

SEASN's 10th Anniversary Academy

Sofia, Bulgaria | 4th November 2025



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK



Welcome remarks

Pozdravne riječi



Igor Hrovatič

SEASN president

*Slovenian Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry (CAFS) - Head of
Advisory Development and Quality*

Predsednik SEASN-a

*Poljoprivredna i šumarska komora Slovenije (KGZS) – Vodja
razvoja i kvaliteta svetodavnih uslug*

Prof. Dr. Mladen Mladenov

*Director of the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) of
Bulgaria*

*Direktor Nacionalne poljoprivredne savjetodavne službe
(NAAS) Bugarske*





Dr. Lozana Vasileva

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food of Bulgaria

Zamenik ministra poljoprivrede i hrane Bugarske

Marko Vešligaj

Member of the European Parliament (S&D Group, Croatia)

Član Evropskog parlamenta (S&D grupa, Hrvatska)





Additional welcome remarks

Dodatne pozdravne reči

*Open floor for any additional greetings from the
audience.*

Otvoren prostor za dodatne pozdrave iz publike.

From founding to organization and activities

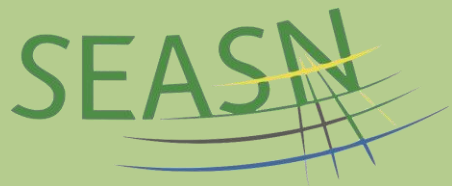
*Od osnivanja do
organizacije i
aktivnostima*



Milan Husnjak

First SEASN president

Prvi SEASN predsjednik



The beginnings and context of the establishment of the SEASN network

*Počeci i kontekst osnivanja SEASN
mreže*

Milan Husnjak

Mreža savjetodavnih službi jugoistočne Evrope (MSS-JE)

FAO / Balkan Context In Which The Initiative Appeared

FAO / Balkan kontekst u kojem se pojavila inicijativa

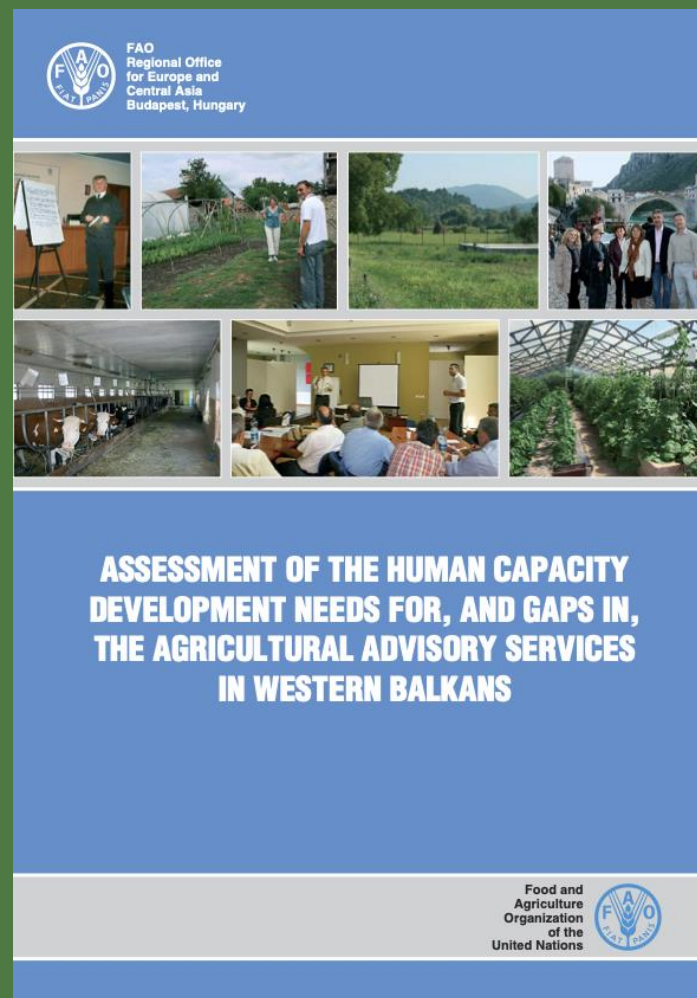
- In 2007, FAO initiated activities in Macedonia to foster cooperation among the countries of the war-torn former Yugoslavia.
- In 2011, FAO published the study:
 - “Assessment of the human capacity development needs for, and gaps in, the Agricultural Advisory Services in the Western Balkans,”
 - “Technical Support for Human Resources Development of Agricultural Advisory Services in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and UNMIK Kosovo,”
 - and “Recommendations for Human Capacity Development and Regional Networking.”
- *FAO je 2007. godine u Makedoniji pokrenuo aktivnosti radi uspostavljanja suradnje među državama ratom razorene bivše Jugoslavije.*
- *FAO je 2011. godine objavio studiju:*
 - *„Procjena potreba za razvojem ljudskih kapaciteta i praznina u savjetodavnim službama za poljoprivredu u Zapadnom Balkanu“;*
 - *„Tehnička podrška za razvoj ljudskih resursa u poljoprivrednim savjetodavnim službama u Albaniji, Bosni i Hercegovini, Bugarskoj, Sjevernoj Makedoniji, Crnoj Gori, Srbiji i UNMIK Kosovu“;*
 - *te „Preporuke za razvoj ljudskih kapaciteta i regionalno umrežavanje“.*

FAO Study

FAO studija

“Assessment of the Human Capacity Development Needs for, and Gaps in, the Agricultural Advisory Services in the Western Balkans”

„Procena potreba za razvojem ljudskih kapaciteta i nedostataka u poljoprivrednim savetodavnim službama na Zapadnom Balkanu“



Read the whole study here
Pročitajte celu studiju ovde



IALB / GFRAS / EUFRAS Context in which the initiative appeared

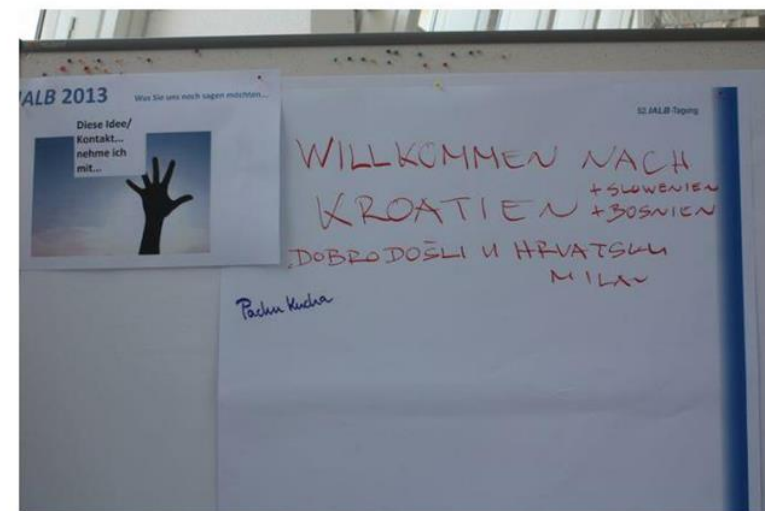
IALB / GFRAS / EUFRAS kontekst u kojem se pojavila inicijativa

- IALB has been active since 1961; in 2010 it initiated the founding of GFRAS, and in 2013 of EUFRAS.
- In 2013, during the 52nd IALB DAYS in Karlsruhe, Germany, IALB entrusted the organization of the 53rd IALB DAYS in 2014 to Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- *IALB djeluje od 1961. godine; 2010. inicira osnivanje GFRAS-a, a 2013. EUFRAS-a.*
- *Godine 2013, na 52. IALB DANIMA u Karlsruheu (Njemačka), IALB povjerava organizaciju 53. IALB DANA 2014. godine Hrvatskoj, Sloveniji i Bosni i Hercegovini.*

IALB-Tagung 2013

2. Ergebnisse der Evaluierung:

→ An den Pinnwänden im Foyer - EG



Key Persons Supporting The Initiative To Establish The SEASN Network

Ključne osobe podrške inicijativi za osnivanje SEASN mreže

- **Edda Albers**, IALB President 2010 – 2015 / *predsjednica IALB-a 2010 – 2015*
- **Michael Kuegler**, Member of the IALB Board of Directors, EU lobbyist / *član Upravnog odbora IALB, EU lobbyist*
- **Erich Waldmeier**, Member of the IALB Board, former long-time Director of the Swiss Advisory Service AGRIDEA / *član Upravnog odbora IALB, bivši direktor švicarske savjetodavne službe AGRIDEA*
- **Ulrich Ryser**, IALB President 2015 – 2018, then AGRIDEA Director / *predsjednik IALB-a 2015 – 2018, tada direktor AGRIDEA*
- **Hans Mikl**, Director of the Chamber of Agriculture of Carinthia, Austria / *direktor Poljoprivredne komore Koruške, Austrija*
- **Tom Kelly**, Director of the Irish Advisory Service TEAGASC and first EUFRAS President / *direktor irske savjetodavne službe TEAGASC i prvi predsjednik EUFRAS-a*

Significance of the 53rd IALB and 1st EUFRAS Conference in Tuhelj in 2014

Značaj 53. IALB i 1. EUFRAS konferencije u Tuhelju 2014. godine

- The initiative to establish the SEASN network and the organization of the 53rd IALB Days in Croatia were strongly interlinked — to such an extent that one would not have been realized without the other.
- *Inicijativa za osnivanje SEASN mreže i organizacija 53. IALB dana u Hrvatskoj bile su međusobno snažno povezane — do te mjere da se može reći kako jedno bez drugoga tada ne bi bilo ostvareno.*



Thank you for your attention!

Hvala vam na pažnji!

