other springs and diverse flora and fauna represent exquisite natural resources which are in great discrepancy with their valorisation.

There are a number of valuable cultural and historical monuments on the territory of the municipality. Above the village of Jablanica is the monastery of Krepicevac with the church of the Holy Virgin from year 1500 with a valuable iconostasis decorated with frescoes. Near the village of Lukovo are the ruins of the monastery Lapusnje with the church of Saint Nicholas from the year 1501, endowment of prince Bogoja and his wife Mara. One of the well-preserved frescoes of the church is kept in the National Museum in Belgrade. In Krivi Vir is also the monastery Lozica from fourteenth century.

2. Natural potentials

The most significant natural resources in the municipality of Boljevac for the development of local economy and agriculture are:

- large forest areas (large amounts of technical and fuel wood);
- water potentials – possibilities for irrigation and bottling of drinking water, or construction of mini hydroelectric power station;
- climate and soil conditions for the development of agricultural production (livestock, herbs, fruit and vegetable production) and construction of wind generator as a plant for production of alternative energy;
- mineral resources (dolomite, clay – bentonite, decorative stones and precious metals).

Besides agricultural production, the conditions also exist, on the territory of Boljevac, to develop metal-processing industry, textile industry, mining and energy, wood industry and tourism/eco tourism.

3. Climate characteristics

Climate is a set of weather phenomena, i.e. atmospheric processes that characterize average physical state of the atmosphere above a certain defined point or above smaller or larger part of the land surface.

The importance of climate and the impact of its elements on the life of all organisms and plants are very big and multifaceted. The main indicators of the climate for a certain area are the data on the average monthly and annual rainfall and air temperature.

Annual average air humidity values are about 75%. Annual regime of humidity shows a maximum in winter months and a minimum during summer (July, August).

Year	Rainfall (mm/m2)						
	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Total
2002	87,0	72,5	35,8	107,5	83,0	97,5	
2003	106,5	66,2	49,2	43,5	2,0	86,5	
2004	8,5	40,0	88,5	38,2	62,0	/	
2005	62,0	59,0	86,0	/	22,0	70,5	
2006	40.2	25.2	97.2	52.8	120.8	26.6	362.8
2007							

Table 2 Average monthly rainfall from 2001 – 2004 during vegetative period

Fluctuations in the annual amounts of rainfall in the analyzed period are considerable and range in the following extent:

Boljevac	549 – 916 mm
Podgorac	392 – 1061 mm
Lukovo	492 – 1015 mm
Krivi Vir	530 - 966 mm

The depreciation of values in annual rainfall amounts can be noticed, to a smaller or larger degree, on the entire territory. The decrease in rainfall is noticeable since 1982.

4. Agricultural land and water potentials

Agricultural land covers 46.8% of the territory of the Municipality (38.636 ha) and represents a significant and extensive natural resource. The main characteristic is a relatively good quality and good structure. The largest part of agricultural land is arable land and gardens 46.7%, pastures cover 28.6%, pastures 20.2%, orchards cover 3.2%, while only 1.3% of area is occupied by vineyards.

Diversification and extensiveness of agricultural land, general climate conditions, clean environment, as well as long-standing tradition of the population dealing with agricultural production with established capacities represent an excellent basis for agricultural development.

Agricultural land as a resource is of primary importance for the municipality, and its developmental significance will depend primarily on the development of livestock production, construction of facilities for processing agricultural products, changes in the structure of production (increase the areas of fruit and vegetable products, medical herbs etc), application of agri-technical measures and increase in areas under irrigation systems.

There are some significant water resources on the territory of the municipality of Boljevac. The river Crni Timok is the most significant water course with its spring in Krivi Vir and a course that goes through the entire area of the municipality. North and south of the valley of the river Crni Timok is a hilly and mountainous area intercepted with numerous water courses, Crni Timok tributaries, among which are Radovan River, Mirovstica, Arnauta and Zlot River. There are many springs, on the territory of the municipality, of which some are characterized by high yield and quality. There is also an insufficiently explored thermal spring in Krivi Vir.

The developmental significance of water resources will primarily depend on the protection and conservation of natural characteristics of water courses, the construction of the regional system – Bogovina, construction of ponds and irrigation systems on the surfaces of agricultural households.

5. Economy

The gross national product has been increasing since 1999, but not as quickly as expected. The obsolescence and lack of investments in new technologies has led to a reduced share of large enterprises in the gross national product of the municipality, but on the other hand the strengthening of private entrepreneurship has led to the fact that they have a stronger impact on the economic life of the municipality. It is a long and complex process which needs to be supported due to the flexibility small production capacities. The most numerous in the

municipality are small trade stores of which there are around 200 and which employ 3-4 workers, and their number is constantly changing.

The percentage of unemployed people is 10% of the total number of population in working age, according to the National Employment Service. The total number of people looking for work is about 900 of which 500 are women.

The age structure of the population is becoming more and more regressive, or older type of population, since the fertile and youth contingent of the population is reducing. The share of agriculture in the total population is 36.9%. Employment rate of the total population is - according to the latest reliable data from 2002 - 17.4%, which in the evaluation up to date has increased to 25%, while the share of working-age population, in total, up to 57%.

6. Previous agricultural development

The main characteristic of previous agricultural development is fragmentary agricultural production. Agricultural households are into livestock production, crop production, to a smaller degree fruit production, leading finally to a small number of agricultural products offered on the market. Of the total number of 5 373 households in the municipality, there are 4 031 households in rural areas. Comparing the number of households with 16 753 ha of arable land, the fact about a fragmentary production and inability to produce market surplus is being confirmed.

Through the ownership transformation process, some enterprises that were carriers of agricultural production are in the privatization process, and the solution to the status of cooperatives is expected through the adoption of the Law on Cooperatives (PC “Eko-hrana” - in the process of privatization, Coop “Boljevac” - in bankruptcy and Coop “Sumrakovac” with the greatest potential, empty buildings, is expecting the Law on Cooperatives and thus the solution to their way of working) The general condition of these subjects who were carriers of agricultural production is that they are in an extremely poor financial condition, with almost no activities, and therefore does not act as carriers of agricultural development in the region. Existing facilities are primarily for primary agricultural production and as such represent a good basis for agricultural development of the municipality.

The share of agriculture in percentage in the gross national income (for 2007) on republic level is 3.77%, while on municipal level that percentage is much lower – 0.0076%.

7. Agricultural land according to usage

Agricultural land includes: fields, gardens, orchards, vineyards, pastures, meadows, ponds, marshes as well other land which according to its natural and economic conditions can be used for agricultural production.

