

Building Capacity for Macedonian Higher Education, Research and Policy Analysis in Agriculture

With a Focus on Agricultural Economics



Completion Report 2008 – June 2011

A project funded by  Sida

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BICA	Balkan International Centre for Agricultural Economics
DE	Department of Economics, SLU
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network (EU)
FAF	Faculty of Agriculture and Food-Skopje
IAE	Institute of Agricultural Economics
MAASP	Macedonian Agricultural Advisory Support Program
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
SFARM	Support to Farmers' Associations of the Republic of Macedonia
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
UKIM	St Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

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Introduction

This is the story of a Swedish-Macedonian development co-operation involving two agricultural universities, two institutions and one common interest for agricultural economics. The cooperation between the Institute of Agricultural Economics (IAE) at the St Cyril and Methodius University (UKIM) in Skopje and the Department of Economics (DE) at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala dates back to 2000 and is now in its last phase.

This is the completion report for the second phase of the project and covers the period between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2011. The report contains a description and analysis of the results of each activity of the project, as well as information on project related issues that have affected the outcome. The project was initially planned to conclude its second phase by December 31, 2010 but after three extensions of the agreement, the period ended on June 30, 2011.

As of July 1, 2011, the project has begun its final phase, which will consolidate the results and assure the sustainable continuation of the invested resources.

For more information on previous phases of the project, please see earlier reports. Below follows a short description of the prestudy and first phase of the project.

Background

In the fall of 2000, three representatives from the department at SLU visited Macedonia and the IAE at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food at UKIM in Skopje. As a first step to assess the needs and problems facing the agricultural sector of Macedonia it was decided that a prestudy should be performed involving both Macedonian and Swedish researchers. The study firmly established that the lack of market institutions and cost-efficient and coherent agricultural policies were the main problems facing the agricultural sector in Macedonia.

It was decided that the overall aim of the project should be to contribute to an improved Macedonian policy for, and economic analysis of, the agricultural sector with

respect to trade, marketing, production and processing. The idea was that the project should create the preconditions for improvements in the Macedonian capacity for policy formulation and for performing economic analyses related to the agricultural sector.

It was foreseen that such knowledge and skills would be required in key areas such as in agro-management, marketing of agricultural products, education in the agricultural sector, and analysis of the impact and consequences for the agricultural sector of the future accession to the EU. This was planned to be carried out by building up the IAE teaching and research capabilities, improving the education programs and by expanding the research activities within specified areas.

During the first phase of the project, which lasted between 2004 and 2007, the project financed three PhD-students in progress, one major research report on the agricultural sector, a teacher exchange programme resulting in 24 visits, and a fully equipped computer lab at IAE. In addition, two Macedonian students achieved the degree of Master of Science at SLU, while four others were at different stages in their studies. The project also organized three study visits to Sweden for undergraduate students from IAE, English language courses for students and staff, as well as strengthened the reference library at IAE with new books and economic science journals.

Project description

The acronym of the project, *UniCoop* reflects the cooperation between two agricultural universities, two institutions, and their common interest in agricultural economics.

The overall objective of the project is:

To contribute to an improved Macedonian policy for, and economic analysis of, the agricultural sector with respect to trade, marketing, production and processing

While the two immediate objectives of the project are:

- 1. Improve the capacity of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Organization for higher education, research and policy analysis in agriculture.*

2. *Improve the capacity of governmental staff and other actors' of the sector for economic analysis in agriculture with focus on agricultural economics.*

The activities of the project during the covered period remains the same as previous and the objectives are to be achieved by building up the IAE teaching and research capabilities, improvements of the education programmes and by expanding the research activities within the specified areas. The project activities are as follows:

1. Education Program

- a. BSc
 - i. Curriculum Development
- b. MSc
 - i. Study Visit
 - ii. Language Courses
 - iii. MSc
 - iv. Balkan International Centre for Agricultural Economics (BICA)
- c. PhD

2. Research Program

- a. Research
- b. Advisory System

3. Staff Development

4. Facility Upgrading

- a. Computer Lab
- b. Literature and Journals

The progress in the implementation of these activities will be more thoroughly presented later in the report.

Project context

The Macedonian higher education needed to be transformed in order to fulfil the requirements of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which aims to ensure comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. EHEA opens the possibilities for student and teacher mobility and exchange with other

universities. The transformation was discussed already before the project's initial start in 2004, but reforms were always postponed. However, 2009 was the year of change for Higher Education in Macedonia. As a result of the new Law on Higher Education adopted in 2008 a new University Charter came into effect on January 1st 2009 and originated a phase of intensive reform at all faculties and bodies concerned.

The new law and the new charter required major changes in the structure of the universities, a transformation of roles and responsibilities of the university bodies, and the introduction of the three-cycle based higher education system that is at the core of the so-called Bologna principles, which guides the EHEA.

In essence, the central university administration has gained power over the faculties. Previously, St Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje was a very heterogeneous organization where each faculty had a great judiciary and financial independence. With the new charter the university (ruled by the Rectorate and the Senate) is the only legal entity and the faculties with its scientific institutes are seen as integrated units within the university. This transfer of powers has sparked a series of organizational changes at the faculty level resulting in a centralization of powers there too, mainly to the Dean and the Dean's Board.

At the Faculty of Agriculture and Food in Skopje (FAF) 12 departments were merged into 6 institutes. The partner responsible for this cooperation in Skopje, the Department of Agricultural Economics and Organization (DAEO) is thus now known under the name the Institute of Agricultural Economics. IAE in turn is divided in two sub departments, one for Agricultural Economics and one for Agribusiness but they share the responsibility for the study programmes of IAE.

These changes have affected the project in two ways. Firstly, the introduction of the three-cycle based higher education system has made it possible to begin the reforming the educational programmes according to the Bologna-principles, a task that was postponed several times with implications for the activities of the project. The Bologna-principles implies a division of the European higher education in three levels: the three years long undergraduate level (BSc), the two year long graduate level (MSc), and the three or four year long postgraduate level (PhD). Secondly, the transformation of the University into the only legal entity and the subsequent loss of independence for its faculties and scientific institutes has not only induced a demanding reorganization but has also implied a set of administrative complications and unforeseen obstacles in the implementation of the project.