Milan Husnjak

South Eastern Europe Advisory Service Network



Prof. Dr. Snežana Janković

*Assistant Director for Science, Institute for Science Application
in Agriculture (IPN)*

*Pomoćnik direktora za nauku Instituta za primenu nauke u
poljoprivredi (IPN)*



The Establishment and Early Development of SEASN

Osnivanje i rani razvoj SEASN-a

Prof. dr. Snežana Janković
Institut za primenu nauke u poljoprivredi (IPN)

First indications of the advisory service's regional connections

Prvi nagoveštaji regionalnog povezivanja savetodavnih službi

- Dating from 2007, when the FAO (Organisation for Food and Agriculture of the United Nations) organised a subregional conference in Skopje.
- At this meeting, the need for the development and strengthening of advisory services in Southeast Europe, and their connection with research and educational institutions, was highlighted.
- The conclusions of the conference were that advisory services play a key role in transferring innovations and knowledge to agriculturists, and that their cooperation is crucial for increasing productivity and achieving sustainable development in rural areas.
- *datiraju iz 2007. godine, kada je FAO (Organizacija za hranu i poljoprivredu Ujedinjenih nacija) organizovala subregionalnu konferenciju u Skoplju.*
- *Na ovom skupu istaknuta je potreba*
 - *za razvijanjem i jačanjem savetodavnih službi u Jugoistočnoj Evropi*
 - *njihovim povezivanjem sa istraživačkim i obrazovnim institucijama*
- *Zaključci konferencije su da*
 - *savetodavne službe imaju ključnu ulogu u prenosu inovacija i znanja do poljoprivrednika*
 - *da je njihova saradnja od presudnog značaja za povećanje produktivnosti i održiv razvoj ruralnih područja.*

First indications of the advisory service's regional connections

Prvi nagoveštaji regionalnog povezivanja savetodavnih službi

- This was the starting point in recognising the need for regional networking.
 - In the years after 2007, the idea of cooperation continued to mature through international events, meetings, and conferences organised by GFRAS, EUFRAS, and IALB.
 - Discussions showed that Southeast Europe was missing its own network.
- *Ovo je bila polaznu tačka u prepoznavanju potrebe za regionalno umrežavanje*
 - *U godinama nakon 2007. ideja o saradnji nastavila je da sazreva kroz međunarodne događaje,*
 - *sastanci i konferencije organizovane od strane GFRAS-a, EUFRAS-a i IALB-a.*
 - *Diskusija je pokazala da Jugoistočnoj Evropi nedostaje sopstvena mreža*

Preparation for establishment and important milestones in the establishment process

Priprema za osnivanje i najvažniji koraci u procesu osnivanja

- In December 2013, a conversation between representatives from Zagreb and Belgrade (Milan and Snežana) clarified the essence and importance of establishing such a network.
- Support was provided by Hrvoje Horvat, Ph.D., med. vet., director of the Croatian Advisory Service.
- The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Agriculture of the USA sent an initiative letter to all national Agricultural Advisory Services in the Balkans, emphasising that cross-border cooperation could enhance the development of agriculture in the region.
- In the following weeks, comprehensive and detailed activities and preparations began with the aim of successfully establishing SEASN.
- *U decembru 2013 razgovor između Zagreba i Beograd (Milan Snežana)*
- *objasnio suštinu i značaj osnivanja ovakve mreže*
- *podršku je dao Hrvoje Horvat, dr. med.vet., ravnatelj Savjetodavne službe Hrvatske.*
- *Ministarstvo poljoprivrede R Srbije i Ministarstvo poljoprivrede SAD*
- *Inicijativno pismo pošalje svim nacionalnim Poljoprivrednim savjetodavnim službama na Balkanu.*
- *da prekogranična suradnja može povećati razvoj poljoprivred u regionu*
- *u narednim nedeljama započete su sveobuhvatne i detaljne aktivnosti i pripreme s ciljem uspjehnog osnivanja SEASN*

The first meeting of the Initiative for the Establishment of the SEASN, Belgrade, 24 April 2014

Prvi sastanak Inicijative za osnivanje MSS-JE u Beogradu 24. aprila 2014

- Prof. Dr Snežana Janković, Director of the Institute for the Application of Science in Agriculture (IPN) in Serbia and representative of the Advisory and Expert Service of Serbia, suggested that IPN host the first meeting. Milan was pleased with the proposal.
- On 24 April 2014, the first meeting of the Initiative was held in Belgrade. This event was a key step in creating the network.
- *Prof dr. Snežana Janković, direktorica Instituta za primenu nauke u poljoprivredi (IPN) iz Srbije i predstavnica Savetodavne i stručne službe Srbije, predložila je da IPN bude domaćin prvog okupljanja.*
- *Milan je bio oduševljen predlogom*
- *24. aprila 2014. u Beogradu, održan prvi sastanak Inicijative. Ovaj događaj bio je ključni korak u stvaranju mreže.*



The first meeting of the Initiative for the Establishment of the SEASN, Belgrade, 24 April 2014

Prvi sastanak Inicijative za osnivanje MSS-JE u Beogradu 24. aprila 2014

- 43 present
 - Representatives attended from international institutions, including IALB, EUFRAS, Caritas Switzerland, the Regional Working Group for Rural Development in Southeastern Europe (SWG RRD) Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Agriculture of the United States of America, the US Embassy in Belgrade, and advisory services from the Southeastern Europe region:
 - National Agricultural Advisory Service of Bulgaria
 - Agricultural Advisory Service of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ministry of Agriculture of Kosovo*
 - NYME MEK, Hungary
 - Institute for Science Application in Agriculture, Belgrade
 - Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - In a solemn atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, participants expressed the importance and satisfaction with the formation of the network. It was concluded that, in the period leading up to the session of the organisational board in Tuheljske Toplice, Croatia, all important issues should be defined.
- 43prisutnih
 - *Na njemu su prisustvovali predstavnici međunarodnih institucija – IALB, EUFRAS, „Karitas“ iz Švajcarske, Regionalna radna grupa za ruralni razvoj u Jugoistočnoj Evropi (SWG RRD) Republika Makedonija, predstavnici Ministarstva poljoprivrede Sjedinjenih američkih država (SAD), i Ambasade SAD u Beogradu i savetodavnih službi iz regiona jugoistočne Evrope:*
 - *NAAS, Republika Bugarska;*
 - *Poljoprivredna savjetodavna služba Republike Hrvatske;*
 - *Ministarstva poljoprivrede Kosova*;*
 - *NYME MEK, Mađarska;*
 - *Institut za primenu nauke u poljoprivredi, Beograd, Srbija;*
 - *Republika Bosna i Hercegovina.*
 - *U svečanoj atmosferi međusobnog poštovanja i tolerancije iskazan je značaj i zadovoljstvo svih za formiranjem mreže i donet zaključak da se u narednom periodu do sednice organizacionog odbora u Hrvatskoj, Tuheljske Toplice, definišu sva pitanja u od značaja*

Gatherings where information was disseminated about the Initiative for the establishment of SEASN

Skupovi na kojima je diseminirana informacija o Inicijativi za osnivanje SEASN

- 2014:
 - 53rd IALB Days and 1st EUFRAS Conference, Tuheljske Toplice, Croatia
 - EUFRAS meeting, September 2014, Latvia
 - The first regional conference of advisors of Southeast Europe, 19 November 2014, Zlatibor, Serbia, held as part of the 6th Seminar of the Agricultural Advisory and Expert Service of the Republic of Serbia
 - Representatives from 12 countries were present.
 - The work systems of advisory services in Southeast European countries were presented.
 - The statutes of IALB, EUFRAS, and GFRAS were discussed.
 - Issues important for the formation of the Network were considered: name of the Network, headquarters, provision of office and equipment, goals, activities, membership, working bodies (board of directors with one member from each state, president, three vice-presidents, Assembly), official language, financing (membership fee, donations, income from organising meetings, projects).



- 2014.
 - 53 IALB Dani i 1. EUFRAS Konferencija, Tuheljske Toplice, Hrvatska,
 - sastanak EUFRAS, septembar 2014. godine, Letonija
 - Prva regionalna konferencija savetodavaca jugoistočne Evrope, 19. novembar 2014. godine Zlatibor, Srbija, koja je održana u okviru 6. Seminara Poljoprivredne savetodavne i stručne službe Republike Srbije
 - prisutni predstavnici iz 12 zemalja
 - prezentovani su sistemi rada savetodavnih službi u zemljama Jugoistočne Evrope.
 - predstavljeni su statuti IALB, EUFRAS-a, GFRAS-a i
 - razmatrana pitanja koja su od značaja za formiranje Mreže: naziv Mreže, sedište, obezbeđivanje kancelarije i opreme, ciljevi, aktivnosti, članstvo, radna tela (upravni odbor i da iz svake države treba da bude po jedan član, predsednik, 3 potpredsednika, Skupština) službeni jezik, finansiranje (članarina, donacije, prihod organizacije skupa, projekti).

Gatherings where information was disseminated about the Initiative for the establishment of SEASN

Skupovi na kojima je diseminirana informacija o Inicijativi za osnivanje SEASN

- Next steps defined:
 - candidate proposal for the headquarters of the Network, proposal of the work plan for 2015, inclusion of CECRA in the advisory system of Southeast Europe
 - preparation and organization of departure to Macedonia,
 - the organization of a joint trip in 2015 to the IALB congress in Soloyhurh, Switzerland,
 - holding the Founding Assembly in 2015
 - activities around future projects.
 - Working groups for all these activities were also proposed, which was the foundation of preparations for the Network's Founding Assembly .
- *definisani sledeći koraci:*
 - *predlog kandidata za sedište Mreže, predlog plana rada za 2015. godinu, uključivanje CECRA-e u savetodavni sistem Jugoistočne Evrope*
 - *priprema i organizacija odlaska u Makedoniju,*
 - *organizacija zajedničkog odlaska u 2015. godini na kongres IALB-a u Soloyhurh, Švajcarska,*
 - *održavanje Osnivačke skupštine u 2015*
 - *aktivnosti oko budućih projekata.*
 - *Predložene su i radne grupe za sve ove aktivnosti, što je bio temelj priprema za Osnivačku skupštinu Mreže.*



Gatherings where information was disseminated about the Initiative for the establishment of SEASN

Skupovi na kojima je diseminirana informacija o Inicijativi za osnivanje SEASN

- In March 2015 in Bitola (Macedonia), at a meeting organised with the support of SWG, 30 representatives from the region participated. On that occasion, the draft SEASN statute was adopted and it was agreed that the founding assembly would be held in October of the same year in Sofia (Bulgaria).
- The founding SEASN assembly was held on 22 October 2015 in Sofia.
- *U martu 2015. u Bitolju (Makedonija), na sastanku organizovanom uz podršku SWG-a, učestvovalo je 30 predstavnika iz regiona. Tom prilikom usvojen je nacrt statuta SEASN-a i dogovoreno da se osnivačka skupština održi u oktobru iste godine u Sofiji (Bugarska).*
- *22. oktobra 2015. godine u Sofiji je održana Osnivačka skupština SEASN*



Thank you for your attention!