The basic characteristics of agricultural land in the municipality Boljevac are the fragmentation of land, inadequate application of agri-technical measures, inefficient use of mineral fertilizers, improper application of chemical agents and others. For a proper use of agricultural land and in order to achieve high yields, it is necessary to regularly control soil fertility (macro and micro elements, pH value and humus).

Property	Fields	Garden	Orchard	Vineyard	Meadow	Pasture
Private	16.753,00	51,60	1.217,20	388,90	10.076,30	18.107,50
Public and state	1.187,80	2,80	51,20	7,30	933,30	3.899,00
Total	17.940,80	54,4	1.268,40	396,20	11.009,60	7.701,00

Table 3 Structure of agricultural land use in ha

Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
264	7.500	15.522	9.764	39.702

Table 4 Number of livestock in Boljevac

Comparing the shown land areas with the number of livestock units, primarily large and small ruminants, on the territory of the municipality, there is a possibility for a multiple increase in the number of livestock units.

8. Capacities for processing agricultural products

The basic features of the municipality of Boljevac are small number of processing facilities for processing agricultural products and that our area is mainly used for providing raw materials for processing capacities in other territories. Therefore it is necessary that in summarizing the current processing facilities provide in the future the construction of capacities which would give final products for export.

Out of the existing facilities for processing primary agricultural products are: the dairy Mihajlovic in Krivi Vir, dairy "7 juli" Podgorac and Zitopromet Boljevac, mill and bakery in Valakonje, mill in Osnic and bakery in Bogovina.

The capacities of processing facilities, primarily dairies are:

- dairy "Petrovic" in Krivi Vir - 5.000 litres
- dairy "7 juli" in Podgorac - 4.000 litres

Dairies from Zajecar, Knjazevac and Sokobanja that are collecting milk are present on the territory of the municipality.

There is an obvious lack of processing capacities in meat, fruit and vegetable production.

9. Current plant production

Out of the total agricultural land, 46.7% is arable land, 28.6% meadows, 20.2% pastures, 3.2% orchards and 1.3% vineyards.

Production structure for crops on arable land from the period 2005/6 – 2007/8 is the following:

Crop	areas in 2005-2006	areas in 2006-2007	areas in 2007-2008
Wheat	3.358 ha	3.650 ha	2.555 ha
Barley	1.633 ha	1.590 ha	1.506 ha
Oats	940 ha	790 ha	750 ha
Rye	220 ha	235 ha	320 ha
Triticale	500 ha	450 ha	473 ha
Maize	4.175 ha	4.203 ha	5.182 ha
Forage	962 ha	976 ha	974 ha
Ind. plants	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha
Med. herbs	0.5 ha	0 ha	0 ha
Vegetables	435 ha	583 ha	603 ha

10. Current livestock production

The structure of livestock production on the territory of the municipality is the following:

Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
264	7.500	15.522	9.764	39.702

The complete livestock production is happening on agricultural households. Of the total number of calves (7.000), 15 % remain for further reproduction, 3% for fattening up to 550 kg and 82 % is sold at up to 200 kg.

An amount of 1 033 200, 00 kg of meat is annually delivered on the territory of the municipality, daily amounts of meat which are delivered are on average 2.830,00 kg.

11. Manifestations

Ethno festival "Crnolecje in song and dance" shows the traditional cultural heritage each year during the second weekend of June. "Crnolecje" contains a program of ethno-music, exhibition of traditional craft products and sales exhibition of organic food. The days of "Crnolecja" are the opportunity for Boljevac to promote the tourism offer and introduce all the enterprises in the municipality.

12. Strict nature reserve

The Strict Nature Reserve Rtanj has, by the decision of the Institute for protection and scientific study of natural rarities no 01-486 of 16.09.1959, been placed under state protection, in the municipality of Boljevac KO Lukovo and Mirovo (k.p. 5990 and 6165). Strict Nature Reserve is a forest of Fir (*Abies alba*) and Beech (*Fagus moesiaca*) with some Sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) on the mountain Rtanj, on an area of 15 ha. There is no planned work in this area that would violate the balance of the ecosystem, especially no use of forests and other products. This protected estate is managed by the Public Company "Srbijasume", Belgrade, however Republic authorities do not allocate funds for the management and use of the reserve for scientific purposes. For the same reason they cannot form a Guard service to make the protection even more effective. The company that manages does not have sufficient funds and the problem is not being solved.

There was an initiative of nongovernmental organizations (hikers, etc.), former user of the Resort "Rtanj", enthusiasts and the Assembly of Boljevac to restore the park-forest on Rtanj which is now derelict and heavily damaged and which once drew much attention with its species diversity, its location and unique architecture. Municipality of Boljevac has, on two occasions, sent a requests to the Department of Nature Conservation for an expert assessment and evaluation of natural resources (in 1998 and 1999). In 2004 and 2005 the Department responded to the requests from the municipality and professional teams have completed the evaluation of the field.

For the implementation of the revitalization project, a project analysis was done for the design for the park-forest "Rtanj" and situations of existing park objects with a tendency to preserve authenticity.

Jagged terrain, different geological composition and a clean environment have caused that the striking mountain of Rtanj (top Siljak 1570 m), with its settlement at the foot, has become known for its great wealth of plant species. Medical and rare plants are considered endangered. The first one because of improper picking, and latter because a small number

of species are present in the nature in restricted areas. A large number of species are protected by law. Especially interesting are medical plants, some which are specific to this area: snowball bush, periwinkle, Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), centaury (*Centaureum Eruthraea*), Mountain germander (*Teucrium montanum*); rare samples of ground-elder, tansy, blue gentian (*Gentiana* sp.) Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), crocus (*Crocus moesiacum*), Tomasin's crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*), snow crocus (*C. Chrusantus*), rock bell (*Edraianthus serbicus*), St. John's wort (*Hypericum boissieri*), Serbian ramonda (*Ramonda serbica*), large sasa (*Pulsatilla vulatis*), mountain sasa (*P. montana*), *Rosa spinosissima* etc..

Over 1000 meters above sea level, around the saddle Baba grows the widely known Rtanj tea (*Satureja Montana*). The specie of *Nepeta rtanjensis* was first recorded in 1974 (Dr. Bojana Milojevic) on the southern slopes of Rtanj. This relict and endemic species has currently been categorized as indeterminate type (I) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). As a species of international importance, this aromatic and potentially medical herb is protected by law in Serbia and deserves more attention.

