

Fruits and Berries Program supported by Denmark



- DKK 40 million (Euro 5.360 million) for development of fruit and berries sector in the south of Serbia
- 820 full time jobs created
- 854 beneficiaries have received grants from the program
- Increased annual production by 5.207 tons to farmers and increased annual revenues by EUR 1.3 million
- Total Danish donations to Serbia more than EUR 17 million through The Neighbourhood Programme in the past 10 years

The F&B Program was a project initiated by the Danish government in close cooperation with and support from the Serbian government. Through its Neighbourhood Programme, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs committed DKK 40 million (Euro 5.360 million) to development of the fruits and berries sector in the south of Serbia over a six-year period from November 15, 2010 to November 14, 2016. The Danish assistance has been implemented in the form of the F&B Program. The Serbian government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection made a commitment to provide a total of EUR 3.3 million, plus the equivalent of EUR 0.3 in the form of manpower for technical assistance. In addition, local governments in the districts covered by the program made commitments to contribute EUR 0.3 million.

The Neighbourhood Programme is Denmark's bilateral program for EU's neighbouring countries to the East and Southeast. The overall objective of the program is to promote open and democratic societies based on the rule of law and based on stable economic and political development. The program supports Denmark's foreign policy priority of promoting a peaceful and stable Europe in progress and prosperity,

F&B Program based in Nis, Serbia has had as its aim the development of high quality and competitive fruit and berry products for export and home market. The Fruits and Berries Program (F&B) has supported improvement of productivity and quality with a focus on education and training of extension service providers and producers, investments in the fruit and berries sector through its grant program, capacity building among producers and market initiatives, and improvement of post-harvest management, research and control.

The implementation of the technical assistance and the grants component has progressed according to plan, and the combination of the investments made as a result of the grants and the efforts of technical assistance has enabled the F&B Program not only to reach but greatly exceed the target for the main objective of the program, i.e. *employment creation measured in terms of net additional full-time equivalent jobs created or maintained in supported holdings or enterprises*. As of the end of September 2016 the number of full time equivalent jobs created was 820 against a target of 250 for the program as a whole. More than two-third of these new full time equivalent jobs were for women.

Other preliminary key results and achievements of the F&B Program as of the end of September 2016 include:

- A total of 854 beneficiaries have received grants from the program, versus a target for the entire program period of 330. Of these 757 beneficiaries have received grants for equipment, while 87 have received grants for planting materials
- Annual export revenues of grant beneficiaries have increased by EUR 5.6 million¹.
- Farmers receiving grants have increased their annual production by 5,207 tons and their annual revenues by EUR 1.3 million
- Cold store operators and processors having received grants have increased their annual volume of products handled by 22,416 tons and increased their annual revenues by EUR 5.6 million
- A total of 12,414 participants have attended 881 training sessions organized by the F&B Program versus a target of 5,000 participants
- A total of 28 beneficiaries has been supported by the F&B Program to implement and has been approved for certification of quality standards, while an additional thirteen beneficiaries have renewed their standards certificates with support from the program. The target for the program was 25 beneficiaries having received new quality standards certifications or renewal of their certifications
- A total of 192 participants from cold store operators and processors have participated to visits to major agricultural trade fairs in Moscow, Cologne, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Plovdiv and Bucharest enabling them to make new contacts and export contracts
- Study tours to the countries with significant achievements in the production of fruits and berries such as Holland, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark and Turkey have been organized and financed for 98 beneficiaries

The key conclusion from these preliminary highlighted results and overall accomplishments of the F&B Program is that the program in most cases has not only exceeded the targets set for the program, but has achieved what all development program strive to obtain but seldom achieve, viz. sustainability. This is not only evidenced by the dry numbers and statistics presented in this report, but also in the investments and all the efforts undertaken by our beneficiaries receiving both grants and technical assistance from the F&B Program underscoring their confidence in the future opportunities represented by the fruits and berries sector in the south of Serbia. It should also be noted that in the agricultural academic and development sector in Serbia the success and remarkable results achieved by the F&B Program have been duly noticed, and a new term referred to as the “Danish model of agricultural development” has been coined and referred to as a template or model for future development projects.

¹ This is based on data collected from all cold stores and processors having received grants, which are engaged in export activities. This figure represents the incremental revenues from exports calculated as the difference between the export revenues before receiving grants and the last season after having received grants.