Hvala vam na pažnji!

Prof. dr. Snežana Janković
Institute for Science Application in Agriculture (IPN)





Igor Hrovatič

SEASN president

Slovenian Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry (CAFS)

Predsednik SEASN-a

Poljoprivredna i šumarska komora Slovenije (KGZS)

The growth, cooperation and future vision of SEASN

*Razvoj, saradnja i vizija budućnosti
SEASN-a*

Igor Hrovatič

Kmetijsko gozdarska zbornica Slovenije (KGZS)

Mreža savjetodavnih službi jugoistočne Evrope (MSS-JE)

Growing of the SEASN network

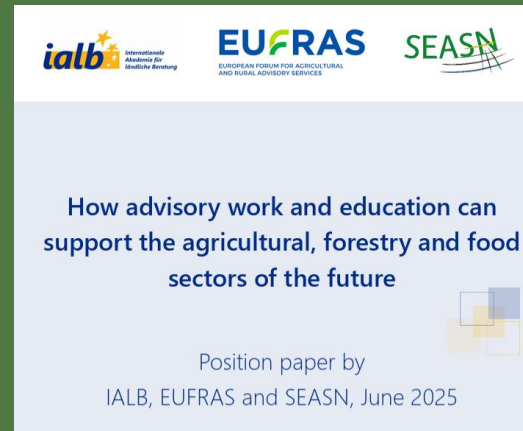
- Initiatives in the pre-establishment period of network establishment, together with the initial conference, were very important
- Important roles of key persons were Milan Husnjak as the first SEASN president, Dr. Snežana Janković, and Dr. Slađan Stanković
- From less than 10 members in 10 years, SEASN grew into an organisation with 19 members from 12 countries
- Every year SEASN organised a two-day meeting with conference and assembly, and participated as co-organizer in IALB, EUFRAS, SEASN conferences, including during the COVID-19 period



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK

Growing of the SEASN network

- Working with SEASN members to share the experiences from EU countries and results from different projects,
- SEASN becomes a member of IALB, GFRAS, and EUFRAS and a member of their bodies.
- Involvement in CECRA trainings, including in YEUFRAS trainings
- Common preparation of position papers, as well as a voice from advisory services from „Balkan countries“
- This year, SEASN was entrusted to organize the IALB EUFRAS SEASN conference in 2026 in Slovenia



The important milestones in 10 years of existence

Annual Assemblies and Thematic Conferences

- Each assembly meeting focused on a specific topic, reflecting the current challenges in the advisory sector:
 - 2016, Jahorina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – Cooperation of SEASN members on registration and implementation of projects – the first major gathering of the members after the network's establishment, dedicated to strengthening cooperation and exchanging ideas for joint projects.
 - 2017, Laško (Slovenia) – Generational renewal – advisory support for young farmers – emphasized knowledge transfer, support for young farmers, and the role of advisory services in generational renewal of rural areas.
 - 2018, Ilok (Croatia) – Soya production in South-Eastern Europe – Danube Soy and SEASN possibilities for cooperation – gathered numerous partners from the Danube region and highlighted the importance of sustainable production and regional cooperation,
 - 2019, Bansko (Bulgaria) – How to make family farms in South-Eastern Europe more profitable – the role of agricultural advisory services – the final event of the four-year cycle focused on the economic aspects of family farm sustainability and the key role of advisory services in their development
 - 2020, online: Role of AKIS, Digitalization, and Climate challenges and importance for implementing it in the SEASN region
 - 2021 online SEASN hub in the FAIRshare project
 - 2022 Skopje: Presentation of platforms developed in the SEASN region in the Fairshare project
 - 2023 Ljubljana: Training for soft skills in innovation processes from project i2connect
 - 2024 Belgrade: Training for soft skills in innovation processes from project i2connect

The important milestones in 10 years of existence

- Participation in European Projects and Initiatives. The main objective of SEASN's participation in European projects is the acquisition, transfer, and dissemination of knowledge, tools, approaches, and policy guidance among its members. Participation in Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, and Erasmus+ projects
- The COVID-19 crisis strongly affected the operation of advisory services. Agricultural advisors were among those professionals who had to continue working under challenging conditions, almost as if the crisis did not exist. During this period, the need for digitization became particularly evident.
- Together with the IPN organization of the 12th GFRAS conference as a webinar in 2021
- Cooperation with European Networks and Continuity of Activities. In cooperation with IALB and EUFRAS, SEASN contributed to the preparation of a joint position paper outlining the role of agricultural advisors
- CECRA
- SEASNFair Event (2025) with the actual new website



A collage of logos for various European projects and networks, including Stratus, LiveNet, DIGI-Rangeland, WiseFarmer, CLIMED-FRUIT, i2connect, AdvisoryNetPEST, FAIRshare, and ORGANIC ADVICE NETWORK. Below these logos is a graphic for SEASNFair, featuring a yellow megaphone and the text "JOIN US! We are announcing SEASNFair". The text "We are pleased to announce the launch of SEASNFair, an online event organized by SEASN." is also present. To the right of the SEASNFair text is a circular inset image showing a group of people sitting around a table, engaged in a discussion. Below this image is the text "WHAT IS SEASNFair?" followed by a bulleted list: "A platform for agricultural innovators and advisory professionals to share ideas", "An opportunity to showcase innovative projects and engage in dynamic discussions.", and "EVENT HIGHLIGHTS" followed by "Selected speakers will present their work", "Open forum for knowledge exchange and networking". At the bottom right, the text "Get ready to connect, collaborate, and inspire others!" is displayed above the SEASN logo and a QR code.

Specifics of SEASN network

- The members of the SEASN network are the members from EU countries, non-EU countries, and countries in the EU pre-accession period
- Members coming from advisory services, research institutions, universities, ministries, chambers of agriculture, agricultural schools, and private companies
- As a philosophy of SEASN participation in the EU project, the SEASN network invites its members to participate directly in the project
- Agriculture in countries of SEASN members (small holdings, less developed, extensive)
- Advisory service systems: private and public advisory services
- *Characteristics of farming and rural areas in countries of the SEASN region and their importance for further development represent the mission for the advisory service in this region.*

SEASN in the future

In the upcoming period, SEASN will focus on several transformative directions:

- SEASN will enhance regional knowledge and innovation exchange through a digital platform connecting advisors, researchers, agricultural schools, and producers. This regional knowledge and innovation hub will gather outcomes of European projects and make them accessible in local languages, ensuring a broad knowledge flow.
- SEASN will strengthen the link between education and practice by connecting secondary agricultural schools, universities, and advisory organizations into a unified educational continuum. Students will gain practical learning opportunities, while advisors will contribute to modernizing curricula — fostering a new generation of professionals who understand how science and practice interact.
- SEASN will lead the digital transformation of advisory systems, emphasizing ethical responsibility and transparency. The use of digital tools and AI-based systems must be accompanied by training and ethical frameworks that ensure technology serves human development and the sustainability of rural life.
- SEASN will continue to be involved in international innovation projects as long-term instruments of cooperation and trust-building.

SEASN in the future

A Vision of Shared Learning and Trust

- As SEASN enters its second decade, it does so with a clear sense of purpose and responsibility: to connect people, knowledge, and institutions. Our role is not merely to transmit information but to cultivate a shared culture of learning, cooperation, and trust. In an era marked by digital transformation, climate instability, and social change, advisory services stand as the foundation of a new equilibrium between economy, ecology, and society.
- Our future is interconnected, participatory, and collaborative.
- SEASN remains the guardian of this spirit – a network of professionals who believe that knowledge is power, and cooperation is the only true path to a sustainable future; and in all future SEASN activities, we will be guided by a common motto:



We are living in a time when many questions arise, but they are slowly turning to ideas and solutions.

“Developing advisory work in the SEASN region – efficiently, innovatively, and sustainably.”

Thank you for your attention!

Hvala vam na pažnji!