The Institute for Nature Protection completed the **Study for protection of Rtanj 2008**, which should cover a wider area of Boljevac and Sokobanja territory. Details of the study have not been sent to the municipality of Boljevac. The protection category will, according to current knowledge, be **Region of outstanding quality**. This type of protection opens up the possibility for **special management** of the landscape, which can go towards the development of eco-tourism, sport tourism, children's tourism and economic development of the municipality as a whole.

Abandoned and polluted land in the municipality are areas for storage space of mullock, abandoned quarries and areas for waste disposal, therefore this land cannot be used for agricultural production or other activity.

As locations for disposal of mullock, the following less valuable agricultural areas and village sward are being used:

- Location called „Bogovinsko polje“ area 5.80 ha kp.no 4253/1-4 K.O. Bogovina
- Location called „Pored pruge“ area 1.70 ha kp.no 3686, 3687, 3688 and 3702 K.O. Bogovina
- location called „Grabovac“ area 0.26 ha parcel in the village
- Location called „Istocno polje“ area 0.17 ha kp.no 10613 and 10614 K.O. Bogovina
- Location called „Ogasu miucu“ area 0.25 ha kp.no 3574/1 K.O. Bogovina

13. Population

Municipality of Boljevac is today a territory with 15 498 inhabitants and belongs to the group of sparsely populated areas. Bearing in mind the basic features, availability, diversity and attractiveness of natural resources, the degree of their deployment, as well as developed economic capacities, real possibilities for achieving a more dynamic development opens up despite major constraints (low degree of development of infrastructural capacities, personnel limitations).

The average population density is significantly below the critical limit of 19 inhabitants per km², which puts Boljevac in sparsely populated municipalities. The number of people older than 60 years makes up for 27.5%, while those younger than 14 years are only 14.9% of the total population. As for the sex distribution 7725 are men while 8124 are women.

The largest number of unemployed, by age structure, are people over the age of 50, though no less disadvantaged are those between 30-40 years.

The movement of the population on the territory of the municipality is, beside the absolute decrease of population, characterized by three basic determinants:

- low birth-rate,
- increase in the mortality rate and
- migration processes.

All settlements, except the centre of the municipality, are noticing an intensive outflow of population.

14. Gender dimension of the Agriculture in the Municipality of Boljevac

Numerous researches and development projects², both here and abroad have shown that women participate in all aspects of agricultural production. On the other hand, the same research projects have shown that the position of women in the agricultural sector is at alarming levels. Most of them are in the category of supporting household members without land ownership, and therefore without basis for pension, social and health insurance, but as a person dependent on the household member who is the owner of the registered household.

Gender aspect and mainstreaming of strategies, among them the strategy of agriculture, represents an approach by which an improvement of women's position is achieved as well as gender equality in society. It includes the integration of gender perspective into legislation, plans, strategies, programmes and projects in order to ensure that these documents affect women and men equally. Gender mainstreaming in one strategy is necessary given the fact that women and men have different life paths and that development policies affect them differently. It is important to note that gender mainstreaming according to approach principles of Gender and Development (GAD) assumes that women's empowerment can be successful only if we take into account the relations between men and women.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDOW Convention), signed by the Serbian Government, in Article No 14³ refers to the rights of rural women. Governments that have signed the Convention have agreed to take into account the specific problems faced by women in rural areas, and significant roles they play in the economic survival of their families, and to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas. They have also agreed to provide, on the basis of equality between women and men, equal participation in and benefit from rural development. Legislation⁴ and strategic documents⁵ in the Republic of Serbia also ensure gender equality in all aspects, including agricultural production and life in rural areas.

On the National Conference on the role of women in rural development⁶ it was repeatedly emphasized that currently none of the rural development strategies of municipalities in Serbia has any defined strategy for improving the status of women in rural areas. We hope

² See: Study on households done within the framework of the development project – Integrated Milk and Dairy Development Project (Reka Mleka); Babović, M. (2008) Rural women as supporting agricultural household members: position, roles and social rights, UNDP, Belgrade; Rajković LJ. (2002) Family and position of women in rural Serbia <http://www.awin.org.rs/srp/arhiva/elbiblioteka.htm>.

³ Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (2008), Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Gender Equality Directorate, p 16

⁴ Law against Discrimination, Law on Gender Equality, European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

⁵ Government of the Republic of Serbia (2008) National Strategy for improving the position of women and promoting gender equality; Government of the Republic of Serbia (2003) Poverty Alleviation Strategy; Millenium Development Goals

⁶ Held in Nis, 26 -28.08.2010

that this first, gender mainstreamed strategy adopted by the municipality of Boljevac will serve as a good example to other municipalities of how this can be achieved.

What do numbers say?

According to the 2002 census, the municipality has 15 849 inhabitants, of which 8124 (51.26%) are women and 7725 (48.74%) are men. According to the same document, out of 7090 women for whom there is information on education, most have completed 4-7 years of primary school (41.95%), completed primary school 22.95%, high school 17.07%, 2.33% higher education, and university education 1.37%. Percentage of women without education in the municipality of Boljevac is 9.72%.

Agricultural population of the Municipality of Boljevac (data from the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac) is 36% of the population, however, is not noted which part of this percentage are women involved in production. According to the 2002 census they make up about 53% of the total agricultural population of the municipality, 48.8% of the active agricultural population, and 49% as individual agricultural producers. On the other hand, women account for 62.2% of supported agricultural population. Following this data we see that women in the Municipality of Boljevac are very involved in agricultural production, and the information received from the municipality is that all women who are living in rural areas but are not employed, participate in agricultural production. Following this argument, we come to the conclusion that about 70% of women living in rural areas, and some 30% of the total number of women, have incomes from agricultural production, mostly in the form of agricultural pensions. A very important data that illustrates the position and role of women in the agriculture of the Municipality of Boljevac is that out of the total of 1568 registered households (reinstatement for 2010) some 45.08% are registered in the name of women. However, although they are very active in agricultural production, trainings in the field of agriculture are available to very few women - they make up only 20% of participants in training courses and workshops organized by the municipal department for agriculture. Also, of the 18 people who participated in the design of this strategy, 5 were women. It is, therefore, emphasized under the proposed measures of this Strategy that it is necessary to find ways and take specific steps to ensure their participation in training events, as well as the ways in which this can be achieved. All this will greatly contribute to their bigger impact on the sustainable development of the municipality of Boljevac.

The share of women in agricultural development in the municipality can be presented on the example of Regional Advisory Service in Zajecar, which works on the territory of Boljevac, and employs 6 people of whom 3 are women. On the other hand, the Department of Economy, Agriculture and Development at the Municipality of Boljevac has three employees of which none is a woman.