The implementation of the Bologna-principles is a development very much welcomed by the project. At least at FAF, however, the implementation was slow. The new BSc, MSc, and PhD programmes needed to receive new accreditations which implied new curricula. Both the new BSc-programmes and the new MSc-programmes at FAF received their accreditation in June 2010. Fortunately, the International double degree master planned for BICA obtained its accreditation already in 2009 and could receive its first groups of students in the fall of 2009.

A negative result of the reorganization of the University and centralisation into one legal entity was that all faculties had their bank accounts seized during almost four months in 2009 since the faculties lost their legal status before the establishment of a legal person for the University as a whole. During these months neither salaries nor bills were paid. Until the problem was solved and the block was lifted, the project staff in Skopje could not access the project funds. The reorganization gave rise to new circumstances also at the governmental level in that the funding of higher education became the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Finance. This new order has created substantial problems for the project management in Skopje since the Ministry of Finance has decided to gather all international funds aimed at higher education in one pot requiring all recipients to get their budget approved and to make a formal request for money they already have been granted by the international donor. This has turned out to be a slow and strenuous process that does not guarantee full and timely access to the project funds which in turn has affected the project management and the activities negatively.

In 2010 the project representatives asked for assistance from the Swedish Agency for International Cooperation to try to establish contacts with the governmental institutions and thus to try to solve the problem. Several meetings were held with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and the Sector for European Affairs, where the project is registered. The meetings were fruitful in one way; but unfortunately, nothing could be done until the end of 2010 since there was no possibility to rebalancing the state budget. Our problem will be considered and overcome during 2011.

In general, higher education in Macedonia has been subject to various direct cuts in public funding as well as changes in funding formulae and pressures to seek alternative sources of funding. Public funds for research and development (R&D) are low and amount to only a fraction of the average spending in the EU. This reality is confirmed and lamented by the Macedonian partner.

EU-candidacy

Although Macedonia still is awaiting a starting date for their accession negotiations, the decision of the EU Commission in October 2009 to recommend the opening of such negotiations with Macedonia was a milestone of great importance in Macedonia's path towards EU-membership. According to the EU Commission, Macedonia has made convincing progress and sufficiently fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. The name dispute with Greece remains to be resolved but there is at least a real prospect of accession negotiations. As a consequence the Swedish Government has decided to phase out the Swedish development support to Macedonia by 2012.

Target groups

The project has three target groups. First, in the short run, the target group is the IAE at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food in Skopje. In the medium run the target group comprises the MAFWE, farmers as well as consumers in Macedonia. Lastly, in the long run the final target group is the whole agricultural sector in Macedonia which will, hopefully, gain from the achievements of the outcome of the project.

The short run target group of staff and students at IAE has considerably improved their competence and experience in economic analysis of the agricultural sector, this include management, policy, production, and marketing. The language barrier has put limitations on the size of the group that has benefitted directly, but the modernized curricula and course material have eventually passed on the improvements to the non-English speaking staff and students.

The research collaborations have among other things also resulted in several workshops and trainings where staff from MAFWE and NEA have participated. The recurring trainings for staff from NEA has especially been fruitful in disseminating research findings to farmers, as well as improve farm statistics. In addition, the research collaboration with MAASP have benefitted farmers in the form of best-practice protocols on farm management. However, there is room for improvement in passing on the strengthened capacity to consumers. The activities aimed at this group have for differing reasons not reached its target. Unfortunately, it is doubtful that the project will manage the task during the phasing out period due to the limit time frame, instead the most likely outcome is that the staff at IAE will reach this group at a later stage.

The long run perspective looks promising. The improved education and research capacity at IAE, will translate into advisors, managers and government personell with a highly relevant education in agricultural economics. This development may influence the outcome of agricultural production, marketing and policy formulation which will eventually strengthen the whole agricultural sector to reach its full potential.

External cooperation

During the second project phase, the project has developed great cooperation with the other Sida projects in the agricultural sector. The cooperation is mostly in the area of research, thus offering the possibility for the projects to suggest research topic relevant for their scope of operation. In 2009, both MAASP and SFARM were offered the possibility to propose research topics for the master theses of the Macedonian students in Uppsala. The list of suggested topics was offered for the students who graduated in 2010 as well. From the list of suggested topics, the students together with their supervisors choose one of them, titled as “The influence of the agricultural products world price increasing over the supply and the prices of the Macedonian agricultural production”. The research was developed, and the master thesis prepared and submitted to the counterpart for their research needs.

A PhD-student from UniCoop was also involved in MAASP's effort to prepare best-practice protocols for farmers. The PhD-student worked with the part on farm management.

The cooperation with the Sida projects, but also with the governmental institutions dealing in the agricultural sector was complemented with trainings offered for the advisors and for project staff. Two workshops were organised where participants were representatives from the National Extension Agency (NEA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), as well as the students from FAF. The farm business plan developed as part of the project research activity as well as the results from the FACEPA projects, were presented.

Considering that the collaboration with other Sida funded projects as well as with other stakeholders is from great benefit, the university cooperation project will continue offering the possibility for organising different trainings and seminars on their demand, using the institutes expertise and research experience in certain areas.

Progress in Project Implementation

a. Project objective 1: Improved Capacity

“Improved capacity at the Institute of Agricultural Economics for higher education, research and policy analysis in agriculture economics.”

Capacity building at the Institute of Agricultural Economics has been the main objective of the project from its beginning. Therefore most of the project activities have been directed towards accomplishment of this objective.

Although hard to measure and quantify, the project activities such as teachers' exchanges within the international double degree programme, development of compendiums as additional teaching material, staff development and research cooperation as well as the MSc- and PhD-scholarships have significantly improved the capacity of the Institute of Agricultural Economics. A short summary of the activities follows below with further details presented in appendices. The quantifiable results are also summarized in Appendix 1.