Igor Hrovatič

*Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (CAFS)
South Eastern Europe Advisory Service Network (SEASN)*



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mladen Mladenov

*Director of the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) of
Bulgaria*

*Direktor Nacionalne poljoprivredne savjetodavne službe
(NAAS) Bugarske*





Ten Years of SEASN through the Eyes of NAAS Bulgaria

Assoc. Prof. dr. Mladen Mladenov

Director of the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) of Bulgaria



Content

- A brief presentation of the activities of the NAAS
- Why was the SEASN Establishment Assembly held in Bulgaria?
- An assessment of the activities of SEASN from NAAS perspective

National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS)

- Subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food

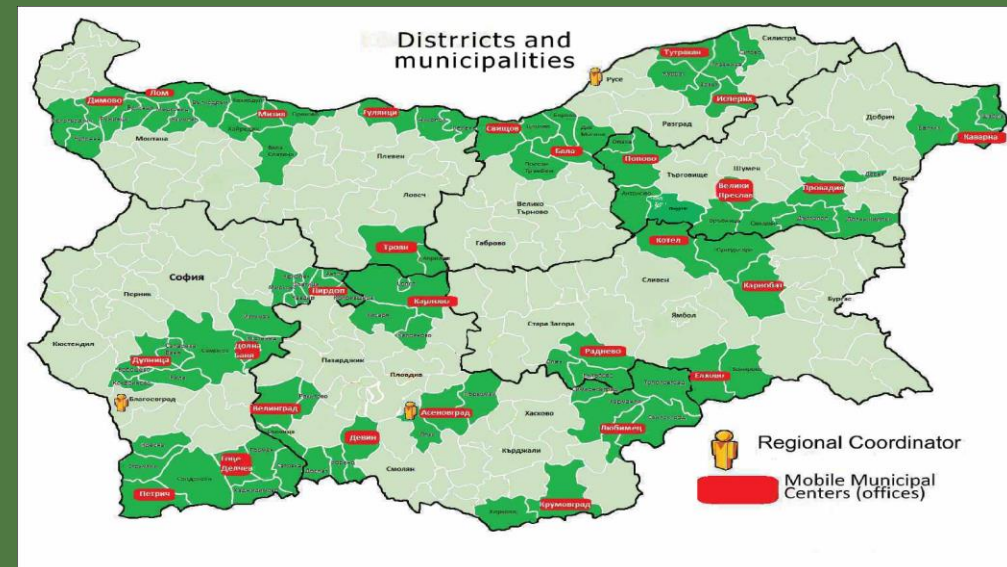
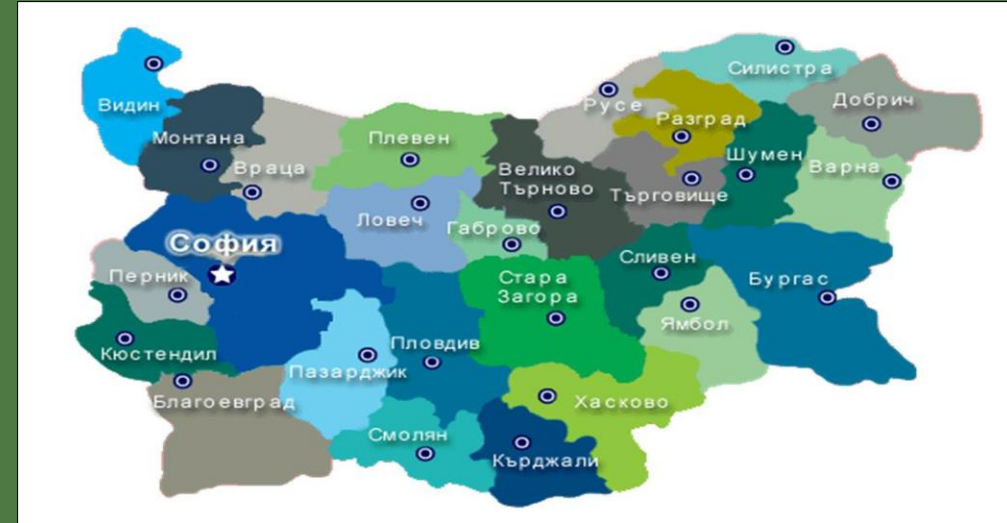


- Public budget-funded organization
- Beginning of its activities - October 2000
- NAAS has regional units throughout Bulgaria



NAAS Structure

- Headquarter in Sofia
- 27 Regional District Offices
- 28 Mobile Municipal Centers (offices)
- Center for vocational training /CVT/
- Analytical laboratory
- About 140 advisors



NAAS main activities (1)

- Providing specialized advice in the field of the agriculture, including crop production, animal husbandry and agrarian economics
 - over **15 000 farmers**
 - over **100 000 consultations** (2024)
 - Free of charge consultations save about **1.6 million EUR expenditures yearly** to Bulgarian farmers
- Advising on CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027, incl. support very small and young farmers and new farmers to apply for financial support and to implement projects
 - Over **2 500 projects** elaborated with total amount of over **EUR 70 million**



NAAS main activities (2)

- Transfer knowledge and technology from science to farmers
- Training through Vocational Training Center
- Performs soil analyses through Analytical Laboratory and gives recommendations for balanced fertilization
- “Farmers’ circles“ attached to 27 district offices



NAAS main activities (3)

- Meetings of the Informal consultative councils attached to 27 district offices (part of AKIS)
- Organizing and participating in information events, developing information materials and interview for media
- Supporting internships in the regional offices of students from the field of agriculture, veterinary medicine and agrarian economics



NAAS - partner in Horizon Europe and other international projects(1)



- modernAKIS - Modernisation of Agriculture through more efficient and effective Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems ()

Start: September 2022 - 2029, 7 years



- Climate Farm Demo - A European-wide network of pilot farmers implementing and demonstrating climate smart solutions for a carbon neutral Europe

Start: October 2022-2029, 7 years



- ClimateSmartAdvisors - Connecting and mobilizing the EU agricultural advisory community to support the transition to Climate Smart Farming

Start: April 2023 - 2030, 7 years

NAAS - partner in Horizon Europe and other international projects (2)



Soil-X-Change

- Soil-X-Change - Fostering cross-border knowledge exchange and co-creation on sustainable soil and farm management

Start: January 2024 - 2027, 3 years



AdvisoryNetPEST

- AdvisoryNetPEST - EU advisory networks to reduce the use and risks of pesticides

Start: January 2024 - 2029, 5 years



- AGROMOAPP - Development of an application for end users for monitoring and analysis of agricultural crops based on satellite observations and intelligent models

Start: January 2023 - 2026, 3 years

Mutual goals

**Professionals
unite**

**Peer-to-peer
learning**

Co-creation

**Share
difficulties**

**Share
success**

**Asking questions,
looking for answers**



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK

A place we belong

Why was the SEASN Establishment Assembly held in Bulgaria? (1)

- NAAS was one of the founders of EUFRAS and possessed the relevant experience in setting up of such type of organization
- NAAS received significant support from Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and Food for organization of SEASN founding meeting
- Good reputation of NAAS thanks to successful implementation of advisory service measures within Bulgarian Rural Development Programme

Why was the SEASN Establishment Assembly held in Bulgaria (2)

- NAAS was willing, and is still strongly committed, to share its experience in providing advice to the farmers
- The possibility for jointly holding the SEASN founding meeting with the Second Regional Conference of Advisory Organizations from South-East Europe on the topic "Training and Key Competencies for Agricultural Advisors - Benefits for Farmers".

Let's turn back the time



SEASON

SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK

....in our memories

Team work
makes the dream **WORK.**



MATRIX
REVOLUTIONS



22 October, 2015 – SEASN Establishment Assembly in Sofia, Bulgaria

Ulrich Reiser - President of IALB and Director of Swiss AGRIDEA



Tom Kelly - President of EUFRAS and Director in Teagasc, Ireland



Ministry of Agriculture and
Food of Bulgaria



SEASN

SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK

The 1st SEASN Conference
23 October 2015

(the day after the founding
SEASN meeting)

We are still
together



2nd Conference of advisory service of Sought East Europe “Training and key competences of agricultural advisors – benefits for farmers”

23 October, 2015, Sofia, Bulgaria



Event in progress ...working
together makes us friends, but not
only colleagues

22nd and 23rd October, 2015 - Farm visit



Our achievements when we look back in years

- creating bridges of cooperation
- knowledge exchange between countries
- enrich professional knowledge
- mutual support
- good friendships
- expanded network with new members and organizations
- a recognizable and sought-after professional community, whose voice is heard in decision-making
- with united efforts we achieve more

How



see it



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У
ИСТОЧНОМ САРАЈЕВУ
University of East Sarajevo



lk
landwirtschaftskammer
kärnten



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK





SEASN

SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK



*Realistic reconstruction of advisors
visiting a farm and meeting a farmer(AI)*

Thank you for your attention!
Благодаря за вниманието!

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Ágnes Jakab Gáborné

Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (NAK)

Poljoprivredna komora Mađarske

The Role of AKIS in the SEASN Region: Building Knowledge and Innovation for the Future of Agriculture

Ágnes Jakab

Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture CAP Network – Green Support
Unit

jakab.agnes@nak.hu

www.nak.hu/zold-tamogato-egyseg

Global challenges and the role of innovation

- Problems of our time: Poverty, inequality, water and food shortages (Meadows et al., 2013)
- Increasing demands, decreasing resources:
 - Population and increase in living standards
 - Production becomes more difficult: soil degradation, water shortage (Gu et al., 2021)
- The key role of innovation:
 - Economic and social impact is high
 - Support for research, development and technological innovation
 - Important at national and international level
- EU focus:
 - Maintaining and increasing competitiveness
 - Utilization of knowledge, development of human resources
 - Strengthening innovation performance



Background: What is AKIS model?

A framework connecting **farmers, researchers, advisors, educators, NGOs, and policymakers**

Goal: Enable effective knowledge and innovation flow

Core principle: From science to practice – and back again.

- Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS)
- A horizontal system, which covers all agricultural sectors
- It helps improving competitiveness of the European Union through knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing in agriculture
- Reducing the "gap" between science and management practice
- AKISs mostly work at a national and/or regional level
- Strategic Working Group (SWG AKIS) of the Standing Committee of Agricultural Research (SCAR) has been reflecting and exploring AKIS systems since 2008

Key actor: Agricultural advisors, innovation brokers, consultants



Evolution of AKIS in Europe

Monograph AKIS chapter content:

- **1950s–2000s:** Rise of coordinated agricultural knowledge systems – national research, education, and advisory services began to integrate.
- **PRO AKIS (2012–2015):** First EU-wide mapping of AKIS structures, identifying key actors and bottlenecks in knowledge flows.
- **i2connect (2019–2025):** Focused on interactive innovation and strengthening the advisor's facilitation role in multi-actor networks.
- **CAP 2021–2027:** Strengthens AKIS for digitalisation, sustainability, and knowledge sharing through national AKIS strategies.
- **Post-2025 outlook:** Integration of AI, data platforms, and cross-sectoral learning to foster smart, resilient, and inclusive rural innovation.