The municipality itself has not had any municipal authority, service, person or project that has dealt with the advancement of the position of women. However, the Regional Chamber of Commerce Zajecar has, under the EU PHARE cross-border programme with Bulgaria, entered into a partnership for the project ***Centers for Women Entrepreneurship - Cross-border network for the future***. As part of project activities which include Boljevac municipality, a database was made for women entrepreneurs of whom there are 16 women entrepreneurs from the Municipality of Boljevac. Of these 16, three have registered businesses related to agricultural production and 3 businesses related to tourism.

What does the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac for the period 2010 – 2020 say?

In addition to individual statistical indicators (e.g. unemployment), women in the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac are represented in rather stereotyped social categories, and data for which there otherwise is gender-sensitive statistics (e.g. population by age and education according to the census of 2002) has not been shown in a way that emphasizes gender-sensitive data.

However, this strategy of agricultural development as document talks of the willingness and openness of the municipality and its employees in the agricultural sector to put the issue of women's equality on their list of priorities. Given that the municipality has a great number of women engaged in agriculture, especially in the dairy sector, and that these women have, in cooperation with some previous international projects (Reka Mleka, Female entrepreneurship), shown willingness, desire and openness to improve and develop their own businesses, the authors of this strategy recommend that the following should be done in the future:

- Establish a Gender Equality Board within the Municipality or determine one person who would be responsible for gender equality issues and advancement of the position of women in the municipality, or through a special project engage a consultant for that position
- Ensure that budget allocations of the Municipality have special resources for improvement of women's position in agriculture
- Through budget allocations ensure an increase in the number of women at the municipal department for agriculture (maybe within the project teams which has been foreseen by this strategy)
- Establish clear, measurable goals to improve the position of women engaged in agricultural production in the municipality of Boljevac
- Based on the above mentioned activities and plans, systematically and continuously monitor the progress related to the improvement of women's position in agriculture and their active participation in sustainable development
- In cooperation with certain projects find opportunities to design a study of the existing macro and micro agricultural policies on gender roles, especially on women owners of agricultural land and women in agribusiness
- In the reports of the Municipality and the Department of agriculture show data through gender sensitive statistics
- Organize special training programmes to develop women skills in agribusiness and advisory services – make a business plan, manage a business, farm as a business and others, and/or ensure a significant percentage of female participants at training events in the field of agriculture (40-50% women)
- Come up with incentives for women participation at training programmes and conduct the trainings in places which are suitable to them
- Define special measures to assist women in agribusiness with an easier access to extension services, suppliers of products important to agricultural production, trainings etc
- Increase female participation in the decision making process in farmer organizations – strengthen their management skills
- Increase the visibility of women in agribusiness through the support for participating on fairs, promotions etc
- Organize presentations, in schools, of successful women in agribusiness to serve as a role model to young women, and to reduce the outflow of young people from rural areas

III STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

The main problem in economy is the lack of working capital in the industry, unsuccessful privatization in some areas, small and mixed agricultural production, unorganized collection of agricultural products, lack of processing capacities for processing agricultural products, weak marketing appearance, insufficient investments in tourism, as well as lack of coordination in certain production fields and insufficient affirmation of homemade products.

The boulders in the faster development of the Municipalities are, among others: migration, negative birth-rate, lack of highly educated human resources of different profiles, industrial capacities insufficiently equipped both technically and technologically, old agricultural machinery, insufficient application of agro-technical measures, insufficiently equipped tourism capacities, lack of financial resources, slow technical development, small investment budget, weak marketing presence and lack of brands.

1. SWOT analysis of agricultural sector in the municipality of Boljevac

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing Association of cattle breedersExisting Association of beekeepersSolid basis of raw materialLong production traditionLarge areas of available agricultural landPreserved environment70% of the population is in agricultural production (cattle breeding)Existing and active institutions (local self-government, regional extension service, veterinary services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Old machineryPoor communication with the local self-governmentUninformed producersNon-existing (non-compliance with) standardsAgricultural households are mainly oldSmall areas of agricultural land is in the ownership of an individual household
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Existence of the Fund for agricultureFarmers forming organizationsLarger use of MAFWM subsidiesExisting funds and those that come will soon (IPA, IPARD)Formation of cooperativesEnlargement of irrigation areasUsage of mountain pasturesAreas that are not treated – shorter conversion period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">One way communication state - municipalityLegal regulation (non-compliance, bad solutions, unfinished guillotine of regulations)Monopoly on the market

2. Underlying contradictions and potential ways of overcoming them

Underlying contradictions

The participants of the workshop brainstormed certain underlying contradictions of agricultural development in the municipality. The contradictions are of a long-term

character and should be dealt with systematically. Brainstormed contradictions can be grouped into the following categories:

Farmer organizations

- Lack of trust and organization between farmers
- Farmers unmotivated to organize themselves
- Long and hard process of changing the awareness of the local population on the needs of forming farmer organizations
- Farmers reluctantly accept responsibility for the functioning of the organization
- The mentality and deeply rooted conception about forming organizations
- Bad experience with previous agricultural cooperatives
- Farmers cannot find an interest to form organization
- Farmers' information level on organizations is low
- Untransparent work of farmer organizations

Market and product placement

- Insecurity in collection, big price fluctuations (therefore no constant production)
- Insecure product placement
- Weak or non-existing cooperation with slaughterhouses and dairies
- Insufficient information on general market trends
- Farmers unwillingness to adjust to the market – change in production

Technology of production and standardization

- Unfavourable production structure, non-existing diversification
- No interested for novelties in production
- Low knowledge level among farmers, especially in animal husbandry
- No knowledge and application of new technologies
- Mountain pastures have not been maintained
- Number of sheep has been drastically reduced, especially for Krivovirska sheep that is characteristic for this area
- Long and expensive product standardization process

Support measures and services for farmers

- Insufficiently developed services which are necessary for supporting farmers (especially veterinarians)
- Frequent inconstancy of government strategy without possibility to influence it from a local level
- Lack of projects for immediate support from EU
- No contact between extension services and local communities
- Insufficiently clear agrarian policy of the Ministry of Agriculture
- Small subsidies
- Irregular support from the Ministry of Agriculture
- Frequent changes of conditions for using subsidies

Natural surrounding and potentials

- Rtanj has potentials but does not fulfil its proper function and the current management is not attracting any potential interest groups
- Newly formed Tourist Organization does not receive the necessary assistance and has difficulties in finding true professionals to help them
- Newly formed Tourist Organization and private initiative are at their beginning
- Natural conditions are inappropriate (soil, precipitations)

Support to women engaged in agricultural production

- Small number of women farmers participates in training sessions
- No parliamentary body dealing with the position of women in the municipality