Teacher exchange

The teachers exchange, which have given teachers from Macedonia the possibility to attend lectures at SLU in Sweden and teachers from Sweden the opportunity to lecture in Macedonia, has inspired both teachers and students in Macedonia to develop their teaching and learning methods and materials. Considering that the Macedonian students are enabled to improve their knowledge, as well as to expand their views in specific areas through the lectures given by the Swedish teachers, this kind of activities are one of the most positively evaluated activities supported by the cooperation project. See Appendix 2 for a complete list of visits.

At the same time, the teacher exchange activities are very useful for improving and initiating other aspects from the cooperation with DE. For instance, a guest lecture that was organised at IAE was also used to discuss a continuation in the cooperation research project Agriwise Macedonia. In addition, Macedonian visits to SLU were also used for developing new research cooperations.

Curriculum development

According to the provisions from the new Law on Higher Education, the reforms in the current BSc- and MSc-programmes and the introduction of PhD-studies at all departments at FASF took place during the reporting period. In order to have a competitive BSc programme, the project initiated discussions with the Swedish teachers

and the Director of studies at SLU who provided great advices to the new programme, which is already running. On the other hand, the reforms of the MSc programme were organised by the IAE itself, relying on the experience gained with the BSc and using the programme available for the international double degree master that is financed by the project. This meant that the courses at the international programme were adapted to the Macedonian needs and offered to the new MSc students.

The reform in the PhD programme is still in progress and mostly refers to preparation and accreditation of the programme. For FAF it should be one study programme with several modules because of the different departments. This is still in debate process, so therefore the final study programme and modules are still not accredited.

Study visit and Swedish Day

As part of the effort to broaden the experience of the undergraduate students at IAE and award the best fourth-year students who had shown an interest in international studies; seven undergraduates took part in a one week study visit to SLU. The visit included listening in on regular MSc-lectures, visits to a dairy farm and the Swedish Federation of Farmers, as well as information on study options and learning resources at SLU. The visit ended with a written assignment. This study visit was the fourth¹ and final to be organized with the aim to motivate IAE students to complete their BSc-degree and see the possibilities with continuing at the master level.

The study visits were replaced with a Swedish Day at IAE, where study options and learning resources at SLU were presented as well as the experience of past and current Macedonian MSc-students. These SLU-students were also responsible for organizing the events, which was appreciated by the undergraduates at IAE.

Compendiums

Through the cooperation process with DE, the Macedonian teachers realized that there was a need for improving the course materials at the undergraduate level. Therefore, the project offered a possibility for development of new course material, compendiums, that was based on the corresponding Swedish material. Besides translating and adapting the Swedish compendiums, a workshop was organised. The main objective of the workshop was to show how to find the best way of teaching in order to get the best outcome from the students' side. In addition to understanding the students' way of learning, one part of the workshop was focused on preparing compendiums. The workshop was found very useful by all participants

¹ The three previous study visits took place in 2004, 2005 and 2007.

and evaluated it very positively. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a list of workshop participants and a complete list of developed compendiums.

MSc-scholarship students

In addition to the interaction between teachers, the influx of ideas from the MSc-students that graduated during the period have continued to strengthen and develop the capacity for higher education at the Institute. As part of their thesis work, which takes place in Macedonia, they have shared their new-gained knowledge with their Macedonian supervisors and also assisted in undergraduate courses, e.g. with tutorials. Between 2008 and spring 2011, six students have graduated and it is clear that the assumption is still valid that students taking part in capacity development, in one way or the other are retained in the field of policy formulation and economic analysis in Macedonia. A list of graduated MSc-students, their thesis topics and current employment is found in Appendix 4.

PhD-scholarship students

Three of the graduated students² have subsequently received a PhD-scholarship at SLU in the framework of the project and a fourth has started with PhD-studies in 2010 at IAE in Skopje and has been employed as a teaching assistant. All PhD-students are presented in Appendix 5 with the topics of their dissertation.

The two students who started already in 2007 have provided 80%-seminars. This kind of seminar is regular practice and is organised to evaluate the plans and the progress of the candidates. Noteworthy is that one of the students has one article submitted for review in an international scientific journal and has also presented papers and posters at several international conferences and workshops, while the other has attended two full time courses at the University of Manchester and the University of Essex in Colchester in England. The third student has so far focused on courses and will start with the research in the autumn of 2011.

Research collaboration

The ongoing research cooperation between the Institute and the department in Sweden is continuously improving the capacity for research and policy analysis. For example, the long-running sector study has been a good way to carefully transfer knowledge on how an analytical, as apposed to synthetic, text is developed. Other examples are the research on cost of production which has included several training workshops throughout Europe, and

² Two of the PhD-students received their MSc-degree in 2006, thus before the reporting period.

Agriwise Macedonia that has engaged several master students during their thesis work. See Appendix 6 for a list of research papers and reports financed by the project.

The sectoral study of Macedonian agriculture that was initiated in 2006 were the single largest collaboration of the reporting period. The three-part study involved several teachers from both departments as well as a professor from the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The content of the study has been the focus of several workshops and seminars, in addition to a presentation for representatives from MAFWE and the State Statistical Office. The final version of the study is expected to be published in the second half of 2011, but one part of the study was published in 2009 as an independent report titled "*Support to Agriculture in FYR Macedonia: An Exploratory Assessment (1999-2004)*". The latter contains the results from the work on measuring the financial support to Macedonian agriculture.

The research project aiming at estimating costs of production for Macedonian agriculture using Farm accounting data has been a three-year collaboration starting in 2008. The project has followed and benefitted from the project titled Farm Accountancy Cost Estimation and Policy Analysis of European Agriculture (FACEPA), coordinated by Professor Yves Surry (SLU) and funded under the FP7 research program of the EU.

The plan has been to develop farm-representative models based on positive mathematical programming (PMP) to study farm performance and to conduct policy analysis. The research project has resulted in a report titled "*Economic and technical analysis of Macedonian farms based on farm accountancy data*" with the objective to provide an overview, analysis and discussion of the situation and performance of Macedonian farms, based on a sample from the Farm Monitoring System (FMS). The report compare data per region, farm type and farm size for 2005-2009 with data from 2001. Besides the report the results from the study have been disseminated to the NEA advisors by organising a workshop.

A third research project has been the adaptation and translation of the Swedish farm business plan named Agriwise to Macedonian conditions. It has received the name Agriwise Macedonia and includes gross margin budgets for thirteen different enterprises, of which six has been developed by Macedonian master students at SLU as part of their theses. The model has been tested on a large dairy farm with the result presented in the report "*A model for farm business planning Agriwise Macedonia-a case of a cow farm.*" Several workshops for using the software has been organised for advisors from NEA; in addition, the software has been used in the course Financial Management to provide the students with hands-on experience of a management tool and increase the

understanding of how different decisions on inputs and outputs affect the farm's production and financial result.

A fourth collaboration was initiated during the first year of the reporting period with the aim to identify the grounds for perceived added value in the marketing of local food products in Macedonia and in Sweden. The research used the qualitative method of case studies and for the empirical studies, data from Gotland in Sweden and successful Macedonian producers was collected through personal interviews with the companies. Data for Sweden Products were chosen from small-sized or medium-sized privately owned companies, positioned on the private markets, which had developed some new specific products in their assortment which presents "added value" products. A literature review on the topic was also compiled. Unfortunately, due to the conflicting schedules of the Macedonian and Swedish researchers, the collaboration was later abandoned before the paper could be finished.

Finally, a new research proposal for analysing the Macedonian farmers' attitude toward EU accession has been developed during the spring 2011. The main objective is to analyze the Macedonian farmers' expectation of an EU accession in terms of the market competitiveness, price development and policy application. This collaboration will continue into the final phase of the project.

The research results, as well as some of the MSc-theses, have been presented and discussed at two workshops organized in Uppsala, Sweden in 2008 and in Ohrid, Macedonia in 2009. In both workshops many researchers from both departments participated, as well as representatives for Sida and SFARM. Besides research, in the second day of the workshops discussions regarding curriculum development and the organization of Bica were also included.

Staff development

The capacity building process would not be complete if there are no staff development activities. These kinds of activities include improvement of the language skills as well as increasing the participation in international conferences. The project has financed individual English language courses for five teachers at IAE with the aim that they should be able to teach and present research in English. Moreover, sixteen junior teaching staff from FAF have attended a regular English course and together with the junior staff members at IAE took the much appreciated academic writing course organized in 2009.

The participation in international conferences was found very useful, especially for learning new research methods as well as for establishing new contacts and expanding the teachers' network. Four Macedonian

professors participated in conferences in Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and Bulgaria where they presented several papers.

Facility upgrading

The support to IAE's facilities are designed to complement the activities for capacity building. The computer lab established during the first phase, has continued to be utilized as part of the teaching as well as by students writing individual work or searching for information on the internet. As mentioned earlier, the lab has also been used for trainings with the business planning software Agriwise Macedonia, which was organized for advisors from NEA.

Subscriptions for a selection of scientific journals in the field of agricultural economics and business were bought for the institutes reference library, see Appendix 7 for a list of the titles. These journals have been available both as hardcopies and on-line at the computer lab and for the staff. In addition, it was considered very important that access to the journal database JSTOR³ could finally be arranged, after a long period of administrative delays from the provider. Moreover, additional books have been purchased for the reference library at the institute to complement the ones bought during the first phase of the project.

Faculty development

During the second project phase, the project team realised that it would be beneficial for all project target groups if the activities for capacity building were extended to a larger circle of teachers and researchers at FAF, not only at IAE. Therefore activities referring to the overall benefit of FAF were introduced, most specifically the abovementioned language and writing courses for junior staff members.

In addition, in order to attract more students to the bachelor programme and therefor increase the interest for studying agriculture, the project supported a promotion of the faculty by preparing advertising material for high-school students. Noteworthy is that in a situation of increasing competition due to the opening of a lot of private universities as well as new state university in Stip, the number of students enrolled at FAF is significantly increasing from year to year as a result of its good promotion.

FAF development activities were supplemented with investments in the faculty infrastructure. Worth to mention is the development of the library into a modern learning centre. The library development activities were divided in

³ JSTOR offers access to discipline specific collections of journals covering decades of scientific articles.

two phases. During the reporting period the development of the librarians' skills as well as the development of the electronic library were of highest importance. The renovation of the library will take place in the phasing out period. The project also supported the improvement of the computer network at the whole faculty, while the plan to introduce a computerized accounting system, which would allow integrating projects' accounting with the faculty's, was abandoned due to lack of funding.

b. Project objective 2: BICA

“Establishment of an independent institute in agricultural economics with graduate education and research of internationally recognizable quality.”

The transformations within the education system towards Bologna principles drove the incentive to look beyond the first project objective. Accordingly, the aim was to establish an independent centre for education and research under the framework of UKIM. However, considering that the formal status of centers at UKIM is still not resolved, the activities towards fulfillment of the prime objective were initiated under revised objectives, which are:

1. To enhance the MSc program at IAE by establishing an international double-degree master in agricultural economics and business administration at FASF, and
2. To improve the research capacity at IAE by establishing a research centre (BICA).

International Master in Agribusiness

Initiation phase and common issues for both study generations

The International double degree master in Agribusiness, between UKIM and SLU, has been accredited at FASF in February 2009 by the Accreditation Committee of Macedonia. The international master was inaugurated in September 2009. The curriculum for the program has been undertaken and adapted from the already existing master at DE. It includes a workload of 120 ECTS divided into two academic years, or four study semesters, see Appendix 8 for the course schedule and teaching staff. The responsibility for the courses has been transferred from the Swedish to Macedonian teachers over a three-year period. The teaching obligation between Macedonian and Swedish teachers has been distributed according to the

following model: Step 1: 50/50 and step 2: 65/35 (a step corresponds to courses given in the same study generation). Grades are jointly decided between teachers using a conversion table enclosed in Appendix 9. Upon completion of the study programme, the graduate students receive two Master of Science diplomas, one from each university, and a diploma supplement.

