



AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP COORDINATION MEETING

DATE	28 January, 2019
TIME	14:00
VENUE	Kramatorsk
CHAIR	Olena Kushch (FAO)

MINUTES

Elena Kusch, FAO Field Office Coordinator, announced the resumption of meetings of the Agricultural Working Group and stressed that their main goal is exchanging information on agricultural support activities and existing needs in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, as well as strengthening the coordination mechanism.

FAO briefly presented the 4-year program on the European Union Support to the East of Ukraine, implemented by UNDP in partnership with FAO, UNFPA and UN Women. FAO's activities will be focused on the following areas: mapping of the priority value chains, assessment and support in development of agricultural advisory services, support to cooperatives and capacity building to address bottlenecks of priority value chains within 10 subprojects, support to local providers of laboratory services, facilitating the exchange of experience among farmers through their participation in agricultural fairs and other business events, improving access of micro, small and medium entrepreneurs (MSME) to financing (grants, credits), as well as support to specialized educational institutions ("Farmers School").

Criteria for determination of MSMEs will meet the requirements of UNDP, as well as the Ukrainian and international standards.

Currently, FAO is conducting value chain assessment in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in order to prioritize and select the most promising ones with regard to their potential for development and livelihoods opportunities among the population. The results of the study will be available in April 2019.

At the same time, FAO is launching an expert assessment of existing agricultural advisory services in Donetsk and Luhansk regions to identify capacity building needs and provide recommendations on the most sustainable model of its operation.

In order to widely disseminate information about open and future opportunities for potential beneficiaries (training announcements, grant programs, etc.), it is proposed for the first time to use the working group's mailing list.

Volodymyr Lyashchenko, UNDP Program Coordinator, added that the European Union allocated 50 million Euro in total to support the East of Ukraine, of which 25 million were allocated to the joint project of 4 UN agencies, 15 million are granted for implementation of the KfW SME credit program and 10 million - to support educational institutions. The program will focus on capacity building for the staff of specialized educational institutions and expanding the graduates' opportunities.

Later, all the participants of the meeting, representing local and international non-governmental organizations, as well as the public sector, had the opportunity to briefly present themselves and their activities.



Volodymyr Kyrlyiuk, First Deputy Head of the Main Department of the State Food Security and Consumer Protection Service in Donetsk region, emphasized the importance of the support to laboratory services. Under the new requirement laboratory specialists have only 2 years for retraining in accordance with the European ISO standards, which creates a shortage of qualified personnel, especially in the Luhansk region. There is also a need in capacity building for internally displaced laboratory personnel and improving their access to livelihoods.

Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster presented their activities in the field of emergency and early recovery coordination, including contact gathering and information sharing. The cluster's representatives proposed to use the platform of the AWG as an additional coordination mechanism for discussion of technical issues, such as related to beneficiaries' referral from humanitarian actors and their further support by recovery/development actors if feasible, territorial coverage, size of grants, consolidation of reports, exchange of experts' contacts, etc. for the group discussion. As for the Food Security Cluster Meetings, they would take place every month (once - in Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk, the next month - in Kiev).

ICRC is engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in the 15-km buffer zone, including the support to farm households.

Caritas (Mariupol and Kramatorsk) mainly implements projects on the provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as support for social centers in Mariupol and Kramatorsk. Last year Caritas carried out the distribution of agricultural grants.

IOM - support for micro-businesses, including animal and plant production.

Public organization "Dnipropetrovsk Agricultural Consulting Service" is engaged in projects focused on creation and development of cooperatives. This year the organization is launching a 5-year project funded by the Government of Canada to develop the dairy business and create cooperatives. Plans to expand to the Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

NRC (Severodonetsk) focus on cooperatives, covering Lugansk and Donetsk region.

Oleksandr Dzigin and Denis Shamshin, representatives of the Department of AIC and RTD of the Donetsk Regional State Administration, noted the positive experience of cooperation with FAO and USAID and emphasized the need for long-term cooperation and coordination. The department has established contacts with potential beneficiaries and offers to apply an interactive map of the main enterprises in the region on the department's official website.

Dorcas (Kurakhovo) is focused on the distribution of small agricultural grants (300-500 Euro), unconditional cash and protection, covering Mariinka district.

At the end of the meeting the participants discussed the regularity of the working group coordination meetings and decided to hold them once a month.

Action Points:

- FAO: to share the preliminary training plan of the FAO Farmer Field School (FFS) 2019 (enclosed to the minutes).
- FAO: to present the results of the value chain mapping and the assessment of existing advisory services as they become available.

■ **Next meeting** – end of February. The date and time will be confirmed via email