- Women farmers do not have a significant impact on the work of farmer organizations

General contradictions

- Corruption

Reactions for removal

Every obstacle requires certain strategic moves for its removal, especially if the obstacle has been present at a place for a long period of time. The participants of the strategic planning workshop tried to list reactions, or more precisely ideas, for influencing a gradual and systematic removal of the mentioned contradictions. These reactions were also divided into following categories:

Farmer organizations

- Initiate changes in the approach of forming organizations
- Get acquainted with organization models in the region
- Constant training of farmers on the advantages of forming organizations
- Visit farmer associations/cooperatives in the region
- Association/cooperative examples – good practices
- Enlargement of production by forming associations or cooperatives
- Group farmers through forming organizations in order to enlarge production
- Organize farmers in order to achieve subsidies
- Constant education of farmers in order to change the view about farmer organizations
- Constant contacts and explanation of the needs to form organizations
- Organize farmers according to production types – meat, milk, agritourism

Market and product placement

- Initiate increase of production by increasing land areas
- Enlarge land properties
- Create larger complexes for cheaper production

Technology of production and standardization

- Organize training events on introducing new technologies
- Get familiar with the production technology of new products required by the market
- Constant information provision to farmers on modern production methods
- Extension services and farmers together determine the basic development directions towards a standardized production
- Define a concrete programme of product standardization at municipal level
- Change the deeply rooted conceptions on production through education
- Get farmers acquainted with the law on animal welfare
- Establish demonstration farms – sheep, cattle

Support measures and services for farmers

- Introduce new topics and approaches in training
- Training of extension services on functioning and adjusting to farmers' needs
- Find the most appropriate way of informing farmers
- Inform about every positive change through public media – run one weekly programme on radio „Bum“
- Responsible agricultural departments within the local self-government in constant contact with agricultural producers
- Organize workshops in the field
- In constant contact with farmers through local communities and municipal authorities

- Insist on cross-border cooperation and exert influence on the foreign market through RARIS programme
- Come up with support mechanisms to encourage women to participate in training programmes and hold trainings at venues which are easy accessible to them
- Create the Gender Equality Board at the Municipality or determine a person who would be responsible for gender equality issues and promote the position of women in the municipality or through projects engage a consultant for that position
- Increase the participation of women in decision making processes in farmer organizations – empower their management skills
- Increase the visibility of women in agribusiness by supporting their participation on fairs, promotions etc.

General measures

- Motivate youth
- Encourage the increase in birth-rate through support measures.

3. Vision and strategic directions

The agricultural development vision for the municipality of Boljevac reads:

Associated farmers, with direct support of local and regional advisory services, produce standardized and recognised local products of high quality, and sell them at domestic and international markets. Agriculture production is respecting available natural resources and contributes to the development of rural development and touristic offer of the municipality of Boljevac. Direct support of the MAFWM and EU organisations/institutions for rural development of the municipality.

In order to fulfil the defined Vision and overcome the underlying contradictions of agricultural development of the municipality, the *strategic development directions* for the following 5 years (period 2010-2015) are defined as follows:

- 1. Expansion of the regional network of advisory services that will also function at the local level, using new approaches and methodologies in training, and that will work on the promotion and establishment of standardized agriculture production**
- 2. Empowerment of existing and formation of new, specialised associations/cooperatives at local and regional level**
- 3. Inclusion of all sources of financing in agriculture production**
- 4. Empowerment and expansion of the possibilities for realisation of added value agriculture production**

The defined strategic directions determine where and how will agricultural development in Boljevac proceed in the period of 2010-2015. *Current situation* has helped stakeholders who are included in strategic planning shape development directions. Working in line with the vision, workshop participants have defined the desired state, which should be accomplished in the following 5 years of implementing the Strategy. They have, therefore, defined *success indicators* as a measure to assess success and to help them determine whether the Strategy has been implemented accordingly. Since 5 years are a long period, stakeholders have also defined *first year accomplishments of Strategy implementation*. These three information categories are described in the following tables.

Current situation, success indicators and accomplishments in the first year

I EXPANSION OF THE REGIONAL NETWORK OF ADVISORY SERVICES THAT WILL ALSO FUNCTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, USING NEW APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES IN TRAINING, AND THAT WILL WORK ON THE PROMOTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDIZED AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

Current situation	First year accomplishments of Strategy implementation	Success indicators of implementing the Strategy (5 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory service good, veterinary services insufficiently developed • No knowledge and application of modern technologies in primary agricultural production • Regional advisory service exists (in Zajecar), as well as veterinary service and herd bookkeeping service • Insufficient number of advisors on the field • No direct contact between extension services and local communities • There is a need to change training approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme for advisors on the standardization of production has been made • Farmers training needs assessment for advisory services made • Advisors training needs assessment made and training programme done • Database on advisors on the field has been made • Initial meeting between advisors and extension services in the region done for the purpose of defining steps for further networking • The necessary steps has been made for establishing a better performance and higher quality of work for extension services on the territory of the municipality of Boljevac • Communication system established between different parts of services on the field (agricultural, veterinarian, municipal etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication system between extension services, local communities and the local self-government established • Organized support of extension services on the field to existing and newly established organizations • Cooperation system between different extension services on the field established • An informal support network for extension services in the region established • Increased number of advisors present in the field • Advisors use new methodologies in working with farmers on the field • A minimum of 1 advisor enabled to provide advices in the field of organic production, farm management, marketing and market appearance • Standardization of agricultural products (honey and vegetables) begun with professional support from advisory services

II EMPOWERMENT OF EXISTING AND FORMATION OF NEW SPECIALIZED ASSOCIATIONS/COOPERATIVES AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL		
Current situation	First year accomplishments of Strategy implementation	Success indicators of implementing the Strategy (5 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 existing Associations – livestock association and beekeepers association • Not active enough • One association has a very long tradition (Beekeepers association) • Unmotivated farmers to organize themselves • Lack of trust and organization between farmers • Farmers' information level low • Untransparent work of farmer organizations • Non-systematic support from the MAFWM • Insecure product placement, organized market appearance insufficiently used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct orientation meetings with potential organization members with, at least, 30% women presence • Contract matrix and organization statute done • Regulations concerning the work of the organization defined (definition of members responsibilities) • Quality standards for honey defined • Trainings on the standardization of the quality of honey conducted • Organization meetings on regional level conducted • Organization logos done • Training on the households economic benefit of forming organizations started • Strategy for increasing women's participation in training process defined • Promotional material for organizations for distributing on fairs done • Training for associations and cooperatives in the field of management started • Database on organizations' production established (id of the organization) • Study tour to domestic successful organizations conducted, with, at least, 30% women participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work plan of farmer organizations developed and at least 2 independent activities of the organization implemented • 2-5 new farmer organizations (vegetable-, herb-, poultry-, sheep- and fish producers) established, including a developed programme and implementation plan • Recognized and standardized product of farmer organization created (1-2 products per organization) • Links with existing regional and national associations established • Information system between producers/farmer organizations/local self-government established • Increased number of active farmer organization members • Increased number of active women and young people in farmer organizations and on trainings • Farmer organization present with their products on fair(s), with special promotion of female member and their activities • Three-monthly bulletin issued on farm organization activities • A section on organization activities posted on municipality's webpage • Principles for households to be group members, not individuals, defined to increase the number of youth and women