Legal and Policy Framework

Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 sets legal foundations
Member States must:

- ✓ Describe and strengthen their AKIS in CAP Strategic Plans
- ✓ Integrate advisory and consultancy services (Articles 13–15)
- ✓ Support training, innovation, and knowledge exchange (Article 78)

Ensures advisors' key role in sustainability, digitalisation, and compliance

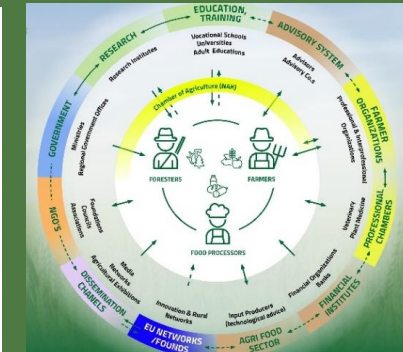
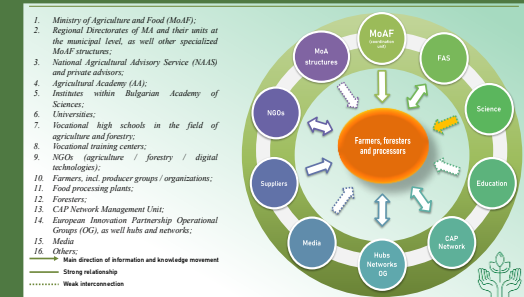


The Role of Advisors

- **Advisors as knowledge brokers:** Translating complex research into practical solutions.
- **Connect farmers ↔ researchers ↔ policymakers:** Building bridges for mutual learning and collaboration.
- **Provide feedback loops to improve innovation:** Ensuring that farmers' experiences inform research and policy.
- **Increasingly digital:** Using online platforms, data tools, and smart advisory systems to enhance efficiency and reach.
- **Crucial for local innovation networks and sustainability goals:** Advisors drive transition toward more resilient and sustainable farming systems.
- **Future outlook:** Advisors as *innovation facilitators* — empowered through training, networking, and digital competence development under CAP AKIS strategies.



Slovenia: Integrated and digitalised; strong research–practice cooperation



AKIS in non-EU SEASN Countries

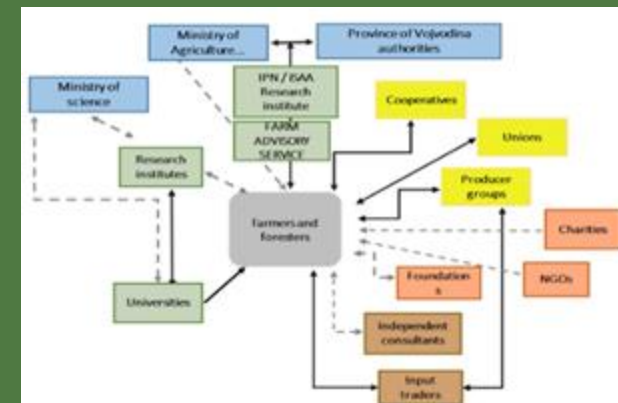
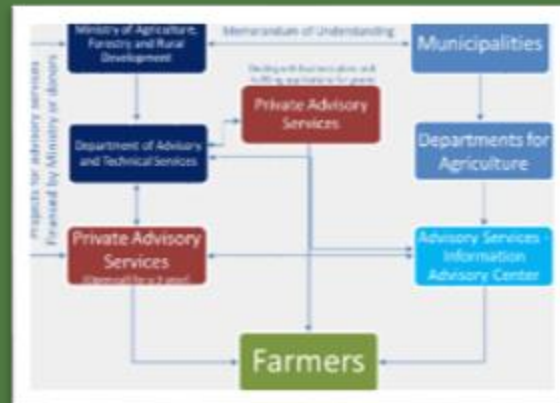
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Fragmented; weak cooperation; limited private services

Kosovo: Digital and inclusive; strong NGO and private advisor participation

Serbia: Emerging coordination; growing cooperation between research and practice

Montenegro: Early-stage; potential within EU pre-accession

North Macedonia: Legal basis exists; digital tools and training expanding



The Future: SEASN and Beyond

SEASN's role:

- Strengthening advisor networks,
- knowledge flow, and innovation capacity

Focus on:

- ✓ **Green transition & sustainability**
- ✓ **Digital transformation**
- ✓ **Rural development & competitiveness**

Goal: A collaborative, resilient, and innovation-driven agricultural region



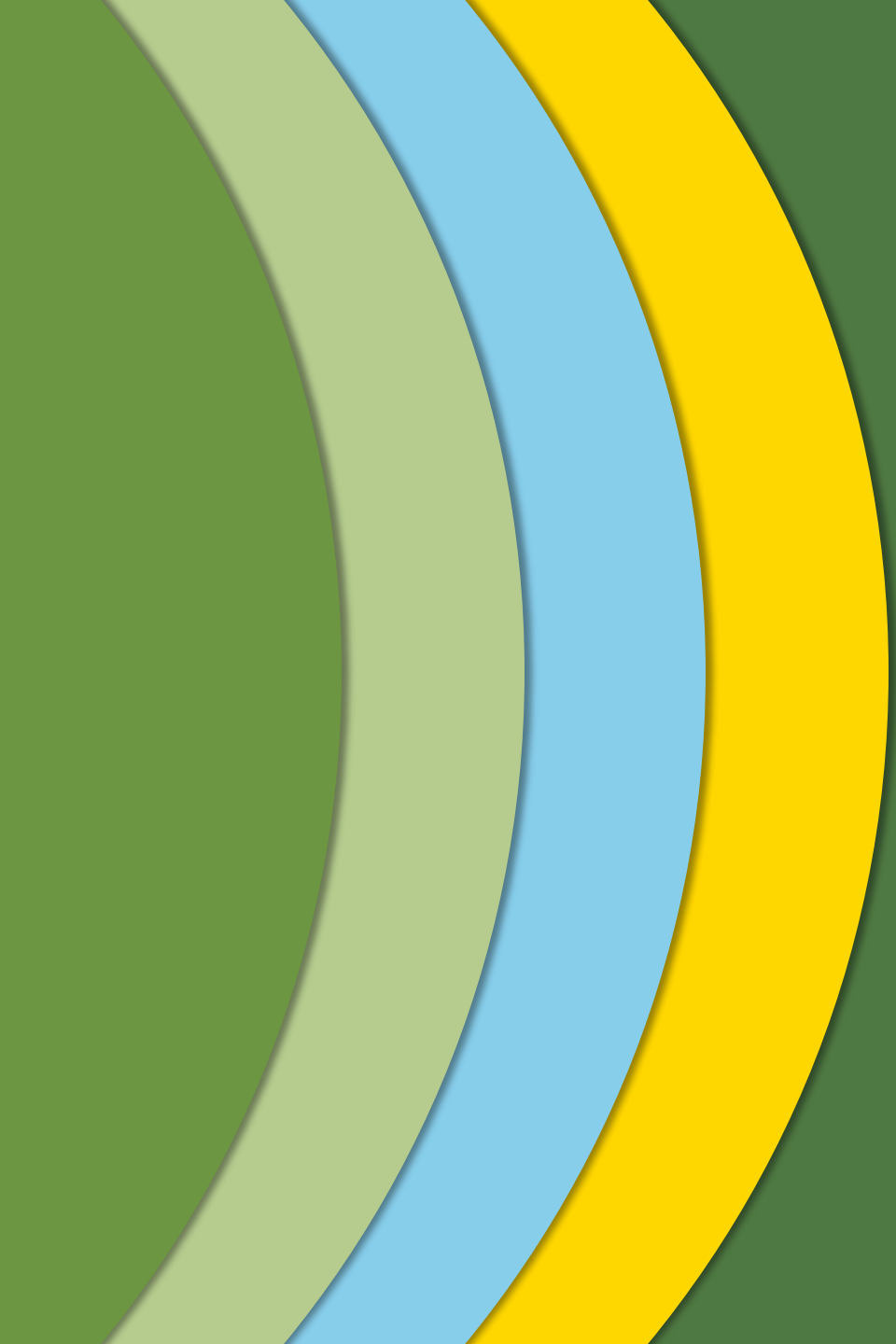
Thank you for your attention!

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coffee break with
poster session