An Agreement on the dual Master of Science degree has been signed by the rectors at both universities during April - June 2011. It is valid for the two generations.

The quality of the studies has been assured by the regular evaluation systems at UKIM and SLU. After each course, students perform a course evaluation. The results revealed students' satisfaction with the curriculum and the new learning techniques, and students' dissatisfaction with the too engaging program considering that they are also full-time employed. An evaluation from teachers' perspective was provided as well. The results revealed that teachers were generally satisfied from the joint cooperation and the working environment. Teachers also reproached that the program was too engaging for them considering the double-shift engagement.

In terms of venues, a classroom and two offices for external teachers were renovated and supplemented with modern teaching equipment. Course books were provided as well. The computer lab that was previously installed by the project was also utilized for teaching purposes.

Step one: The first study generation

The first study generation commenced the first semester in October 2009. Twelve students officially enrolled the program. A list of students is enclosed in Appendix 10. After finishing the three course semesters, students applied for the thesis semester at SLU which is a condition for obtaining a diploma from SLU. Ten of the students succeeded to enroll the thesis course at SLU, while the remaining two did not succeed to fulfill the English prerequisite. The plan for these students is to take the thesis course along with the second study generation if they succeed to fulfill the English prerequisite. The other students are currently working on their master theses. The thesis topics were jointly decided between students and supervisors (each student was awarded two supervisors - one from IAE and one from SLU). The master thesis preparation and seminar shall be in accordance with both UKIM's and SLU's principles.

Step two: The second study generation

The second generation of students started the first semester in October 2010. Twelve students submitted

application at FASF, but only six students remained; two did not fulfill the study prerequisites and four students quitted from the program. A list of students is enclosed in the appendix. The third semester will start in October 2011 for these students.

The transfer of experience and knowledge

The prime objective in regard to education was to enhance the MSc program at IAE and to create a well educated youth. The following achievements were realized:

- A new competitive study program was established according with the EU study requirements and standards.
- The IAE's staffs have improved their teaching skills throughout the involvement in the program, and accordingly, new learning skills were transferred to Macedonian students.
- Students are offered a high-quality master program which enables them to improve their knowledge and professional skills.
- Study literature has been improved at IAE.

Institutional and financial sustainability

The accreditation for the international master has been awarded for five years. In order to keep the double degree character, the project is working on establishing a long-term agreement between universities, which shall provide students a possibility to enrol the fourth semester at SLU. Supervision from SLU's teachers is considered to be provided in distance.

Financial sustainability, at the other side, is questionable. Considering that from 2011, Sweden has introduced a tuition fee for all university students from non-EU-countries, the thesis course becomes very costly. After Sida's withdrawal, the financial responsibility shall be held by the students themselves. However, both institutions shall share information with students about possible scholarships. Possibilities to include SLU's teachers for the course semesters shall be further investigated. The project, along with the support from Sida Skopje, will try to apply for other European funds in order to maintain the project activities including the double-degree master.

Research centre

The prime idea was that the research centre shall be established as an independent centre under UKIM. Considering that the formal status of centers at UKIM is still not resolved, other alternatives were looked into, among

which, to create the centre as a private entity or as an association. The alternatives were presented at the annual review meeting in 2010. Following Sida's recommendations, the strategic plan is to establish BICA as a research centre under UKIM as soon as the university Rulebook for centers is ready.

c. Project objective 3: Policy Analysis

“Improved governmental staff and other actors' in the industry capacity to undertake policy formulation and economic analysis of issues of strategic importance for the agricultural sector.”

The research activities supported by the cooperation project are from highest importance for both institute's capacity development but also for the capacity development of the other actors in the agricultural sector. All research projects have indirect contribution towards policy formulation and economic analysis of issues from strategic importance.

The sectoral study of Macedonian agriculture that was finalized in 2010 and is expected to be published in 2011 represents a basis for policy making, comprising a ten-year period and giving extensive macroeconomic analysis and sector overview. Beside the sectoral study, the Agriwise Macedonia research also contributes for the development of the stakeholders' capacity. It is another tool that will facilitate policy formulation and economic analysis of agricultural issues. The Swedish farm business plan was adapted to Macedonian conditions. It was presented on a workshop intended for building the capacity of the NEA advisors and the representatives from farmers' organisations. The researchers will continue to work on finding ways for making the programme available to the advisors in their daily operations with the farms.

Additionally, the research regarding estimating costs of production also contributes for policy analysis and improvement of the governmental staff capacity. The report on economic and technical analysis of Macedonian farms based on farm accountancy data for the period 2005-2009 will be also presented to the stakeholders and will serve for further policy analysis and evaluation. The last but not least research activity will also contribute to the improvement of the stakeholders' capacity. The final report of the research regarding determining the Macedonian farmers' expectations from the EU accession could also contribute towards agricultural policy analysis.

Beside the abovementioned, the fact that the students that have been taking part in capacity development as part of the project, in one way or another have been retained in

the field of policy formulation and economic analysis in Macedonia is also contributing to the fulfilment of this goal.

Conclusively, taking into account that the University is state institution, as well as that the IAE staff could contribute to the policy formulation with its expertise, the development of the IAE capacity can be considered as development of institutions' capacity for policy formulation and economic analysis of strategic issues. It can be proofed by inviting representatives from IAE to participate in several meetings as well as in two national FADN conferences organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy.

Project work with basic values

This project has committed itself to a set of core values and will thus in all its activities strive for democracy, gender equality, respect for sexual orientation and disability, respect for minorities, the environment, and no corruption. Given the nature of the project as a cooperation between two universities on education, research and policy analysis the main focus of this work has been on equality of opportunity, student influence and social and ethnic diversity at the higher education institutions.

The differences in how students in Sweden and in Macedonia can influence their education have been a topic in study visits, teachers exchange and in the preparations for the international double master degree.

Discrimination against someone on the grounds of gender, ethnic belonging, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disability is a problem in many societies. The different ethnic groups in Macedonia to a large extent carry on their lives separated from each other. While the second largest minority, the Albanians have got a stronger position with the Ohrid accord from 2001 other minorities have fallen behind. The composition of the IAE reflects this reality. Almost all students and personnel at IAE come from the majority group. Out of all minorities, the Roma is probably the most underrepresented group at IAE. Given this reality, how to improve the accessibility of higher education for minorities has been a topic for continuous discussions. As a result the international master programme has been promoted both in Macedonian and in Albanian.

Appendix 1: Table with summarized results

Project output	Goal	Results
Project Output/Result 1:	Improved BSc, MSc, and PhD	
1.1 Curriculum Development	Strengthened curriculum that is prepared for the Bologna-model, making the BSc- and MSc-programmes in agricultural economics more competitive on the labour market and among students.	
1.1.1. BSc-level	1.1.1.1. Thirteen guest lectures by Swedish teachers 1.1.1.2. Eight visiting Macedonian teachers at SLU 1.1.1.3. Nine new teaching material developed in Macedonian 1.1.1.4. Survey of the educational demands in the labour market. 1.1.1.5. BSc-programmes prepared according to the Bologna principles. 1.1.1.6. Preparation of 1 leaflet as advertising material for promotion of FAF's BSc-programmes to high school students.	1.1.1.1 Eleven guest lectures are provided. 1.1.1.2 Five Macedonian teachers visited DE. 1.1.1.3 Four compendiums are developed. 1.1.1.4 One labour market study is prepared. 1.1.1.5 The BSc programme is revised and prepared according Bologna principles. 1.1.1.6 An advertising leaflet was prepared.
1.1.2. MSc-level	1.1.2.1. MSc-programmes prepared according to the Bologna principles.	1.1.2.1 One new master programme is developed according the international double degree programme
1.1.3. PhD-level	1.1.3.1. PhD-programme prepared according to the Bologna principles	1.1.3.1 The reforms for developing PhD programme are still in progress at the university level. The PhD programme should be developed until end of 2011 or beginning of 2012.
1.1.4. General	1.1.4.1. An analysis of the competence areas needed for IAE's (former DAEO) operations in terms of courses offered and research areas of importance for the agricultural sector, as well as an analysis of the current competence areas covered. 1.1.4.2. An action plan developed to meet the competence needs identified in the analysis.	1.1.4.1 An analysis of the competence area has not been done. 1.1.4.2 Considering the 1.1.4.1, the action plan was not developed.
1.2 Study visit	Attract students to the MSc-programme at SLU as well as increase the undergraduate students' interest	

		to finish their BSc-degree at IAE	
1.2.1	Study visit to SLU	1.2.1. Seven undergraduate students visit SLU's department of economics	1.2.1. Seven students participated in a study visit organised in 2008.
1.2.2	Swedish Day	1.2.2. Organize two "Swedish Day" at IAE (former DAEO) with at least 40 students attending	1.2.2. One Swedish day was organised in 2009.
1.3	Language courses	English skills improved for students to allow participation in an international academic environment.	
1.3.1	Regular course	1.3.1. 90 students will improve their skills with at least two levels according to the scale for language proficiency used by the Council of Europe	1.3.1. 77 students took the regular courses.
1.3.2	IELTS course/test	1.3.2. Five students passing the IELTS test	1.3.2. Seven students passed the IELTS test.
1.4	MSc-scholarship	Enhance the MSc-graduates' competitiveness on the labour market as well as to increase the number of competent persons eligible to work at the IAE/DAEO or other qualified positions in Macedonia, especially in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the programme aims at preparing the students for PhD-studies	
		1.4.1. Ten students admitted to one of the MSc-programmes at SLU.	1.4.1. Eight students admitted to the MSc programme at SLU.
		1.4.2. Seven MSc-theses in agricultural economics defended by Macedonian students at SLU	1.4.2. Six MSc theses defended until June 2011.
1.5	Centre	Improved capacity among stakeholders in management, financial or economic analysis and/or policy formulation in the agricultural sector	
		1.5.1. An international MSc-programme with two majors (later revised to one major)	1.5.1. International master degree programme in Agribusiness is developed at IAE.
		1.5.2. 45 students enrolled in the programme (later revised to 20 students due to delays in establishment)	1.5.2. 18 students enrolled in the programme.
		1.5.3. Web page for the centre developed and continuously updated.	1.5.3. One web page is developed (www.bica.mk)
1.6	PhD-scholarship	Improved knowledge in economic analysis of the agricultural sector with respect to trade, marketing, production, and/or processing; as well as enrich the Macedonian scientific tradition in agricultural economics, thus making the PhDs more competitive on the labour market.	
1.6.1	"Old" students	1.6.1.1. The two students should have passed 90% of course credits.	1.6.1.1. 100% of the course credits are passed.
		1.6.1.2. The two students should have completed 25% of research/papers.	1.6.1.2. The two students completed 80% seminars.
1.6.2	"New" student	1.6.2.1. The new student should have passed 100% of preparatory courses (on MSc-level) and	1.6.2.1. 100% of the preparatory courses on MSc level are passed and more than 40% of

	40% of PhD-courses.	the PhD courses are passed.
Project Output/Result 2: Improved research programme		
2.1 Research Cooperation	Strengthening the Macedonian expertise on sector analysis and modelling, while at the same time increasing the Swedish researchers' experience of international cooperation and knowledge of e.g. the specific problems facing an economy in transition.	
	2.1.1. Four research papers co-written by Macedonian and Swedish researchers.	2.1.1. Three research papers are developed. The fourth one is in progress.
	2.1.2. A cost-of-production model developed and tested with Macedonian FADN data.	2.1.2. The cost of production model is developed with the FADN data.
	2.1.3. Two workshops organized for presenting research results.	2.1.3. Two workshops for presenting research results were organised.
	2.1.4. A FP7 research application submitted to EU's research programme.	2.1.4. The FP7 research application was not submitted, otherwise a workshop for preparing FP7 research application will be organised.
2.2 Advisory system	Strengthen the communication channel between researchers, advisors and farmers; thus improving the exchange of experiences, demands and data for the benefit of farm development and research	
2.2.1 Agriwise Macedonia	2.2.1.1. Agriwise Macedonia business plan software developed	2.2.1.1. The Agriwise Macedonia software is developed.
	2.2.1.2. Gross margin budgets for 10 different enterprises developed	2.2.1.2. Gross margin budgets for 10 enterprises are developed.
2.2.2 Trainings/workshops	2.2.2.1. Six trainings for farm advisors organized	2.2.2.1. Three trainings for farm advisors are organised.
Project Output/Result 3: Improved FAF and IAE/DAEO		
3.1 Language courses	English skills strengthened for staff to allow participation in an international academic environment	
	3.1.1. Five teachers at IAE able to teach in English	3.1.1. Five teachers took individual language courses.
	3.1.2. 20 teaching assistants at FAF able to participate in international research and educational programmes, i.e. reached the C1-level according to the scale of the Council of Europe	3.1.2. 16 teaching assistants took language courses.
3.2 Academic writing course	Academic writing skills in English improved for FAF staff to allow participation in different international research and scientific projects.	
	3.2.1. 20 teaching assistants at FAF should have	3.2.1. 20 teaching assistants passed the academic

		passed course	writing course.
3.3	Statistical software course	Improved computer skills to provide access to common research tools.	
		3.3.1. Six staff members able to use one statistical software for research purposes	3.3.1. Six staff members took a course in STATA statistical software, and one staff member took a course in GAMS.
3.4	Courses for librarians	The competence of the FAF librarians strengthened.	
		3.4.1. Four courses organized to improve the librarians' skills and competences.	3.4.1. Four courses for improving the librarian skills were organised.
Project Output/Result 4:		Improved facilities for IAE/DAEO	
4.1	Computer lab	Strengthen the students' access to current research results and modern means of education.	
		4.1.1. Maintenance and operation of 21 computers in the computer lab.	4.1.1. 21 computers are in use.
		4.1.2. One STATA and one GAMS licenses purchased.	4.1.2. One STATA and one GAMS license are purchased.
		4.1.3. Project website developed and operational	4.1.3. The project website was developed but because of technical problems was not operational.
		4.1.4. Four trainings/workshops for farm advisors organized by IAE at the computer lab	4.1.4. Three trainings were organised in the computer lab.
		4.1.5. FAF's network operational	4.1.5. FAF's network is improved and operational.
		4.1.6. Computer-based accounting system in operation, which integrates all activities of FAF (incl. projects)	4.1.6. The computer based accounting system was not developed.
4.2	Literature and Journals	Improve access to current research results and modern theories in agricultural economics.	
		4.2.1. Ten new books on agricultural economics or related topics	4.2.1. Eleven relevant text books are purchased.
		4.2.2. Five annual subscriptions on-line science journals in agricultural economics	4.2.2. Five annual online subscriptions are available.
		4.2.3. Continuous access the journal database JSTOR	4.2.3. Access on JSTOR provided.
		4.2.4. Maintain access to reference library for students and staff at IAE.	4.2.4. The IAE library is available for the students and the staff.
4.3	FAF library development	Develop the FAF library into a learning and resource centre to create a stimulating place of study for the students and to support the teaching/research staff in their academic work.	
		4.3.1. A reference group established providing suggestions for the library development	4.3.1. Reference group of six members is established.

4.3.2. Weed out old journals and books to make room for new.	4.3.2. All old journals and textbooks are removed from the library.
4.3.3. Computerized catalogue of the books and journals in the library operational	4.3.3. The computerising of all books is permanently in progress.
4.3.4. Develop an e-library with starting access to the five journals mentioned in 4.2.2, JSTOR, and free journals and databases in the field of agriculture, biology and economics.	4.3.4. System for the e-library is purchased.
4.3.5. Library renovated and organized/equipped as an open access library with learning resources.	4.3.5. The renovation will take place in second half of 2011.

Appendix 2: Teacher exchange

Macedonian visits to SLU

Course	Year	Name
International Trade and Agricultural Markets	2008	Nenad Georgiev
Production Economics	2008	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska
Financial Accounting	2009	Dragan Gjosevski
Applied Production Economics	2010	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska
Production Economics	2010	Ana Kotevska

Swedish visits to IAE

Course	Year	Name
Cooperatives	2008	Jerker Nilsson
Financial Management	2008	Bo Öhlmer and Thord Karlsson
Mathematical Statistical Methods	2008	Monica Campos
Agribusiness Management	2008	Bo Öhlmer
Entrepreneurship	2008	Börje Svensson
Mathematical Statistical Methods	2009	Monica Campos
Financial Management	2009	Bo Öhlmer and Thord Karlsson
Business Analysis	2010	Bo Öhlmer and Thord Karlsson

Appendix 3: Compendiums

Participants in workshop held at IAE by Natalie Jellinek (SLU)

Name	Occupation/Affiliation
Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska	Docent
Ana Kotevska	Docent
Ana Simonovska	Teaching Assistant
Marina Petrovska	Project Assistant
Marina Nacka	Teaching Assistant
Zlatko Chanevski	Teaching Assistant
Katerina Bandzo	Teaching Assistant
Margarita Dimovska	Teaching Assistant
Romina Kabranova	Teaching Assistant
Dimitar Nakov	Teaching Assistant
Biserkag Tokovska Stevcevska	Librarian
Zorica Velkova	Librarian
Emelj Tuna	PhD student
Gordana Manevska Tasevska	PhD student
Ingrid Naeslund	Project representative SLU

Compendiums

Course	Year	Teacher
Cooperatives	2009	Jovan Azderski
Business Analysis	2009	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska
Financial Management	2009	Dragan Gjosevski and Ana Simonovska
Accounting	In progress	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska and Ivana Janeska Stamenkovska

Appendix 4: Graduated MSc-students

Name	Year	Thesis subject	Position/Employer
Ana Simonovska	2008	Macedonian dairy farmers and their choice of buyers	Teaching Assistant/FASF
Blagoja Tosevski	2008	Farm business planning model in the Republic of Macedonia	Volunteering at the Paying Agency
Jordan Hristov	2009	Assesment of the high fragmented land impact over the productivity and profitability of the farms	PhD student at SLU
Elena Simonovska	2009	Farm business planning model in the Republic of Macedonia	Paying Agency
Jasmina Milevska	2010	Sheep enterprise budgets-beneficial planning tools within Agriwise Macedonia	Paying Agency
Blaze Jordanov	2010	The influence of the agricultural products world price increasing over the supply and the prices of the Macedonian agricultural production	Private Company

Appendix 5: PhD-students

Name	Start year	Expected defence	Subject of dissertation
Gordana Manevska Tasevska	2007	2011	Efficiency analysis of the commercial grape-growing family farms in the Tikvesh vineyard district – Efficiency coefficients and determinants mapping
Emelj Tuna	2007	2012	The modernization of the dairy industry in FYROM - Organization, Networks and Transaction Costs
Jordan Hristov	2010	2013	Using and assessing economic instruments for agriculture in integrated water policy: the case of Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia
Ivana Janeska (Mac. proj.coordinator) stud. at IAE	2011	2014	Multicriteria decision making model for the agricultural households in Republic of Macedonia
Tina Ericson (Sw. proj.leader)	2003	2013	Economic modeling of agrifood systems in transition economies: The case of Macedonia

Appendix 6: Research papers and reports

Title	Authors	Subject	Year
A model for farm business planning Agriwise Macedonia-a case of a cow farm	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska, Dimitrievski Dragi, Bo Öhlmer and Thord Karlsson	Management	2008
Support to Agriculture in FYR Macedonia: An Explorative Assessment (1999-2004)	Tina Ericson, Erik Pelling, Yves Surry	Ag.policy	2009
Sector study – Macedonian agriculture in the period 1995-2007	Dimitrievski Dragi, Tina Ericson et al.	Ag. policy	In print
Agriwise Macedonia - A new decision support system for farm management in contrast to current practices	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska, Dimitrievski Dragi, Bo Ohlmer and Thord Karlsson	Management	2010
Economic and technical performance of Macedonian agriculture using FADN-type data	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska, Leida Sergio, Yves Surry, Valentina Ilievska, Hans Andersson and Dimitrievski Dragi	Management	2010
Economic and technical analysis of Macedonian farms based on farm accountancy data (report)	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska, Leida Sergio, Yves Surry, Hans Andersson and Dimitrievski Dragi	Management	2011
The productivity situation in Macedonian agriculture: Gainers and losers during the first decade of the 21st century	Aleksandra Martinovska Stojceska and Yves Surry	Management	2011
Macedonian farmers attitudes towards EU accession	Ana Kotevska and Bo Öhlmer	Management	In progress

Appendix 7: Journal subscriptions

Title	Issuer
European Review of Agricultural Economics (ERAЕ) Agricultural Economics	The Foundation for the ERAЕ The International Association of Agricultural Economists
International Farm Management	The International Farm Management Association
Rural Europe	Agra Informa
CAP Monitor ¹	Agra informa

¹ CAP Monitor is a reference and guide to the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU. The CAP Monitor bought during the first project phase was updated in 2008.

Appendix 8: Study schedule for 2011-2012

MASTER PROGRAMME International Master in Agribusiness

	Course	Number of ECTS	Semester Lectures load								Teaching staff	Institution
			I		II		III		IV			
			a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b		
1	Strategic Management	15									Helena Hansson, Bo Öhlmér & Dragi Dimitrievski Ana Kotevska	SLU, UKIM
2	Quantitative Finance – Theory and Applications	15									Luca Di Corato & Dragan Gjosevski Ana Simonovska	SLU, UKIM
3	Environmental and Social Responsibility Marketing	15									Cecilia Mark-Herbert & Nenad Georgiev, Elizabeta Angelova, Iva Jovevska, Aleksandar Jonchevski	SLU, UKIM
4	Production Economics	10									Hans Andersson & Ana Kotevska, Ivana Janeska-Stamenkovska	SLU, UKIM
5	Ethics	5									Kiril Temkov, Dragan Gjosevski	UKIM
6	Cooperatives and Agricultural Marketing	15									Karin Hakelius, Lena Westerlund Lind & Jovan Azderski, Nenad Georgiev, Emelj Tuna	SLU, UKIM
7	Financial Accounting	10									Lars Lönnstedt & Aleksandra Martonovska-Stojceska, Ivana Janeska-Stamenkovska	SLU, UKIM
8	Agricultural Policy and Trade	5									Yves Surry & Emil Erjavec & Dragi Dimitrievski Nenad Georgiev	SLU, UKIM, BF
9	Master Thesis Business Administration	30									Bo Öhlmér & Aleksandra Martonovska-Stojceska	SLU, UKIM

Semester schedule

Year 2	<i>Semester III: Fall 2011</i>		<i>Semester IV: Spring 2012</i>		
	IIIa	3 October 2011	11 December 2011	IVa	20 February 2012
IIIb	12 December 2011	19 February 2012	IVb	2 May 2012	9 July 2012

Institutions involved:

SLU Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Economics, Uppsala, Sweden

UKIM University Ss Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Agriculture and Food, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

BF Biotechnical Faculty, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Appendix 9: Grade system equivalency

ECTS Scale	UKIM equivalents	SLU equivalents
A	10	5
B	9	4
C	8	
D	7	3
E	6	
FX	5	U

Appendix 10: List of students at International MSc-program

First study generation			Second study generation	
N°	Name	Surname	Name	Surname
1	Aleksandar	Musalevski	Afrodita	Musliu
2	Aleksandar	Ivanovski	Kiraca	Apostolova
3	Bajdo	Bajdevski	Nikola	Manchev
4	Bojana	Burzevska	Sanja	Zivchevska
5	Daniela	Buzarovska	Zdravko	Trpkovski
6	Daniel	Gecoski	Zlatko	Chanevski
7	Marija	Nikolovska		
8	Marina	Petrovska		
9	Natasa	Ljubeckij		
10	Saso	Risteski		
11	Stojadin	Stojanovic		
12	Vladimir	Hristov		



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