		participation
III INCLUSION OF ALL SOURCES OF FINANCING IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION		
Current situation	First year accomplishments of Strategy implementation	Success indicators of implementing the Strategy (5 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund for agricultural development established • No resources for the Fund to start working • A small number of registered household owners can receive subsidies (they are not paying for their pension insurance) • Poor communication between registered household owners-local self-government-Fund • Work plan of the Fund exists but it is not adopted nor forwarded to the MAFWM • Registered household owners are not familiar with the manner or the conditions for using support measures and bank loans • Insufficient number of programmes for financing agricultural products • Insufficient number of professionals for writing projects and programmes to collect resources • There is no fund for encouraging female owners of registered households and their engagement in the agri-business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The realization of programme activities of the Fund has begun • The initial resources allocated from municipal budget for implementing the work plan of the Fund, with specific funding allocated for women in agribusiness • The initiative to revise the Decree on achieving the right for subsidies in agriculture (not according to pension insurance but per production unit) sent to the Ministry of Agriculture • Meetings with farmers held in most local communities to inform them about support measures and decrees of the Ministry of Agriculture, with, at least, 30% women participation • Municipal extension services communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks • The work programme of the Fund for following year adopted and sent to the Ministry of Agriculture • Information programme done for informing farmers about using support measures of the Fund and bank loans, with a special programme for informing women • 3-5 programmes drafted for financing agricultural activities • A suggestion of members for the Team for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 programmes implemented through the Fund and other sources of financing • 5 million secured from the municipal budget, 5 million from the funds of the Ministry of Agriculture and 10 million from the “Agro banka” bank funds annually • Budget allocations have a clear specified item for supporting women in agribusiness • The initiatives from the municipality have impacted on the formulation of Ministry decrees • Regular meetings are held with farmers in all local communities to inform them about support measures • A system of data exchange established between the Administration-Ministry of Agriculture-banks • Farmers use the resources of the Fund and bank loans by 50% more than in 2010 • 5 programmes of the Fund designed, 4 realized towards the Ministry • A team of 5 people trained on writing projects

	designing projects and programmes made and their training has begun	
IV EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANSION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR REALISATION OF ADDED VALUE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION		
Current situation	First year accomplishments of Strategy implementation	Success indicators of implementing the Strategy (5 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rtanj is currently not sufficiently used and does not have appropriate function • Newly formed Tourist organization is facing beginners problems • Insecure placement of agricultural products • Insufficient diversification of agricultural products, poor production structure • Insufficient or non-existing cooperation with slaughterhouses and dairies • There is no private slaughterhouse or dairy in the municipality of Boljevac • Tourist potentials exist but are not sufficiently developed • Non-existing or insufficiently developed craft stores for domestic processing of agricultural products and cottage industry • Large number of women engaged in home processing and cottage industry, not recognized labour • The need exists for organized production and sale of honey and herbs • There are no defined, recognized agricultural products of the municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristic agricultural products recognized and a strategy made for their further development and promotion • Plan made for arranging tourist sites • Committee for categorizing tourist capacities is formed • Possibility assessment done for establishing craft store • Strategy done to encourage women to enter agribusiness sector • Assessment of capacities and possibilities for diversification of agricultural products done • National study tour performed to see good practices in agritourism, with special attention to women entrepreneurship in tourism • Links established between stakeholders providing tourism services and farmers interested for diversification of products and their placement at the tourism market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural products characteristic for the municipality are included in the tourist offer of the municipality of Boljevac • Diversification of agricultural products initiated • Study tour(s) conducted in order to become acquainted with good practices of agritourism in EU • At least 50% women participation on study tours • Craft stores for processing agricultural products registered (focus on closed circle of agricultural production) • Increased number of registered stores whose owners are women • Categorization of tourist capacities performed • Tourist offers done for agencies • Rtanj is on the tourism map of Serbia with organized tourist offer

4. Implementation plan of the Strategy

The plan for implementing the Strategy was done in accordance to the defined achievements in the first year, as well as the success indicators which should be measured after the five-year Strategic plan has been finished. Considering the specificity of agricultural production, its seasonal aspect as well as the quick changes which may occur during the implementation of the Strategy, the Team that defined the Strategy decided to write a six-month detailed plan for the initial period. A one year plan was also defined internally, but the six-month plan is presented here since it gives a more realistic picture and the possibilities which can be achieved in the period October 2010 – March 2011. The one-year plan (internal plan October 2010 – October 2011) will serve as the benchmark for the following six-month planning which will happen during the second quarterly meeting for monitoring and evaluation that will take place in March 2011.

The person responsible for the implementation of each activity is mentioned next to the activity, but the final division of responsibilities will be done by the Implementation team of the Strategy that will be formed by the Municipality of Boljevac.

Six months Implementation plan for each strategic direction

I EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANSION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR REALISATION OF ADDED VALUE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

October	November	December	January	February	March
<p>Create a leaflet on the conditions for registering craft stores and distribute it to interested farmers through local communities (MA-Municipal Administration)</p> <p>Conduct meetings with existing and interested farmers on registration of craft stores (MA)</p>	<p>Conduct meetings with existing and interested farmers on registration of craft stores (MA)</p> <p>Make a list of farmers interested to register craft stores and provide support in the registration process (MA)</p>			<p>Begin drafting the Strategy for encouraging women to enter agribusiness (MA)</p>	
<p>Send invitations to interested farmers for a meeting concerning assessing the capacities and possibilities for product diversification (MA, Regional Advisory Service - RAS)</p>	<p>On municipal level, hold meetings with interested farmers to assess the capacities and possibilities for product diversification (MA, RAS)</p> <p>Hold meetings in the municipality to define necessary steps for</p>	<p>Based on information that has been received make an action plan for production and placement of agricultural products with added value (MA, RAS, Farmers organizations)</p>			

	creating a Strategy for encouraging women to enter agribusiness (MA, RAS)				
	Make a list of characteristic agricultural products in cooperation with RAS and farmers, including information collection on their current production volume (RAS, MA, Associations)	Define necessary steps for the development and promotion of agricultural products characteristic for the area of the municipality of Boljevac	Draft the Strategy for development and promotion of characteristic products (MA, RAS, Associations, interested farmers)		
					Hold first meeting with all stakeholders of the tourist sector including farmers interested in diversification and sale of agricultural products through the tourist offer (MA, Tourist Organization, Associations)