**EU AKIS in the field of
climate change –
development
perspective and good
practices, such as
carbon credits**



Chavdar Marinov

Chief Executive Officer of Carbonsafe

Izvršni direktor Carbonsafe-a

Carbnsafe

It's not a product, it's a solution

Dobromir Kasabov / Chavdar
Marinov

Who we are

CARBONSAFE – the Bulgarian Carbon Program working with farmers

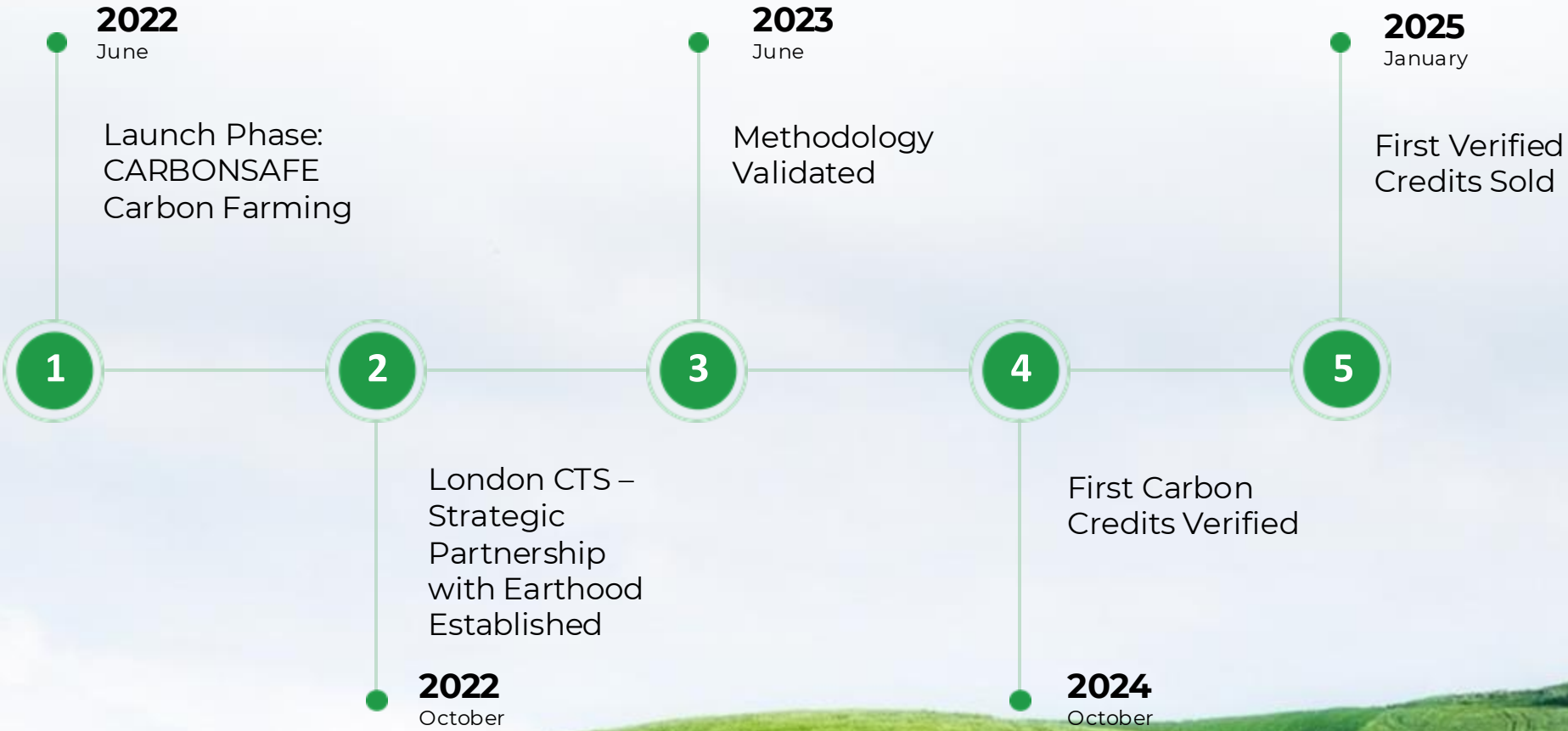
The first 100% measured-remeasured verified credits in Europe from projects for soil organic carbon sequestration

The first completed sale in Europe of credits from soil organic carbon sequestration projects

Real rewards for farmers' efforts to improve soil health



Milestones

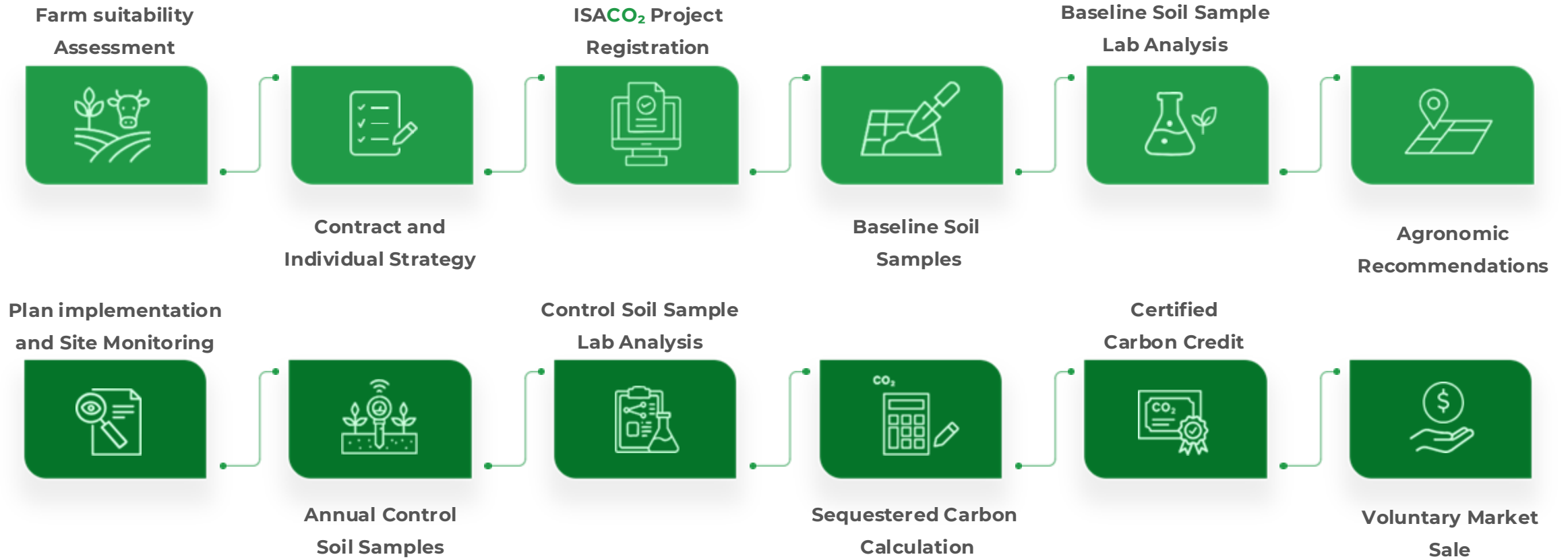


How Carbonsafe program works



- ✓ Geo-referenced soil samples at three depths (0–30 cm, 30–60 cm, 60–90 cm)
- ✓ Automated sampling – 25 cores from each depth per carbon cell (plot) of up to 25 hectares in size
- ✓ Testing of samples in accredited laboratories
- ✓ Process recording and management in dedicated software
- ✓ Farm-specific land management plan in the program
- ✓ Specific regenerative agricultural practices that lead to increased SOC sequestration, increased yields and optimized input costs for fertilizers
- ✓ Certification of actual measured increase in soil organic carbon stock levels

Pathway



What Sets Carbonsafe Apart

Carbonsafe uses **100% soil sampling annually**, following a measure-remeasure approach on every plot.



Yearly geo-referenced sampling



25 soil cores per 4-25 ha plot, from 3 depths, for accuracy.



High-quality credits. Transparent, traceable, delivering real benefits.

Beyond Carbon

Carbonsafe mandates yearly physical soil data, not just estimates.

Thus, turning each credit into a tool for real on-farm improvement, a co-benefit rarely found in global standards. Carbonsafe goes beyond carbon.

Our physical soil analysis includes macro and micro nutrients, such as N, P, K, S, Mg, Fe and more, providing tailored agronomic strategies for each plot to each farmer annually.

The annual administrative fee for farmers in Bulgaria for soil sampling is ~ **€ 13 euro/ ha**

These recommendations could **lead up** to:

2x

improvement in soil health and water retention, for sustainable ecosystem management

50%

less fertilizer and **10% higher** yield gains

2x

reduced costs and increased long-term farm resilience

Key Features



Ex-post CCs

Credits issued only after carbon removal is measured and verified. Reflecting real impact. 1 credit = 1 ton of CO₂ equivalent genuinely removed from the atmosphere.



Biodiversity

Implementation of diverse crop rotations and a deliberate reduction in pesticide use, for more resilient and ecologically balanced agroecosystems.



Food Security

Regenerative strategies build healthier soils, which in turn support stronger, more reliable yields and sustainable food production.



Revenue

Farmers receive direct financial incentives tied to regenerative practices, enabling them to invest in long-term soil health and ecosystem restoration.



Good practices

Proposed by our agronomists for each farm, building on the measures and activities carried out so far.



Sustainability

Retention of moisture, organic matter increase, improvement of soil structure, combating soil erosion, reduction of soil compaction.

15 \$**30 €****50 £**

Farmer income per carbon credit

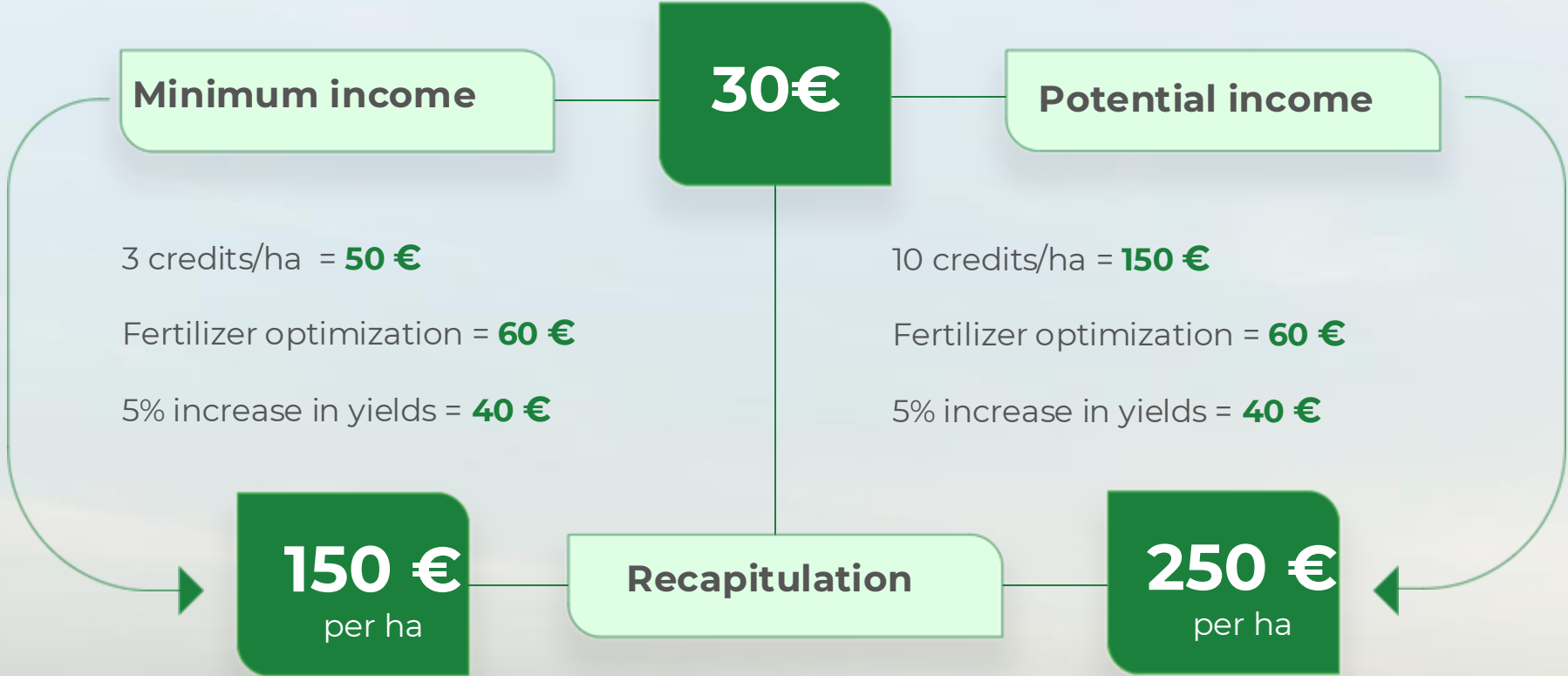
Project developer expenses and buffer pool per credit:

- **5%** – Buffer
- **15%** – Sales commission
- **30%** – Certification

✓ **50%** – Farmer

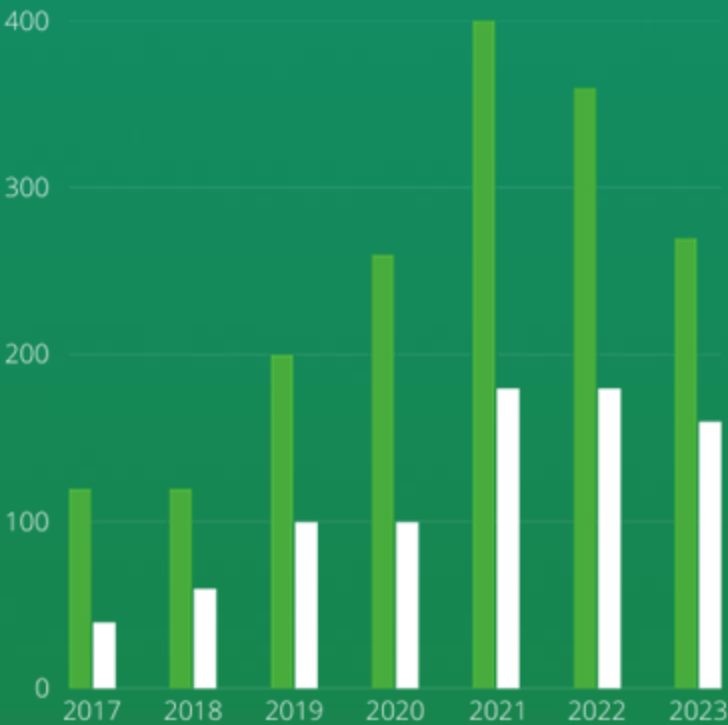
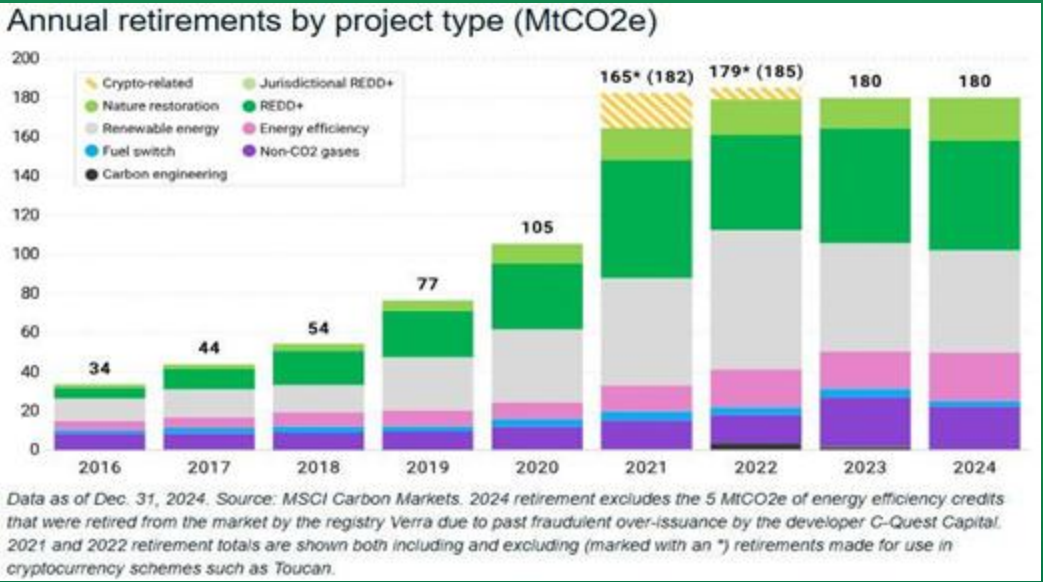
1 carbon credit = **15 euro** for farmer

Income analysis for BG farmers



Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM)

- Over 6,200 carbon credit projects
- 305 million tonnes of issued credits (MtCO₂e) in 2024
- Over 2.1 billion credits issued since the Paris Agreement in 2016
- 180 million credits retired from circulation in 2024
- Approximately the same amount as in 2023



Credits retired from circulation in 2024:

- 91% from emission reduction projects
- 9% from carbon removal projects

What's ahead:

- By 2030, the market is expected to reach between \$7 and \$35 billion
- By 2050, it could reach \$250 billion.

EU Legislation



In force since December 27, 2024

Carbon Removal Certification Framework (CRCF)

EU Commission

- Carbon credit market (CRCF units) in the EU
- Emissions Trading System (ETS)
- Mixed voluntary and mandatory measures



Thank you!

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EU AKIS in the field of climate change – development perspective and good practices, such as carbon credits

Dr. Dimitar Vanev

Director of the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) of Bulgaria





Dr. Dimitar Vanev

Director Directorate "Analysis, Planning and Information Provision", National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) of Bulgaria

Direktor Direkcije za analizu, planiranje i informisanje, Nacionalna služba za poljoprivredne savete (NAAS) Bugarska

EU AKIS in the Field of Climate Change



AKIS connects farmers, advisors, researchers, and policymakers for knowledge exchange on climate changes issues.



AKIS supports transition to sustainable agriculture through climate adaptation and mitigation.



Integrated into CAP Strategic Plans with climate-focused AKIS strategies.

Examples of Effective AKIS Climate changes Practices

AKIS ROLE IN CLIMATE CHANGE	EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES
Connects key actors for knowledge exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤Project “A European-wide network of pilot farmers implementing and demonstrating climate smart solutions for a carbon neutral Europe” (Climate Farm Demo) ”➤Project “Connecting and mobilizing the EU agricultural advisory community to support the transition to Climate Smart Farming” (ClimateSmartAdvisors)
Supports sustainable agriculture transition	Innovation projects (e.g. EPI-AGRI operational groups)
Integrated into CAP Strategic Plans	Support for Knowledge platforms, EU CAP Network
Promotes digitalization and tailored advice	Digital tools for advice and climate risk monitoring
Rewarding Mechanisms	Certificates, carbon credits, and carbon offsets; bonuses/better price to farmers that reduce emissions

Carbon Credits

Mechanism:

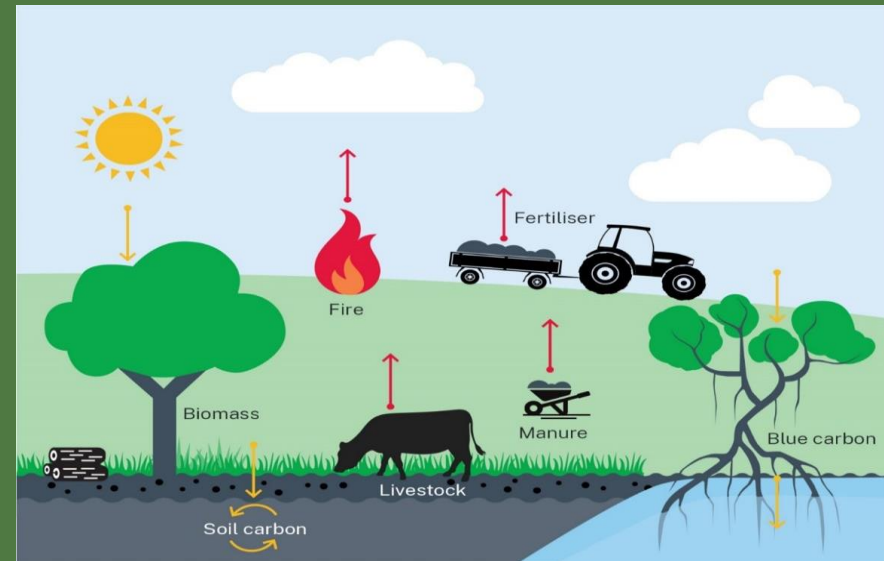
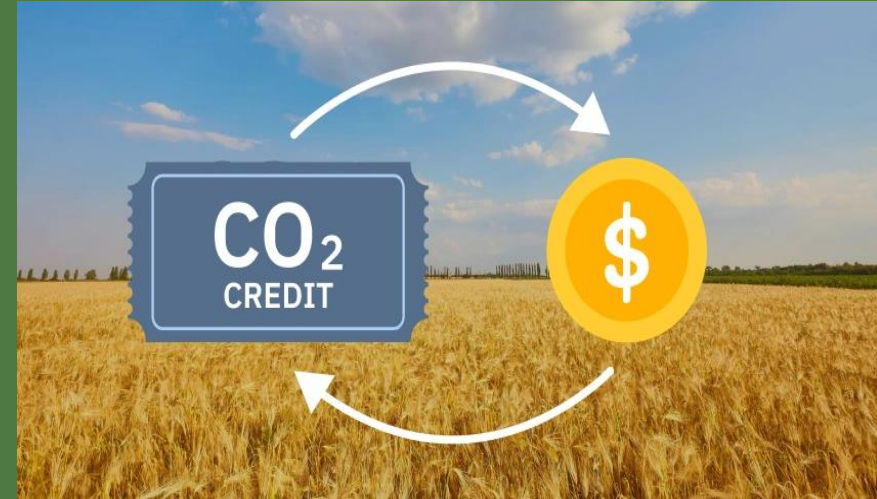
- Farmers can generate certified carbon credits by adopting practices that store carbon in soils or avoid emissions and gain profit by selling credits

EU legislation:

- Voluntary certification framework for carbon removals and carbon farming, through the EU Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation (EU/2024/3012)

Main challenges:

- How to measure and verify reliably.