II EMPOWERMENT OF EXISTING AND FORMATION OF NEW SPECIALIZED ASSOCIATIONS/COOPERATIVES AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL					
October	November	December	January	February	March
<p>Prepare a meeting programme for establishment of new/restoration of old associations (RAS, MA and Vet service)</p> <p>Campaign for motivating farmers to form organizations – personal contacts, radio, local communities (MA)</p>	Meetings of vegetable producers and herb producers/collectors (2-3 meetings) (RAS and MA)	Meetings of poultry producers, sheep and goat breeders and fruit growers (2-3 meetings) (RAS, MA and Vet service)			
		Registration of interested farmers/households for farmer group formation (RAS, MA and Vet service)		Define the statute and other documents necessary for the functioning of the organization (RAS and MA, Associations)	
		Hold a special orientation meeting with women, potential organization members (MA, RAS)		Prepare a brochure on the quality standards of honey, promote it on the Annual Assembly (RAS, Associations)	Determine the possibility of affiliating with regional/national associations (RAS, Associations, MA)

III EXPANSION OF THE REGIONAL NETWORK OF ADVISORY SERVICES THAT WILL ALSO FUNCTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, USING NEW APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES IN TRAINING, AND THAT WILL WORK ON THE PROMOTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDIZED AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION					
October	November	December	January	February	March
Make a list of existing extension services and advisors on the territory of the municipality of Boljevac (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Create a database of extension services and advisors on the field, with contact details and advisors specialities (MA and RAS)				
Organize a campaign for motivating interested farmers in each local community and assess their needs for advisory services as well as prepare a workshop plan (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Conduct 4 workshops to assess the needs for advisory services in defined local communities (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Conduct 3 workshops to assess the needs for advisory services in defined local communities (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Conduct 3 workshops to assess the needs for advisory services in defined local communities (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Make a plan based on the assessment of farmers needs for advisory services (MA, RAS, Vet station)	
		Make a plan for conducting workshops on assessing advisors needs for training (MA, external consultants)	Conduct 2 workshops to assess advisors needs for training (MA, external consultants)		Design a plan and programme for implementing trainings for existing and new advisors
				Assess the needs of farmers interested in training on product standardization (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Design a training programme for farmers on product standardization (RAS)

IV INCLUSION OF ALL SOURCES OF FINANCING IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION					
October	November	December	January	February	March
Define the work plan of the Fund (MA; Steering Committee of the Fund)	Present the work plan of the Fund to representatives of Municipal Administration (MA)	Send a request to Municipal Administration (MA) to put the programme of the Fund for consideration	Adopt the work plan of the Fund and deliver the final version of the work programme to the Ministry of Agriculture (MA; SC of the Fund)		
Prepare the text for proposed changes in the Decree on achieving the right for subsidies in agriculture (Associations, MA, RAS, Vet service) Initiate changes in the Decree on achieving the right for subsidies in agriculture with responsible institutions (Associations, MA, RAS, Vet service)					
Make a record of human resources for the programme/project team (MA; Associations, RAS and Vet service)	Make a record of human resources for the programme/project team (MA; Associations, RAS and Vet service)			Form the programme/project team Design a training programme for the team (MA, RAS, external consultants)	
				Define the ways and channels for informing farmers on using	

				incentives of the Fund and bank loans Define special measures for effective information of women on incentives of the Fund and bank loans (MA; Vet services and RAS)	
				Hold meetings with farmers to inform them about the programmes and regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture, with at least 30% women participation (MA; Vet services and RAS)	
Establish regular communication with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and regular tracking of laws, regulations and competitions (MA; Vet service and RAS) Regular information provision through local media (radio „Bum“) (MA)	Create a webpage of the municipality to publish relevant information, regulations, laws etc and update them (MA) Municipal extension service communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, regulations and competitions (MA, RAS)	Municipal extension service communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, regulations and competitions (MA, RAS)	Municipal extension service communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, regulations and competitions (MA, RAS)	Municipal extension service communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, regulations and competitions (MA, RAS)	Municipal extension service communicates regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, regulations and competitions (MA, RAS)
Analyze the functioning of the Fund so far, determine the problems and hinders in order to be able to remove them (MA; Vet service, RAS and Associations)	Define mechanisms to improve the working of the Fund (MA and SC of the Fund)	Establish a more functional implementation of the Fund plan (MA and SC of the Fund)			

IV IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

1. Implementation Team

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of members of the **Strategy Implementation Team** which should be appointed. The Team is appointed by the Municipality bodies and is made of representatives from all relevant stakeholders of agricultural development on the territory of the municipality.

Responsibilities and roles of the Implementation Team members

Coordinator

- Coordinates and organizes the work of the Team and enables information flow
- Controls the way the team achieves the objectives that have been set
- Promotes the strategy and leads the marketing
- Controls and uses the qualities that the Team possesses
- Uses the potentials of each individual team member

Team leader

- Designates and guides, adjusts the work of the Team members
- Coordinates the work of the members
- Manages the work of the Team
- Cooperates with other stakeholders
- Assists Team members
- Responsible for the work of the “project” (achievement of strategic objective)
- Schedules Team meetings
- Informs the Coordinator on the work of the Team

Team members

- Timely realization of assignments agreed upon within the Team
- Responsible for the correctness and accuracy of data
- Participate actively in team activities, team decisions and suggests adjustments
- Monitor the realization of assignments

Facilitators

- Facilitate quarterly and bi-annual planning sessions
- Suggestions for strategy implementation
- Participate in monitoring

V MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Suggested framework for monitoring and evaluation consists of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and predicted activities through a monthly progress reporting, quarterly reviews of progress (one day sessions) and bi-annual meetings to review the progress as well as plan detailed activities within the adopted implementation plan of the Strategy. Quarterly and bi-annual progress review meetings should also be used to evaluate conducted activities, define lessons learned from previous period and include them in the plans for the next period.

Monthly progress reports:

Monthly progress report on the implementation of the Strategy is prepared by all stakeholders, responsible for its implementation, together. These reports are prepared as a result of monthly coordination meetings of the Implementation Team and contain information on conducted activities from the previous period, as well as planned activities for the following period. The report should also contain information on possible difficulties which may affect the implementation of activities as well as possible solutions and interventions.

Quarterly progress meetings

Quarterly progress review should be organized as a coordination meeting with all stakeholders included in the implementation of the Strategy, and with participation of responsible people from the Municipality (President of the Municipality, President of the Assembly etc). The objective of these meetings is to become aware of possible problems and standstill in the implementation of the Strategy which may endanger its short-term implementation, but also define the activities for its removal. As a preparation for these meetings, the Implementation Team prepares a presentation on the progress of activities in the previous period and gives an oral presentation to the participants of the meeting. These quarterly meetings are internal and their goal is to increase the work efficiency and effectiveness of the Implementation Team.

The participants on quarterly meetings are the Project Team, municipal officials and external consultants, if needed (each other quarterly meeting which is also a bi-annual planning meeting).

Bi-annual progress meetings

These meetings could be on a six-month level or annual level and serve the purpose of detailed planning of activities which can be found in the Strategy Implementation plan. Still, consider the specifics of the field which is of seasonal character (agricultural production), as well as the intensive work during the first period of Strategy implementation, the recommendation is to hold bi-annual meetings. This type of frequency allows for a timelier planning and information on the obstacles which may occur in the field during implementation, but also on the possibilities for new activities, projects etc.

Apart of the reporting by the Implementation Team, these bi-annual meetings should also serve to make a detailed plan for the following six months implementation. It is, therefore, necessary that all the stakeholders who were present during the creation of the Strategy are present here, as well as other relevant stakeholders who, in the meantime, might appear as important to the Implementation of the Strategy (projects, newly formed associations etc). It is important to define the lessons learned, in these sessions, which are then included in the new plans so that the Implementation plan is always updated with latest information and experience. Bi-annual meetings can last for 1-3 days, depending on the topics and plans to be considered within the group of stakeholders and Implementation Team.

After bi-annual review meetings of the project, a bi-annual progress report is drafted. This report contains all the necessary data about conducted activities in the previous period, plans for the following period as well as objectives achieved (achievement phase). The reports are public and can be distributed to all the actors who indirectly or directly participate in the Implementation of the Strategy.

VI ANNEX

Annex 1 – Primary implementation plan for the first year of implementation

I EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANSION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR REALISATION OF ADDED VALUE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION											
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
	<p>Capacity assessment of the municipality made for registration of craft stores – who, what, where, when, how</p> <p>Meeting held in the municipality to define necessary steps for creating a Strategy for encouraging women to enter agribusiness (MA, RAS, Association)</p>	<p>Capacity and possibility assessment done regarding diversification of agricultural products (Mena Group)</p>	<p>Characteristic/recognizable agricultural products defined and the Strategy for their further development and promotion made (MA, RAS, Associations)</p>	<p>Strategy for encouraging women to enter agribusiness made (MA)</p>	<p>Hold first meeting with all stakeholders of the tourist sector including farmers interested in diversification and sale of agricultural products through the tourist offer (MA, Tourist Organization Associations)</p>	<p>Plan made for arranging tourist sites (TO)</p>	<p>National study tour performed to see good practices in agritourism with special attention to women entrepreneurship in tourism (TO, MA and Associations)</p>			<p>Committee for categorizing tourist capacities is formed (MA)</p>	
II EMPOWERMENT OF EXISTING AND FORMATION OF NEW SPECIALIZED ASSOCIATIONS/COOPERATIVES AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL											

October	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
	<p>Conduct orientation meetings with potential organization members</p> <p>Conduct orientation meetings with women, potential organization members (MA, RAS, Vet station)</p>		<p>Contract matrix and organization statute done (RAS)</p> <p>Regulations concerning the work of the organization defined (members)</p>		<p>Quality standards for honey defined (Association)</p> <p>Organization meetings on regional level conducted (continuous) (MA, Association)</p>	<p>Organization logos done (Association)</p> <p>Trainings on the standardization of the quality of honey conducted (RAS)</p> <p>Training on the households economic benefit of forming organizations started</p> <p>Strategy for increasing women's participation in training process defined</p> <p>Promotional material for organizations for distributing on fairs done (Association)</p>	<p>Training for associations and cooperatives in the field of management started (RAS)</p>		<p>Database on organizations' production established (id of the organization) (MA, Association)</p>	<p>Study tour to domestic successful organizations conducted, with, at least, 30% women participation (MA, RAS, Vet station)</p>	

III EXPANSION OF THE REGIONAL NETWORK OF ADVISORY SERVICES THAT WILL ALSO FUNCTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, USING NEW APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES IN TRAINING, AND THAT WILL WORK ON THE PROMOTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDIZED AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
	Database of advisors on the field has been made (MA and RAS)			Farmers training needs assessment for advisory services made (MA, RAS, Vet station)	Advisors training needs assessment made and training programme done Training programme made for advisors on the standardization of production	Initial meeting between advisors and extension services in the region done for the purpose of defining steps for further networking	Communication system established between different parts of services on the field			The necessary steps defined for establishing a better performance and higher quality of work for extension services on the territory of the municipality of Boljevac	

IV INCLUSION OF ALL SOURCES OF FINANCING IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION											
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
<p>The initiative to revise the Decree on achieving the right for subsidies in agriculture (Associations, MA, RAS, Vet service)</p> <p>Make a record of human resources for the programme /project team (MA; Associations, RAS and Vet service)</p> <p>Municipal extension services communicates regularly</p>	<p>Improve the work of the Fund (long-term activity) (MA and SC of the Fund)</p>		<p>The work programme of the Fund adopted and sent to the Ministry of Agriculture (MA and SC of the Fund)</p>	<p>Information programme done for informing farmers about using support measures of the Fund and bank loans, with a special programme for informing women (MA and SC of the Fund)</p>	<p>Meetings with farmers held in most local communities to inform them about support measures and decrees of the Ministry of Agriculture, with, at least, 30% women participation (MA and SC of the Fund, RAS, Vet service)</p>	<p>Registration of farmers for using financial resources (MA and SC of the Fund)</p>	<p>The initial resources allocated from municipal budget (May-Sep)</p> <p>The initial resources allocated from municipal budget, with specific funding allocated for women in agribusiness (SC of the Fund and Mun. Assembly)</p> <p>Programmes drafted for financing agricultural activities and sent to the Ministry (May-Aug)</p>				

with the Ministry of Agriculture and banks, and tracks laws, decrees and competition s (MA)							(MA and SC of the Fund)				
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