Thank you for your attention!

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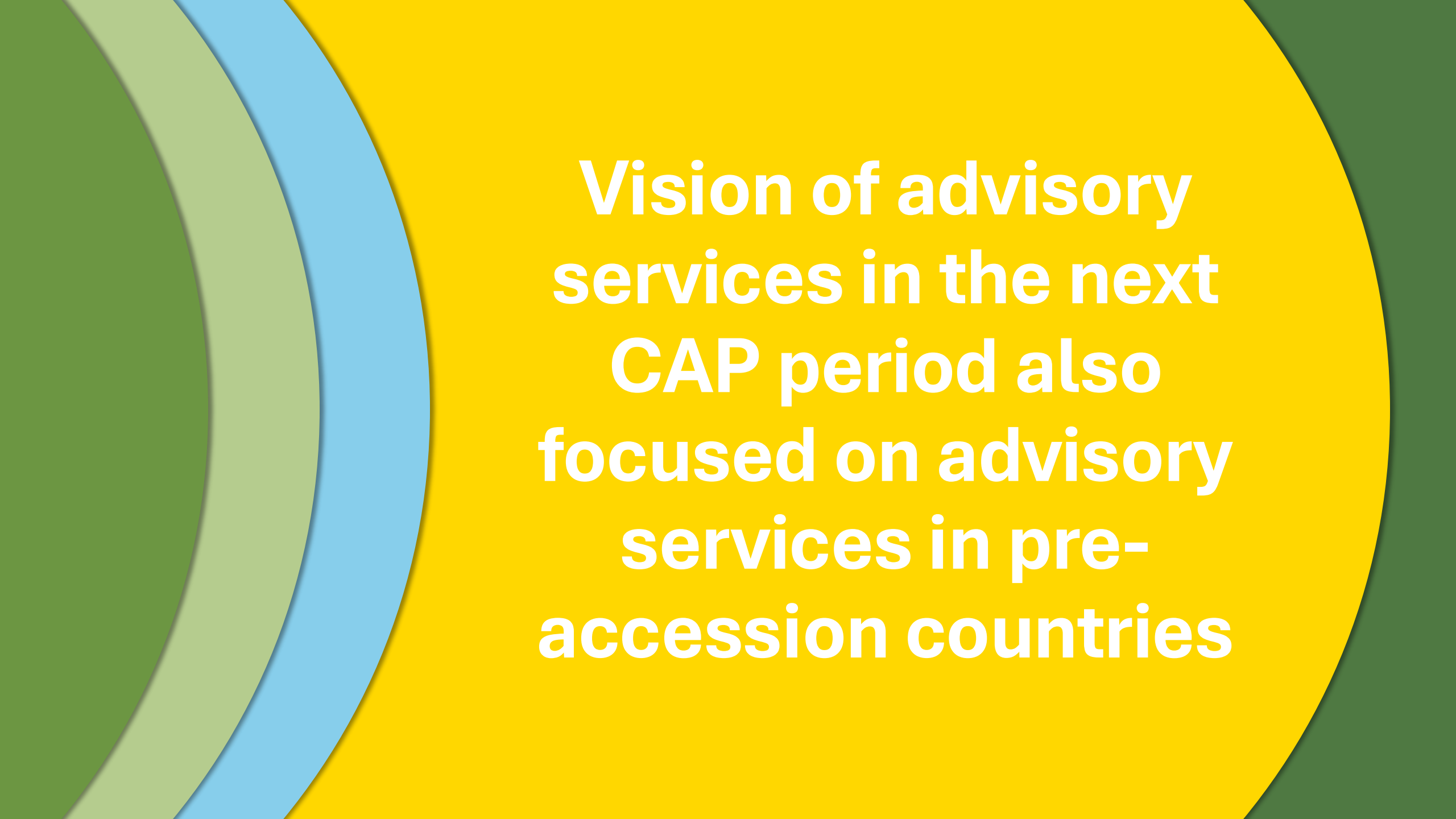
**What value can
advisory
organizations and
network derive
from AKIS**

Elena Teodora Miron

*Service center for innovation projects, Landwirtschaftskammer
Österreich (LKÖ)*

*Servisni centar za inovacione projekte, Poljoprivredna komora
Austrije (LKÖ)*





**Vision of advisory
services in the next
CAP period also
focused on advisory
services in pre-
accession countries**

Hugo Almedia

Deputy Head of Unit D.1, DIGI AGRI

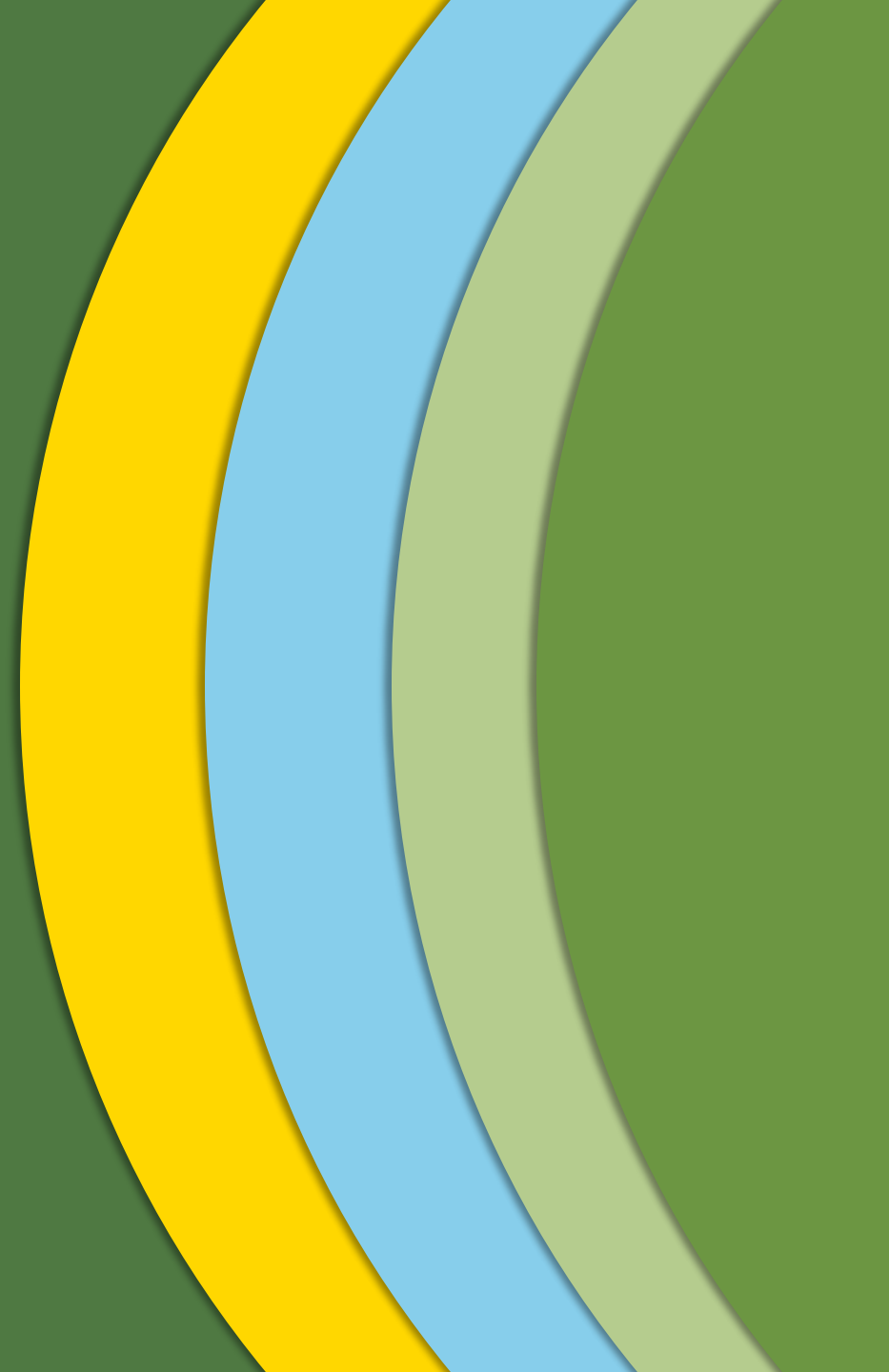
Zamenik rukovodioca odeljenja D.1, DIGI Agri





ALMEIDA Hugo (AGRI)

Further information





Closing words

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*Assistant Director for Science, Institute for Science Application
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*Pomoćnik direktora za nauku Instituta za primenu nauke u
poljoprivredi (IPN)*





Igor Hrovatič

SEASN president

Slovenian Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry (CAFS)

Predsednik SEASN-a

Poljoprivredna i šumarska komora Slovenije (KGZS)



**THANK YOU FOR
BEING PART OF THIS
STORY!**

**HVALA VAM ŠTO STE
DEO OVE PRIČE!**

SEASN



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK

