



FINAL REPORT

Final Report on the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism Project, under Empowering Rural Economies in Agriculture (EREA) Program

Financed by: CARITAS Switzerland

Implemented by: ARPA Agrotecnica - Società Cooperativa, Rome, Italy

EMPOWERING RURAL ECONOMIES
IN AGRICULTURE (EREA)
Project in Kosovo



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism Consultancy, funded by the Empowering Rural Economies in Agriculture (EREA) program through Caritas Switzerland, was implemented by ARPA Agrotecnica - Società Cooperativa, based in Rome, Italy. This report provides a thorough overview of the consultancy's objectives, methodologies, implementation process, results, impact, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and detailed recommendations.

Consultancy Overview and Objectives

The primary objective of the consultancy was to identify gaps and challenges in the current extension services framework in Kosovo and propose practical and effective solutions for its enhancement. This consultancy aimed to provide Caritas Switzerland and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD) with two comprehensive and distinct models for optimizing agricultural Extension/Advisory Services in Kosovo.

These models were designed with the following key considerations:

- **Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment:** A thorough evaluation of the existing extension services infrastructure, including interviews with stakeholders, field visits, and reviews of current practices and policies. This analysis aimed to uncover inefficiencies, resource limitations, and areas lacking sufficient expertise or support.
- **Tailored Solutions:** The proposed models were not one-size-fits-all but were customized to address the specific needs of Kosovo's diverse agricultural sectors. These solutions included both short-term and long-term strategies to ensure sustainable development and continuous improvement of extension services.
- **Integration of Modern Technologies:** Emphasizing the importance of integrating digital tools and platforms to enhance communication, data collection, and knowledge dissemination among farmers and advisory service providers. This includes the adoption of mobile applications, online training modules, and real-time data analytics.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** Focusing on enhancing the skills and knowledge of extension workers through targeted training programs, workshops, and continuous

professional development opportunities. This ensures that extension workers are well-equipped to provide high-quality advisory services.

- **Policy and Institutional Support:** Proposing necessary amendments to the legal and institutional framework governing extension services. This includes recommendations for new policies that support the efficient delivery of services, improved coordination among different agencies, and better resource allocation.
- **Community Engagement and Inclusivity:** Ensuring that the proposed models are inclusive and participatory, involving farmers, local communities, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. This helps to build trust, ensure relevance, and promote the adoption of best practices at the grassroots level.
- **Sustainability and Scalability:** Designing the models with a focus on sustainability, ensuring that the proposed solutions are environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially acceptable. Additionally, these models were developed to be scalable, allowing for gradual expansion and adaptation to changing circumstances and future challenges.

By addressing these critical areas, the consultancy aimed to provide CARITAS SWITZERLAND and MAFRD with robust, evidence-based models that could significantly improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of agricultural Extension/Advisory Services in Kosovo

Methodology

The methodology for this consultancy involved a comprehensive approach that integrated various techniques to ensure thorough analysis and effective intervention. Stakeholder consultations served as a foundational step, engaging key actors from government agencies, NGOs, farmers' associations, and the private sector to gather diverse perspectives and insights. Through structured interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops, stakeholders contributed valuable input to inform subsequent stages of the consultancy. These consultations were critical in ensuring that the consultancy addressed the real needs and priorities of all relevant parties.

Implementation (April – June 2024)

The consultancy was implemented over approximately three (3) months (April – June 2024), with key activities included:

- Conducting 4 focus group discussions (FGDs);
- Conducting 2 agro-inputs visits;
- Conducting 15 field interviews with farmers;
- Conducting 15 field interviews with agro-industry;
- Facilitating access to modern farming tools and technologies;
- Developing and disseminating recommendations and conclusions;
- Promoting knowledge sharing.

Results and Findings

The consultancy achieved significant milestones, including:

1. **Identification of Gaps and Challenges:** Through focus group discussions and field interviews, our team gathered valuable insights into the specific needs and obstacles faced by farmers and agricultural stakeholders in Kosovo. The main gaps and challenges identified in advisory services include limited access to modern agricultural practices, insufficient advisory services, and inadequate capacity-building opportunities for farmers

Recommendations:

- Increase access to modern agricultural techniques.
 - Strengthen advisory services.
 - Provide more capacity-building opportunities.
2. **Development of Effective Models:** Two comprehensive models for Extension/Advisory Services were developed, tailored to the unique context of Kosovo. These models proposed innovative approaches to improve the execution and impact of extension services, emphasizing sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices. The models were designed to enhance collaboration between farmers, researchers, and extension officers, ensuring a more integrated and effective support system.

Recommendations:

- Implement the proposed models to improve extension service execution.
- Encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

3. Enhanced Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange: Enhanced collaboration and knowledge exchange are crucial for advancing agricultural practices and improving outcomes for farmers. By fostering partnerships between local farmers, advisory services, research institutions, and international experts, all together can facilitate the sharing of innovative techniques, best practices, and valuable resources. This collaborative approach not only addresses existing gaps but also promotes continuous learning and adaptation, ultimately leading to more sustainable and productive agricultural systems.

Recommendations:

- Facilitate ongoing knowledge-sharing sessions.
- Promote a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

4. Empowerment and Capacity Building: Empowerment and capacity building are essential for enabling farmers to succeed. By providing targeted training (particularly to women and marginalized groups) and resources, we can enhance their skills, knowledge, and confidence. This approach ensures that farmers are better equipped to adopt modern agricultural practices, make informed decisions, and sustainably improve their productivity and livelihoods.

Recommendations:

- Provide targeted extension services to these groups.
- Offer training on modern agricultural practices.
- Continue promoting sustainable farming methods.
- Provide training on modern techniques.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The consultancy successfully met its objectives, developing two detailed models: one designed for small-scale implementation (targeting specific groups of associations or regions) and the other intended for nationwide application. Furthermore, based on the EREA project's perspective and goals, the consultancy team recommend Model 2 for several reasons:

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Model 2 is fully in line with the Strategic Plan of the Kosovo Advisory System for Agriculture and Rural Development 2023-2027. This plan was developed with the support of Caritas Switzerland through the SIREN project, ensuring a robust and well-supported framework.

Sustainability: Model 1, while potentially beneficial, lacks sustainability. Associations such as Organika, Mjedra e Kosoves, PePeKo, and AGRODEV are currently not financially sustainable. They lack both the human capacities and financial means to operate independently. Their continued existence in this sector is contingent upon the ongoing support from Caritas.

Capacity Building: Model 2 provides a more sustainable approach by leveraging the strategic plan's provisions for capacity building and resource allocation. This ensures that the advisory system can operate independently and effectively in the long term.

Financial Stability: The reliance on external support, as seen with the associations in Model 1, poses a risk to the project's continuity. Model 2 mitigates this risk by establishing a framework that is less dependent on temporary external funding.

Strategic Fit: The EREA project's goals include establishing a sustainable and independent advisory system. Model 2 fits this strategic vision better, ensuring that the project's outcomes are durable and aligned with broader national objectives.

Therefore, while Model 1 has its merits, Model 2 is better suited to achieving the EREA project's objectives in a sustainable and strategically aligned manner.

Recommendations for Implementation:

Facilitate Dialogue with MAFRD/DTAS: EREA should initiate and facilitate the dialogue process with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) and the Department of Technical Advisory and Service (DTAS) to implement Model 2. Since Caritas through SIREN

project supported the drafting of the strategic plan, the next logical step is to start implementing this plan with concrete actions, such as those outlined in Model 2.

Leverage Caritas Support: If Caritas is willing to continue its support to (Organika, Mjedra e Kosoves, PePeKo, and AGRODEV), EREA project can facilitate dialogue with MAFRD/DTAS to explore cooperation with these four associations. These associations can then operate as independent, specialized private bodies that could provide paid advisory services to farmers. This approach ensures that the associations become financially sustainable while still contributing to the agricultural advisory system.

By taking these steps, the EREA project can ensure the successful implementation of Model 2, fostering a sustainable and effective agricultural advisory system in Kosovo.

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To sustain and scale these achievements, the following recommendations are proposed for the EREA Program:

1. **Provide Ongoing Support for Extension Services:** Caritas Switzerland, through the EREA Program, should continuously support the aforementioned associations and DTAS. This ongoing support is essential to maintain and expand the reach of extension services, ensuring they remain accessible and relevant to farmers. By doing so, we will promote long-term agricultural development and sustainability. Additionally, continuous support will help build the capacity of these associations, enhance their operational efficiency, and ensure they can deliver high-quality advisory services independently in the future. This support will also foster innovation in agricultural practices, improve productivity, and contribute to the overall economic development of rural areas.
2. **Strengthen Farmer Cooperatives and Market Linkages:** Strengthening farmer cooperatives and improving market linkages will ensure long-term economic benefits. This will enhance farmers' bargaining power, market access, and integration into value chains.
3. **Promote Policy Frameworks for Sustainable Agriculture:** DTAS's Role: The DTAS team should take a leading role in developing the necessary policy frameworks, with EREA's team, leveraging their expertise and existing involvement in the sector, well-positioned to support DTAS in spearheading this initiative.

Specific Frameworks to Focus On:

Legal Framework for Agricultural Cooperatives: Develop comprehensive regulations to facilitate the establishment, operation, and governance of agricultural cooperatives. This will encourage collective farming practices and improve market access for smallholder farmers.

Sustainability and Environmental Compliance: Create policies that promote sustainable agricultural practices and ensure environmental compliance. These policies should include guidelines for resource management, soil conservation, and the reduction of carbon footprints in farming activities.

Financial Support and Incentives: Formulate frameworks that provide financial support and incentives for farmers adopting innovative and sustainable farming techniques. This could include subsidies, grants, and low-interest loans to encourage investment in modern agricultural technologies.

Capacity Building and Training: Develop policies that focus on capacity building and continuous professional development for farmers and agricultural advisors. This will ensure that the agricultural community is well-equipped with the latest knowledge and skills.

Recommendations:

Collaborate with MAFRD/DTAS: EREA should work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD) and the Department of Technical Advisory Service (DTAS) to ensure that the policy frameworks are aligned with national strategies and priorities.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including farmers' associations, agricultural experts, and private sector partners, to gather input and ensure the frameworks are comprehensive and practical.

4. **Ensure Continuous Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:** Continuous capacity building and knowledge sharing among farmers are vital for the sustained success of extension services. Regular training programs and workshops will help farmers stay updated on best practices and innovations in agriculture. **Training Programs for Extension Officers:**
 - **Responsibility:** The responsibility for designing and implementing training programs for extension officers should be a collaborative effort between the DTAS and the EREA team, with support from Caritas Switzerland.

- **Implementation:** Implementation can be carried out through a combination of workshops, online courses, field visits, and on-the-job training. Partnerships with these 4 association's, other private companies, research institutions, and international organizations can enhance the quality and scope of the training programs.
- **Specific Skills and Knowledge Areas:** The following skills and knowledge areas have been identified as lacking among extension officers and should be the focus of the training programs:
- **Technical Knowledge in Modern Agricultural Practices: Crop Management:** Advanced techniques in crop rotation, soil fertility management, pest and disease control, and irrigation management. **Livestock Management:** Improved breeding practices, animal health management, nutrition, and housing. **Sustainable Practices:** Knowledge of sustainable farming techniques, organic farming, and agroecology.
- **ICT and Digital Tools: Data Management:** Use of digital tools for collecting, analyzing, and managing agricultural data. **Extension Apps:** Training on using mobile applications and online platforms to deliver extension services and communicate with farmers.
- **Communication and Advisory Skills: Effective Communication:** Techniques for effective communication and advisory services, including listening skills, negotiation, and conflict resolution. **Community Engagement:** Strategies for engaging with farmer communities, understanding their needs, and fostering collaboration.
- **Business and Financial Management: Farm Economics:** Understanding farm economics, budgeting, financial planning, and record-keeping. **Market Access:** Knowledge of market trends, supply chain management, and marketing strategies.
- **Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: Agricultural Policies:** Understanding of relevant agricultural policies, regulations, and support programs (like grants and direct payments, application form, preparing the project proposals etc). **Compliance:** Training on regulatory compliance, environmental standards, and quality control.

By focusing on these areas and following these recommendations, the training programs can significantly enhance the skills and effectiveness of extension officers, thereby improving the overall quality and impact of agricultural advisory services in Kosovo.

5. **Expand Outreach Efforts:** Expanding outreach efforts to reach more farmers and communities with tailored advisory services is necessary. This will ensure that the benefits of the extension services are widely distributed and inclusive. Based on the assessment and observations from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in Kosovo,

here are detailed insights on key areas for investment and improvement for extension officers, along with best practices to enhance their effectiveness:

- MAFRD/DTAS with the support of EREA program should investment in Specialized Training Programs: the trainings should focus on advanced agricultural techniques, sustainable practices, and modern technologies. MAFRD/DTAS with the support of EREA program Provide must provide ongoing learning opportunities through workshops, seminars, and online courses to keep extension officers updated with the latest developments in agriculture. Another important are is related to digital Tools and ICT Integration: the MAFRD/DTAS with the support of EREA program **must** invest in training programs to improve digital literacy among extension officers, enabling them to use modern ICT tools effectively. Then one other field of interest is the **access** to digital **resources**: MAFRD/DTAS with the support of EREA program must equip extension officers with tablets, smartphones, and other digital devices loaded with agricultural apps and resources. Data Management Systems: Develop and implement robust data management systems to collect, analyze, and use agricultural data effectively.

In addition is the long list of activities where EREA program could support MAFRD/DTAS to improve the overall situation of the advisory services in Kosovo:

- Invest in communication skills training to help extension officers engage effectively with farmers.
- Train officers in community engagement strategies to foster trust and collaboration with local farming communities.
- Establish systems for regular feedback from farmers to continuously improve advisory services.
- Establish well-equipped agricultural resource centers where extension officers and farmers can access information, tools, and technologies.
- Foster collaborations to access cutting-edge research and innovations.
- Create networks for extension officers to share experiences, challenges, and best practices.

As per best practices observed, the consultancy team recommends the Holistic Approach to Training, Community-Based Approaches, Financial and Policy Support and Monitoring and Evaluation.

6. **Foster Partnerships with Local Organizations:** Building and nurturing partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders will enhance the sustainability and impact of extension programs. Collaborative efforts can lead to better resource mobilization and more effective service delivery.
7. **Invest in Training and Capacity Building for Extension Officers:** Continuous investment in the training and capacity building of extension officers is essential. Keeping extension officers updated on best practices will ensure that they provide high-quality support to farmers.
8. **Integrate Technology Solutions:** Integrating technology solutions for improved data collection, analysis, and communication within advisory services will enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Technology can facilitate better decision-making and more timely interventions.

Other recommendations:

- Continue promoting sustainable farming methods.
- Provide training on modern techniques.
- Provide farmers with better market access and negotiation tools.
- Increase economic empowerment and resilience to market fluctuations.
- Promote gender equality in decision-making.
- Improve coordination and resource allocation.
- Enhance support for farmers' needs.
- Adopt practices that reduce chemical use and preserve biodiversity.
- Enhance soil fertility.
- Prioritize funding and design targeted interventions.
- Shape policies based on successful strategies and areas for improvement.

This final report provides a comprehensive account of the consultancy's journey, offering valuable insights and guidance for future initiatives aimed at enhancing the structuring and execution of Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism models and practices.

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1. Introduction

The Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism Consultancy, funded by the Empowering Rural Economies in Agriculture (EREA) program through CARITAS Switzerland, was implemented by ARPA Agrotecnica - Società Cooperativa, based in Rome, Italy. This report provides a thorough overview of the consultancy's objectives, methodologies, implementation process, results, impact, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and detailed recommendations.

Henceforth, agriculture remains the backbone of rural economy, providing livelihoods for a significant portion of the population in Kosovo. However, smallholder farmers in Kosovo often face numerous challenges, including limited access to modern farming techniques, inadequate advisory services, and restricted market access. These challenges make it difficult for them to stay productive and financially secure, trapping them in poverty and leaving them without sufficient income and food security. Recognizing these issues, the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy was designed to address these gaps and challenges and propose solutions for better execution of extension services in Kosovo.

The EREA program, supported by CARITAS Switzerland, focuses on sustainable agricultural development and rural economic empowerment. It aims to enhance food security, increase agricultural productivity, and improve the livelihoods of rural communities through various interventions. The Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism project aligns with these goals by providing tailored support and capacity-building opportunities for farmers, promoting sustainable farming practices, and facilitating better market integration.

ARPA Agrotecnica - Società Cooperativa, based in Rome, Italy, brings extensive experience and expertise in agricultural development and rural advisory services. The cooperative's commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development has been instrumental in the successful implementation of this project. Through collaborative efforts with local stakeholders, ARPA Agrotecnica has ensured that the consultancy's interventions are contextually relevant and effectively address the specific needs of the target communities.

This report is structured to provide a detailed account of the project's journey from inception to conclusion. It begins with an overview of the project background, objectives, and methodology, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the implementation process and the results achieved. The impact analysis section outlines the positive effects on the economy, society, and environment, while the challenges and lessons learned section sheds light on valuable insights gained during project implementation. Lastly, recommendations are provided to sustain and expand the project's influence, ensuring ongoing support for rural Extension/Advisory Service in Kosovo.

This report documents both the achievements and obstacles encountered within the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy, aiming to enrich discussions on sustainable agricultural growth and rural economic advancement in Kosovo. It also serves as a valuable tool for policymakers, development workers, and stakeholders seeking to replicate and expand similar efforts, thereby empowering rural communities across the country.

1.1 Consultancy Background

In Kosovo, agriculture is fundamental to rural economies, serving as the primary source of livelihood and ensuring food security for many. However, smallholder farmers face significant hurdles, including limited access to modern farming techniques, inadequate advisory services, and constrained market opportunities, which often result in low productivity, food insecurity, and persistent poverty nationwide. Nonetheless, Kosovo's agricultural sector plays a pivotal role in its economy, supporting livelihoods and fostering socio-economic development. Effective agricultural extension services are essential for sustainable growth, offering crucial information, technical assistance, and market access to farmers and agri-entrepreneurs. Moreover, the agricultural sector not only underpins Kosovo's economy but also significantly contributes to the livelihoods of its people and the overall socio-economic progress of the nation.

In the past year, the agricultural sector in Kosovo has shown resilience, with added value reaching € 969 million in 2023. This represents 7.4% of the country's Gross National Product (GNP), highlighting the sector's importance in the overall economic development of our country.

(MAFRD, 2024). However, it's important to note that these numbers are subject to fluctuations influenced by various factors including weather conditions, market demand, and policy changes.

With approximately 130,800 farms operating throughout the country. These farms are a vital part of the economy, employing a significant portion of the population and providing livelihoods for many residents. Notably, about 62% of Kosovo's population lives in rural areas, highlighting the importance of agriculture in sustaining these communities (SAK 2011, SAK, 2015, FAO 2018). The agricultural workforce, encompassing both farmers and laborers, constitutes a significant portion of the labor force, with over 82,000 annual working units dedicated to this sector (MAFRD 2021). This substantial engagement underscores the sector's contribution to fostering sustainable development and enhancing rural prosperity.

Extension services are vital for supporting farmers and improving agricultural productivity. Based on the MAFRD database of the Register of Certified Advisors, in Kosovo, approximately 400 experts are employed in extension services, delivering essential knowledge and assistance to farmers. Among these, 40 are public extension officers from municipal departments, and 360 are private advisors. However, it is important to note that out of the 400 certified advisors, 200 currently hold valid certifications, while the other 200 have recently expired certifications (MAFRD, 2024). These certified advisory service officers play a pivotal role in disseminating information, providing technical expertise, and facilitating access to resources for farmers. According to discussions with MAFRD/DTAS staff, these experts are prepared to actively provide advice to farmers. Active engagement includes on-site visits, conducting workshops, and offering consultations through digital platforms. This proactive approach ensures that farmers receive timely and practical support tailored to their specific needs. Unfortunately, the list of Certified Advisors is not yet available online, so farmers cannot contact them directly. Instead, farmers can ask questions through the DTAS web page and await responses. As stated above, the experts comprise a mix of individuals affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development, municipal departments, and private advisors. This combination ensures a wide range of expertise and coverage for the agricultural sector in Kosovo. Despite their smaller numbers, they are instrumental in ensuring that farmers have access to current information,

innovative practices, and support networks to optimize their agricultural activities and adapt to changing conditions.

Despite its significance, the efficacy of agricultural extension services, both public and private, remains a critical determinant for ensuring sustainable growth and development within this sector. These extension services play a multifaceted role in the agricultural ecosystem, serving as conduits for disseminating vital information, offering technical assistance, and facilitating market access for farmers and agri-entrepreneurs.

Understanding the pivotal role of agricultural extension services, this project aimed to bridge existing gaps and enhance the delivery mechanisms in Kosovo. Through a careful and comprehensive assessment coupled with innovative model development, the project sought to invigorate and reinforce the agricultural extension service, thereby fostering sustainable growth and development.

The envisioned consultancy strategy entailed active engagement with key stakeholders, forging collaborative partnerships with program allies, and aligning closely with the strategic direction set forth by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of these stakeholders, the project endeavored to catalyze positive change and drive impactful outcomes across Kosovo's agricultural sector. Moreover, it aimed not only to identify existing challenges but also to capitalize on emerging opportunities, thereby proposing a more resilient and responsive extension service framework tailored to meet the diverse needs of stakeholders.

At its core, this consultancy embarked on a transformative journey aimed at redefining agricultural extension services in Kosovo. Central to this transformation was the assurance of accessibility, effectiveness, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. Through strategic collaborations and concerted efforts, the project endeavored to empower farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and service providers alike, thereby laying the foundation for a vibrant and resilient agricultural ecosystem in Kosovo.

CARITAS Switzerland is a leading international development organization with a strong commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable communities through sustainable development initiatives. The organization's support for the EREA program underscores its dedication to addressing the root causes of poverty and food insecurity in rural areas. By financing the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism project, CARITAS Switzerland aims to enhance agricultural productivity and promote economic stability in rural economies.

ARPA Agrotecnica - Società Cooperativa, based in Rome, Italy, is a renowned agricultural cooperative with extensive experience in providing advisory services and promoting sustainable farming practices. The cooperative's mission is to support farmers in adopting modern agricultural techniques, improving crop yields, and achieving economic self-sufficiency. ARPA Agrotecnica's expertise and commitment to rural development made it the ideal implementing partner for the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism project.

The rationale behind the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism project is rooted in the recognition that empowering smallholder farmers with knowledge, skills, and resources is essential for achieving sustainable agricultural development. The project seeks to bridge the gap between traditional farming practices and modern agricultural techniques, enabling farmers to enhance their productivity and resilience. By providing access to extension services, training, and capacity-building opportunities, the project aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation among farmers.

The consultancy's design was informed by a thorough needs assessment and stakeholder consultations, ensuring that the interventions were contextually relevant and effectively addressed the specific challenges faced by the target communities. The project's scope encompassed several key areas, including the enhancement of cooperation among extension service partners, the development of two different models, the organization of FGDs and field interviews, and the study of market linkages etc.

The Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy is a strategic initiative under the EREA program, aimed at enhancing the agricultural productivity and economic resilience of rural

communities. Supported by CARITAS Switzerland and implemented by ARPA Agrotecnica, the consultancy leverages the strengths of both organizations to deliver targeted interventions that empower farmers and promote sustainable agricultural development. This report provides a comprehensive account of the consultancy's implementation, outcomes, and impacts, contributing to the broader discourse on rural economic empowerment and sustainable agriculture.

1.2 Objectives

The Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy, under the Empowering Rural Economies in Agriculture (EREA) program, is designed to address the critical needs of smallholder farmers by enhancing their agricultural practices and economic resilience. The consultancy's objectives are structured to provide comprehensive support to rural communities, ultimately aiming for sustainable agricultural development and improved livelihoods.

1.2.1 Consultancy Overview and Objectives

The primary objective of the consultancy was to identify gaps and challenges in the current extension services framework in Kosovo and propose practical and effective solutions for its enhancement. This consultancy aimed to provide CARITAS SWITZERLAND and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD) with two comprehensive and distinct models for optimizing agricultural Extension/Advisory Services in Kosovo.

1.2.2 Key Objectives:

1. **Develop Proposals for Effective Extension/Advisory Service Mechanisms:**

- Create two tailored proposals for establishing effective Extension/Advisory Service mechanisms specific to the context of Kosovo.

2. **Identify and Address Gaps and Challenges:**

- Conduct a thorough analysis to identify gaps and challenges within the existing extension services framework.

3. **Provide Tailored Solutions:**

- Offer CARITAS SWITZERLAND and MAFRD models for enhancing agricultural practices, advisory services, and capacity-building initiatives.

4. Integration of Modern Technology:

- Implement innovative and sustainable approaches to improve the execution and impact of extension services.

5. Strengthen Collaboration:

- Foster stronger collaboration between farmers, advisory services, and agricultural institutions to ensure cohesive support.

6. Promote Best Practices:

- Encourage the adoption of best practices in agricultural extension and advisory services.

7. Foster Continuous Improvement:

- Promote continuous improvement and adaptation of extension services to meet the evolving needs of farmers and rural communities.

8. Foster Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Incorporate robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, measure impact, and ensure continuous improvement, thereby sustaining and scaling sustainable agricultural development and improved livelihoods.

These objectives are designed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by smallholder farmers, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and support needed to achieve sustainable agricultural development. By focusing on capacity building, market integration, and sustainability, the consultancy aims to create lasting positive impacts on rural economies and contribute to the overall goals of the EREA program.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology for this consultancy involved a comprehensive approach that integrated various techniques to ensure thorough analysis and effective intervention. Stakeholder consultations served as a foundational step, engaging key actors from government agencies, NGOs, farmers' associations, and the private sector to gather diverse perspectives and insights. Through structured interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops, stakeholders contributed valuable input to inform subsequent stages of the consultancy. These consultations were critical in ensuring that the consultancy addressed the real needs and priorities of all relevant parties.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to gather empirical data and provide a deeper understanding of the current state of agricultural extension services. Surveys, interviews, and participant observations captured qualitative insights, while statistical analysis quantified key indicators such as service utilization and satisfaction levels. This dual approach enabled a nuanced examination of extension services, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The qualitative methods provided rich, contextual data that helped to understand the underlying issues and motivations, while the quantitative methods offered a broad overview of trends and patterns, ensuring a comprehensive analysis.

International benchmarking offered valuable insights into global best practices, allowing for comparative analysis and the identification of innovative approaches. By studying extension service models from countries with successful agricultural sectors, such as Italy, Austria etc., the consultant team gained valuable insights to inform the development of a tailored model for Kosovo.

The consultancy employed a participatory and inclusive approach, engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including local farmers, agricultural experts, MAFRD, and non-governmental organizations. The consultancy was implemented in a phased manner, with continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure timely adjustments and improvements.

1. Conducting 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

- **Purpose:** Gather diverse perspectives and insights from different stakeholder groups, extension service providers, agricultural experts, and representatives from MAFRD and NGOs.
- **Method:** Organize and facilitate five FGDs in various fields to ensure broad representation and inclusivity. Discussions focused on identifying current challenges, needs, and potential solutions for improving extension services.
- **Outcome:** Comprehensive understanding of stakeholder views and collaborative identification of key issues and recommendations.

2. **Conducting 2 Agro-Inputs Visits:**

- **Purpose:** Assess the availability, quality, and accessibility of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides.
- **Method:** Visit two key agro-input suppliers and distributors to evaluate their operations, supply chains, and interaction with farmers.
- **Outcome:** Detailed insights into the agro-input market, identifying gaps and opportunities for enhancing input supply and distribution.

3. **Conducting 15 Field Interviews with Farmers:**

- **Purpose:** Collect in-depth information on the experiences, challenges, and needs of smallholder farmers.
- **Method:** Conduct individual interviews with 15 farmers across different regions, focusing on their current farming practices, access to extension services, and specific areas where support is needed.
- **Outcome:** Rich qualitative data on farmers' perspectives, helping to tailor extension services to meet their needs effectively.

4. **Conducting 15 Field Interviews with Agro-Industry:**

- **Purpose:** Understand the role and impact of the agro-industry on agricultural practices and farmer support.
- **Method:** Conduct individual interviews with 15 representatives from the agro-industry, including agribusinesses, cooperatives, and agro-processing units.
- **Outcome:** Insights into the agro-industry's contributions and challenges, identifying areas for collaboration and improvement in extension services.

5. **Facilitating Access to Modern Farming Tools and Technologies:**

- **Purpose:** Enhance farmers' productivity and sustainability through the adoption of modern farming tools and technologies.
- **Method:** Organize demonstrations and training sessions on the use of advanced agricultural equipment and techniques.
- **Outcome:** Increased awareness and capacity among farmers to utilize modern tools, leading to improved agricultural practices and yields.

6. Developing and Disseminating Recommendations and Conclusions:

- **Purpose:** Provide actionable recommendations for improving extension services and agricultural practices in Kosovo.
- **Method:** Analyze data collected from FGDs, interviews, and field visits to develop comprehensive recommendations. Disseminate these findings through reports, workshops, and meetings with stakeholders.
- **Outcome:** Clear, evidence-based recommendations that inform policy and practice, ensuring sustainable improvements in extension services.

This methodology ensures a comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive approach to improving extension services in Kosovo, aligned with the overall goals of the EREA program.

Findings from Meetings and Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholders Insights:

First FGD with AgriDev, Mjedra e Kosoves, PePeko, and Organica - During this session, it became evident that Kosovo's agricultural advisory services are not meeting the needs of farmers. Despite significant efforts and a decade-long partnership with USAID, public advisory services have fallen short. Participants highlighted that municipal advisors are overburdened and often lack the specialized knowledge required to provide effective support. This inadequacy has led to poor adoption of innovative agricultural practices and dissatisfaction among farmers.

Moreover, the FGD underscored the need for a more organized and expert-driven approach to advisory services. The private experts engaged by the "AgriDev" foundation have shown promise, suggesting that a shift towards specialized, dedicated advisory teams could enhance service quality. Participants also noted the importance of collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Agriculture and organizations like "Mjedra e Kosoves" to deliver targeted agricultural advice. The FGD participants agreed that a restructured advisory system, leveraging both public and private expertise, is crucial for advancing Kosovo's agricultural sector.

One other conclusions drawn from our first focus group discussion (FGD) highlight several critical issues and potential solutions regarding Kosovo's agricultural advisory services. Firstly, CARITAS has been instrumental in providing professional reports and strategies, offering valuable technical

expertise to various departments within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. Despite this, public sector-led advisory services have proven inadequate. Participants emphasized the necessity of a well-organized structure for these services, which has been lacking over the years. They also stressed that the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) should support associated organizations in delivering advisory services. The frequent failure of many funded consultancies indicates inherent problems within the current advisory services framework, despite the ministry's sufficient budget for grants.

The discussion also revealed significant flaws in the tender process for advisory services, conducted every two years by MAFRD. Contracts awarded to private companies often result in unprofessional and superficial services, with companies merely collecting signatures without providing real value. Participants agreed that the current system is ineffective. Additionally, the MAFRD should collaborate with specialized organizations like "Mjedra e Kosoves," which are dedicated to agricultural advice. Farmers often seek guidance through platforms like "agro portal," where they can ask about good agricultural practices and pesticide use, receiving tailored advice from our experts. The FGD highlighted that municipal advisors lack the necessary expertise for effective advisory services and are overwhelmed with other responsibilities, such as processing subsidy applications under MAFRD agreements. To address these issues, advisory services must be categorized and assigned to experts in specific fields to ensure they adequately meet farmers' needs.

Further conclusions from the first focus group discussion (FGD) emphasize several critical points for enhancing agricultural advisory services in Kosovo. It is crucial that agricultural advisory programs are tailored to the specific needs of each region, as the agricultural crops vary significantly across the seven regions of Kosovo. A one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. Additionally, institutions should support women in agriculture, empowering them to become farm managers. Women possess strong farm management skills, and advisory services should include training programs specifically designed to enhance these skills.

Participants also highlighted the importance of integrating smart agriculture, digitalization, and environmentally friendly practices into the agricultural strategy. Although these concepts are

relatively new to farmers in Kosovo, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is beginning to support farmers through initiatives such as the digitization of greenhouses. Implementing modern agricultural practices should be a gradual process, with the Ministry playing a pivotal role in guiding these initiatives.

Another key point raised was the lack of daily information on product prices in Kosovo's main markets. This issue could be addressed by creating a website with daily updates from market managers. Additionally, the current agricultural policy that subsidizes raspberry producers at 0.2 €/kg could be adjusted. Reducing the subsidy to 0.18 €/kg and reallocating 0.02 €/kg to associations or cooperatives would support extension services more effectively.

The final conclusion from the first focus group discussion (FGD) highlights a significant challenge for small farmers: collaborating with collection points to pay for advisory services. Many small farmers lack the financial means to pay for these services upfront. Additionally, they are reluctant to agree to a system where the fee for advisory services is deducted from the payment for their produce at the collection point. This reluctance stems from the fact that it would result in them receiving less money for their delivered production. This issue is exacerbated by the small and highly fragmented nature of farms in Kosovo, making it difficult to implement such payment systems effectively.

Finally, while many donors are willing to fund technical advice, the challenge remains that farmers are often reluctant to pay for agricultural advice. Overcoming this reluctance requires demonstrating the tangible benefits of advisory services and finding innovative ways to fund these services sustainably.

The second meeting with FGD (IADK): The second focus group discussion (FGD) highlighted several critical issues and potential solutions for improving advisory services for farmers in Kosovo. The Ministry of Agriculture and Municipalities were criticized for their ineffective approach, particularly their reliance on outsourcing consulting services to private companies through procurement procedures. This often results in substandard services and possible manipulation. Farmers are also inadequately informed about the available services due to the lack

of clear communication channels. Additionally, municipalities lack sufficient staff and infrastructure to provide independent advisory support, exacerbating the problem.

Farmers' needs remain unmet, with issues such as agronomist certification and access challenges, especially in remote rural areas. To address these shortcomings, the FGD participants recommended creating a dedicated agency for advisory services, with offices in municipalities to facilitate direct communication between officials and farmers. There is also a call for increased engagement of young agronomists and the development of online platforms to provide easy access to information and services. Programs should prioritize innovative topics such as adaptation to climate change and the digitization of agriculture, reflecting the evolving needs of the sector.

Face-to-face interactions were deemed more effective for counseling services, especially for women who face additional barriers such as isolation and limited access to transportation. Organizations like IADK advocate for improvements based on international expertise, aiming to promote smart agricultural practices. The challenges of climate change adaptation and knowledge sharing among farmers were highlighted, emphasizing the need for investment in models and good practices to encourage adoption.

Finally, according to IADK, addressing the gaps in advisory services requires a comprehensive approach that includes restructuring, capacity building, and innovation. Establishing a dedicated agency, improving communication channels, engaging young agronomists, and prioritizing face-to-face interactions and digital solutions are essential steps to meet the diverse needs of farmers in Kosovo.

The third meeting with FGD Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) - The third focus group discussion (FGD) highlighted several key conclusions regarding the advisory services for farmers in Kosovo. During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD), key participants included representatives from the Department of Technical Advisory Service, representatives from the Department of Economic Analysis and Agricultural Statistics, and representatives from the Department of Agricultural Policy and Trade and Department for

Rural Development and from ARPA Mr. Luciano Pasi, Sokol Sallahu and Dukagjin Zeka. The discussion centered on identifying the current challenges in extension services, exploring innovative solutions, and fostering inter-departmental collaboration to enhance agricultural practices and economic resilience among smallholder farmers in Kosovo. A significant contribution has been made by CARITAS, whose expert engagement facilitated the preparation of the strategic plan for Kosovo's rural development. This strategic plan, covering a five-year period, regulates the availability of advisory services and addresses the advisory system for agriculture and rural development across the entire Republic of Kosovo.

Despite these efforts, the implementation and maintenance of agricultural councils revealed several defects. The strategic plan has identified these issues, and the recently proposed law for advisory services, currently in the Kosovo parliament, aims to address them. Furthermore, as part of the advisory services function, a concept document for agricultural cooperatives was drafted with CARITAS, who have expressed their readiness to support these cooperatives.

Meetings with farmers are usually held in response to their requests, and efforts are underway to increase farmer participation in training sessions. A private company was selected through procurement procedures, aiming to train approximately 7,000 farmers over the next two years. This year, collaboration with the Kosovo Agricultural Institute in Peje has led to the establishment of demonstration fields for wheat crops, featuring five important wheat cultivars.

An information system for the advisory services sector has been initiated, with an expert engaged to prepare the terms of reference. Additionally, the strategic plan recognizes the need for municipal councilors to be more dedicated to advisory services rather than other municipal tasks. Plans are in place to either transfer existing councilors or hire new staff, ensuring each municipality has at least one dedicated municipal councilor for advisory services.

A major issue identified is the lack of staff. Municipal agricultural advisors are often overburdened with additional responsibilities, detracting from their advisory roles. Meetings with mayors and directors of agricultural departments reveal a tendency to prioritize municipal interests over

advisory services. To improve this, the strategic plan proposes forming advisory packages that provide all farmers with necessary information.

A visit to Croatia provided a model for digital access to advisory services, highlighting the need to advance Kosovo's information system. Over the next two years, efforts will focus on enhancing digital advisory services and creating comprehensive counseling packages in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Establishing a functional chain of services is crucial. Coordination between farmers, municipal officials, regional officials, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) is necessary. Regional offices would facilitate better contact with municipal officials and farmers, addressing the current limitation of annual meetings between MAFRD and municipal councilors.

Private companies contracted for agricultural advice are expected to address farmers' needs based on requests submitted through municipal councilors. These requests form the basis of monthly agendas for municipal meetings, ensuring relevant topics are prioritized. Requests are evaluated annually and monthly to ensure they align with farmers' changing needs and priorities.

In conclusion, addressing the gaps in advisory services requires a comprehensive approach that includes strategic planning, increased staffing, better coordination, and the integration of digital solutions to meet the diverse needs of Kosovo's farmers.

The fourth meeting with FGD Agro inputs (Agrion SH.P.K. & NTP FATI, & Agricultural Pharmacy) - The fourth focus group discussion (FGD) underscored several critical issues and potential solutions for enhancing agricultural advisory services at both the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and the municipal levels. Despite the existence of advisory services, there is a perceived lack of concrete impact on farmers, as evidenced by direct interactions with farmers at agricultural pharmacies. Farmers are not seeing the Ministry's advisory services in action, especially in addressing their immediate needs.

One notable observation is the ineffectiveness of the current extension services provided by private companies under the MAFRD. Farmers primarily seek advice on managing pests and diseases. For instance, the appearance of the "**Tuta absoluta**" insect highlighted a failure in timely intervention, leading to ineffective control measures. This emphasizes the need for regular and timely visits by advisory institutions to monitor and advise on the state of orchards and greenhouses.

The current system, where one municipal official is responsible for agricultural advice, is inadequate. For example, it is impossible for a single advisor to effectively support approximately 3,000 farmers in Prishtina. To address this, municipalities should employ at least five agricultural advisors to ensure comprehensive support. These advisors should form mobile teams that regularly visit farms, providing timely and relevant advice.

Farmers in remote areas face significant barriers such as poor infrastructure, limited transportation, and lack of information. Establishing farmers' federations and accurately identifying the number of farmers and their cultivated crops are essential steps. A detailed database of farmers' current situations is necessary. Farmers should be organized at the association or cooperative level and given easier access to advisory services through online platforms or mobile teams that respond promptly to their inquiries.

Every municipality should have an office dedicated to supporting farmers, staffed with at least five agronomists to provide full-capacity advisory services, including regular farm visits. Enhanced cooperation between central institutions, municipal authorities, and associated organizations is crucial, ensuring that agro inputs are not overlooked.

The installation of agro-meteorological stations in various villages is also recommended. These stations can provide vital data on farm conditions, such as insect presence, wind speed, humidity, diseases, hail, and drought, and transmit this information to a central system for timely advisories. Empowering women in rural areas is also essential, as they play a critical role in economic development. Efforts should continue to support women in the agricultural sector, ensuring they have the resources and knowledge to succeed.

The MAFRD should focus on integrating smart agriculture practices and support these initiatives through grants. Particular attention should be given to the vegetable sector and the digitization of greenhouses. Additionally, digitizing the pesticide system would allow farmers to stay informed about permitted and banned pesticides, enhancing their ability to manage crops safely and effectively.

Finally, according to the fourth FGD, addressing the gaps in advisory services requires a multifaceted approach, including increased staffing, improved infrastructure, enhanced data collection, and digital solutions. Effective collaboration between various levels of government and organizations, as well as a focus on timely and relevant support, is crucial to meeting the diverse needs of Kosovo's farmers.

Final Comparative Conclusion from Four FGDs

The series of focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted shed light on various challenges and proposed solutions regarding agricultural advisory services in Kosovo. Here's a comparative summary of the key conclusions drawn from the four FGDs:

1. Current State of Advisory Services:

- FGD 1 highlighted the inefficiency of Kosovo's agricultural advisory mechanism, citing shortcomings in public sector-led services and reliance on private expertise.
- FGD 2 reiterated concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of advisory services, particularly those outsourced to private companies, and emphasized the need for better communication channels and infrastructure.
- FGD 3 noted the lack of tangible impact from existing advisory services and called for more proactive engagement with farmers, especially in addressing immediate needs like pest management.
- FGD 4 echoed these sentiments, expressing dissatisfaction with the perceived absence of visible results from advisory services and the inadequacy of single municipal advisors to cater to the needs of large farmer populations.

2. Proposed Solutions:

- FGD 1 proposed establishing dedicated expert groups and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors to improve advisory services.

- FGD 2 suggested restructuring advisory systems, increasing staffing, and enhancing digital solutions to address communication gaps and provide more effective support.
- FGD 3 recommended regular farm visits, increased staffing at municipal levels, and the establishment of farmers' federations to improve advisory service delivery.
- FGD 4 advocated for the installation of agro-meteorological stations, empowering women in agriculture, and digitizing pesticide systems to enhance advisory services.

3. Common Themes:

- All FGDs emphasized the importance of tailored advisory services, recognizing the diverse needs of farmers based on geographical regions and agricultural practices.
- There was consistent recognition of the need for increased staffing and better infrastructure at both central and municipal levels to improve service delivery.
- The importance of proactive engagement with farmers, timely interventions, and the integration of digital solutions were common threads throughout all discussions.

Moreover, the four FGDs underscored persistent challenges in Kosovo's agricultural advisory services while offering consistent recommendations for improvement. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts to enhance infrastructure, increase staffing, foster collaboration, and adopt innovative solutions tailored to farmers' diverse needs across the region.

Integration into Value Chain: The cost of Advisory Service (AS) should be considered part of the product's value chain. Agronomists, extension officials, and advisors working for cooperatives, DTAS, and Municipality Information Advisory Centers (MIAC) should be partially paid by the farmers. Free services are often undervalued by clients in any domain.

Financing Application Assistance: Allocate funds from the Paying Agency to finance services that help farmers with their yearly application forms. These services should be provided by MIAC and private advisors, who will gain a deep understanding of individual farms and their needs.

Direct Payment to Advisors: Use a portion of the annual contributions given to farmers to pay directly the advisors.

2. Key Achievements and Milestones Reached by ARPA

2.1 Main Takeaways

According to the recent studies and as presented also in the Strategic Plan of the Kosovo Advisory System for Agriculture and Rural Development 2023-2027, in Kosovo, the need for robust extension services is emphasized by the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the agricultural sector. Recognizing that the usual production factors include land, labor, capital, and information, it becomes clear that enhancing human capital through extension services is vital. Farmers' performance is significantly affected by their ability to process information, which encompasses both innate and learned skills.

Extension services provide human capital-enhancing inputs and flows of information that can improve farmers' welfare. In Kosovo, these services are essential for transferring knowledge from researchers to farmers, advising farmers on decision-making, enabling them to clarify their goals, and stimulating agricultural development. Given Kosovo's diverse agricultural landscape, tailored extension services can address the unique needs of different regions and farming communities.

The public-good attributes of extension services, such as low excludability and rivalry, justify public provision to ensure equitable access and avoid conflicts of interest. While public extension services may not always be the most efficient, they are free from the conflicts that can arise when private sector suppliers of inputs also provide information. This is particularly important in Kosovo, where trust in public institutions can play a critical role in the adoption of new practices.

The record of extension impact on farm performance is mixed. While some analyses indicate high rates of return on extension investment, other cases document negligible achievements, implying a misallocation of public resources. In Kosovo, this highlights the need for careful design and implementation of extension services to maximize their effectiveness.

Productivity improvements are possible if a differential exists between actual productivity on farms and potential productivity with better know-how. This differential, often due to technology and management gaps, can be addressed through extension services. In Kosovo, rapid

technological advances have created significant opportunities for productivity improvements, but these must be tailored to local conditions and constraints.

The extension helps reduce the differential between potential and actual yields by accelerating technology transfer, helping farmers become better managers, and adapting new technology to local conditions. In Kosovo, this approach is fundamental to displacing traditional practices and reducing the perceived risks associated with adopting new technologies. Continuous engagement and tailored communication strategies are essential for building trust and fostering a willingness to adopt new methods.

Moreover, effective extension services in Kosovo can enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability by integrating local knowledge with modern practices, providing tailored support to farmers, and ensuring equitable access to vital information and resources.

2.2 Impact Analysis

Assessing the Impact of the Project on Rural Economies and Agricultural Practices within the Extension Agriculture Service mechanism involves evaluating how the consultancy has influenced income levels, market access, community well-being, agricultural productivity, and the adoption of sustainable practices through extension services. By examining these factors, we can understand the holistic impact of the project on rural communities and farming practices, providing valuable insights for future initiatives and sustainable development.

The Extension Agriculture Service mechanism consultancy can bring significant economic benefits to rural economies. These benefits include increased income levels for farmers, improved market access, and overall enhancement of community well-being. Additionally, should MAFRD or EREA choose to implement either the 1st or 2nd model developed through this consultancy, the expert team is confident that it will positively impact agricultural productivity and the adoption of sustainable practices, thereby contributing to long-term economic sustainability in the agricultural sector.

2.3 Economic Benefits

1. **Increased Income Levels:** The consultancy can lead to a rise in farmers' incomes through enhanced market access and improved agricultural practices, ultimately boosting their financial well-being and livelihoods;
2. **Improved Market Access:** By facilitating better market access for farmers, the consultancy has enabled them to reach a broader customer base, secure fair prices for their produce, and strengthen their economic stability;
3. **Enhanced Community Well-being:** The consultancy's impact on community well-being is evident through job creation, improved social cohesion, and overall quality of life enhancements in rural areas, fostering a more prosperous and connected community;
4. **Boosted Agricultural Productivity:** Through the adoption of new techniques and technologies, the consultancy has increased agricultural productivity, leading to higher yields and improved farm output, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the farming sector;
5. **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:** The consultancy's emphasis on sustainable farming practices has not only benefited the environment but also supported long-term economic sustainability by ensuring the efficient use of resources and promoting eco-friendly agricultural methods.

These economic benefits collectively highlight the positive outcomes of the consultancy on rural economies and agricultural practices, paving the way for continued growth and development in the agricultural sector.

2.4 Social Benefits

By enhancing community well-being, promoting social cohesion, and creating job opportunities, the consultancy can positively impact the social stuff of rural areas. This leads to stronger and more connected communities, improving the overall quality of life for residents in these regions.

1. **Enhanced Community Well-being:** The consultancy contributes to the overall well-being of rural communities by providing job opportunities, fostering social connections, and improving the quality of life for residents;

2. **Promotion of Social Cohesion:** Through its initiatives, the consultancy strengthens social bonds within communities, encouraging collaboration, mutual support, and a sense of unity among residents;
3. **Job Creation:** By generating employment opportunities within the agricultural sector, the consultancy can not only improve economic conditions but also enhance social dynamics by providing individuals with meaningful work and income sources.

These social benefits highlight the consultancy's positive impact on the social aspects of rural areas, creating a more interconnected and thriving community environment.

2.5 Environmental Benefits

The Extension Agriculture Service mechanism consultancy leads to significant environmental benefits. By promoting sustainable farming practices and encouraging eco-friendly approaches, the consultancy can positively impact the environment in rural areas. This includes the conservation of natural resources, reduction of environmental degradation, and overall improvement in the ecological sustainability of agricultural activities.

1. **Conservation of Natural Resources:** The consultancy's emphasis on sustainable farming practices can help in conserving natural resources such as water, soil, and biodiversity, ensuring their long-term availability for future generations.
2. **Reduction of Environmental Degradation:** By promoting eco-friendly approaches to agriculture, the consultancy can contribute to the reduction of environmental degradation, minimizing the negative impact of farming activities on the environment.
3. **Improvement in Ecological Sustainability:** Through the adoption of sustainable practices, the consultancy can enhance the ecological sustainability of agricultural activities, creating a more harmonious relationship between farming and the environment.

These environmental benefits underscore the consultancy's commitment to fostering a more environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural sector, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more balanced ecosystem.

3. Comparison of Pre-and Post-Consultancy Conditions

3.1 Pre-Consultancy Conditions

Before the implementation of the Extension Agriculture Service Mechanism Consultancy, the pre-consultancy conditions in rural areas might have included limited access to agricultural extension services, unsustainable farming practices, fragmented market access, and a lack of social cohesion within the communities. These conditions likely posed challenges to agricultural development, economic growth, and environmental sustainability in the region.

- 1. Limited access to agricultural extension services:** Farmers lacked access to crucial information, modern farming techniques, and advisory services that could help improve their agricultural practices and increase productivity. This limitation hindered their ability to adopt new technologies and best practices.
- 2. Unsustainable farming practices:** The prevalent use of unsustainable farming methods, such as excessive pesticide and fertilizer use, mono-cropping, and poor soil management, leads to soil degradation, reduced crop yields, and environmental damage. Farmers needed guidance on transitioning to more sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices.
- 3. Fragmented market access:** Farmers encounter difficulties in accessing markets due to poor infrastructure, limited transportation options, and a lack of market information. This fragmentation in market access restricted their ability to sell their produce at fair prices and limited their income potential.
- 4. Lack of social cohesion within the communities:** The absence of strong social bonds and cooperation among community members hinders collective action and collaborative efforts in addressing common challenges. This lack of cohesion made it challenging to implement community-wide initiatives for agricultural development and sustainability.

3.2 Post-Consultancy Conditions

After the successful implementation of the Extension Agriculture Service mechanism models, the post-consultancy conditions in rural areas will likely transform significantly. The models will lead to improved access to agricultural extension services, adoption of sustainable farming practices, enhanced market access, and increased social cohesion within the communities. These positive changes will contribute to the overall development, economic growth, and environmental

sustainability in the region. Here are some suggested measures the EREA project should take to overcome challenges and build on these successes:

1. Improved Access to Agricultural Extension Services:

- Measure: Establish a decentralized network of extension agents to ensure regular and personalized advisory services.
- Action: EREA should train and deploy local extension agents who can provide on-the-ground support and tailored advice to farmers. Additionally, creating a digital platform for disseminating information and conducting virtual consultations can complement face-to-face interactions.

2. Adoption of Sustainable Farming Practices:

- Measure: Promote and support sustainable farming practices through incentives and education.
- Action: EREA should organize workshops and training sessions focusing on sustainable farming techniques such as crop rotation, organic farming, and efficient water use. Providing trainings and info sessions for the farmers how to apply for subsidies or grants, or other financial incentives for adopting these practices can also encourage more farmers to transition to sustainable methods.

3. Enhanced Market Access:

- Measure: Improve infrastructure and market linkages to facilitate better market access.
- Action: EREA should collaborate with local authorities to provide technical assistance and training in various market fields and post-harvest processes, as well as to improve the conditions on storage facilities. Additionally, establishing farmer cooperatives can help in collective bargaining and accessing larger markets. Creating an online marketplace or mobile app to connect farmers with buyers can also enhance market access.

4. Increased Social Cohesion Within the Communities:

- Measure: Foster community engagement and cooperative initiatives.

- Action: EREA should facilitate regular community meetings and forums where farmers can share experiences and collaborate on joint projects. Encouraging the formation of farmer groups or cooperatives can enhance collective action and strengthen social bonds. Providing training in leadership and conflict resolution can further support community cohesion.

By implementing these measures, the EREA project can build on the initial successes of the Extension Agriculture Service mechanism models and address the challenges faced by rural communities. This will ensure sustained improvements in agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and community development.

4 The nature of agricultural knowledge

There are two broadly applicable categories of disembodied agricultural information:

- a) General, non-excludable information (e.g., market information, cropping patterns, etc.), which tends to be a public good, and
- b) Specialized, excludable information, which tends to be a toll good.

Thus different types of information can be provided efficiently by different entities: a public service, a private specialized entity, farmers' organizations, and NGOs. Some implications derived from experience seem to lead to the following recommendations:

- Information closely associated with market goods (e.g., purchased inputs) is generally best left to the private sector;
- Information associated with toll goods can be effectively provided by combined public- and private-sector efforts;
- Information relative to management of common pool goods (forests, common grazing lands, water when it is not already subject to quota rules) is usually best provided by cooperative or other non-government institutions;
- Only when market and participation failures are high should information provision be financed by the public sector and, even in these cases, the public sector might well finance private service delivery.

- It is important to underline the relational nature of technical assistance: for reasons of effectiveness, an extension officer must have in-depth knowledge of the type of crop and the pedological and climatic conditions of the place where he works. The degree of local involvement and his familiarity with farmers allows him to overcome farmers' natural distrust of innovations. His continuous availability increases the perception of his responsibility and his sharing of the results of cultivation.

4.1 Financing Extension Services

In European countries, a large part of the extension that falls under toll goods is provided by producer organizations. In the case of cooperatives and organizations such as marketing boards, the service is provided by expert employees whose cost is integrated into the operating costs of the cooperative. In the case of trade union-type associations, professional agronomists are often employed and are paid both by the annual contributions of the farmers and by farmers directly.

In general, agricultural policy contains measures that offer public contributions that partially reimburse organizations for the costs of extension. Larger than average, commercial farms generally hire private consultants or employ them directly.

Kosovo Context: In Kosovo, extension services can be financed through a combination of public funding, contributions from farmer associations, and support from international organizations. Given the structure of Kosovo's agricultural sector, where many farmers operate on a small scale, the following options could be relevant:

- **Producer Organizations and Cooperatives:** Similar to European countries, Kosovo could encourage the formation of producer organizations and cooperatives. These entities can employ expert agronomists and extension workers whose costs are integrated into the cooperative's operating expenses. Public policies could provide partial reimbursement for these costs, incentivizing the formation and operation of such groups.
- **Trade Union-Type Associations:** Professional agronomists could be employed by farmer associations, with their salaries covered by annual farmer contributions and direct payments from farmers. This model would ensure that farmers have access to professional advice and support.

- **Public Contributions:** Agricultural policies in Kosovo could include measures to partially reimburse organizations for the costs of providing extension services. This approach would align with practices in other European countries and ensure that smaller farmers receive necessary support.

4.2 Financing the Extension Services, Private

In the US most information services are provided by private companies. However, the government keeps a major role in establishing measures to encourage their development. can and will fund and deliver” [Beynon et al. (1998, p. 135)].

Private consulting or advisory services generally address the needs of commercial farmers.

Developing private services for small-scale farmers often necessitates public investment to develop the capacities of service providers and establish markets for services.

Another form of providing extension services is given by contract farming: in this set up farmers and buyers agree in advance on the terms and conditions for the production and marketing of farm products. These conditions usually specify the price to be paid to the farmer, the quantity and quality of the product demanded by the buyer, and the date for delivery to buyers. In most cases, the contract may also include more detailed information on how the production will be carried out and inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and technical advice will be provided by the buyer.

Kosovo Context: While private extension services are less common in Kosovo compared to countries like Italy, Austria and especially the US, there are still opportunities for private sector involvement:

- **Private Consulting for Commercial Farmers:** Larger, commercially-oriented farms in Kosovo could hire private consultants to provide specialized advice and services. Public investment may be required to develop the capacities of local private service providers and establish a market for these services.
- **Contract Farming:** Kosovo could promote contract farming arrangements, where buyers provide inputs, technical advice, and support to farmers in exchange for guaranteed produce. This model aligns incentives and ensures that farmers receive the necessary guidance to meet quality and production standards. Integrating extension services into the

EREA contract farming model can greatly enhance the success and sustainability of the project. By providing tailored support, training, and resources, can help farmers improve their productivity, comply with contract terms, and achieve better market access, ultimately contributing to the overall development of the agricultural sector in Kosovo.

4.3 Financing the Extension Service, Public

Public investment in extension is justified when there are benefits also to the general public when the government can provide services more cheaply or better, when extension services directly facilitate other programs, or when the private sector does not provide needed services. These conditions apply when there are positive externalities to innovation or market failure in service provision.

The general trend toward fiscal restraint has reduced the role of the public sector and has led to financial crises of many extension services. The available answers are scaling back and improving efficiency. Scaling back often means focusing on specific target farmer groups and requiring cost sharing by users. Improving cost-effectiveness can be achieved through improvements in program management, targeting and priority setting, and choice of appropriate extension delivery methods, like the use of mass media. Empowerment of farmers, means actual farmers' ownership of programs or farmer involvement in setting priorities, increasing provision efficiency and sustainability of the extension service also by generating support from internal and external stakeholders.

Kosovo Context: Public investment in extension services is crucial in Kosovo, given the significant number of small-scale farmers and the presence of positive externalities:

- **Targeted Public Investment:** The government could focus its extension efforts on small and medium-sized farms, ensuring that these groups receive necessary support. Cost-sharing mechanisms could be introduced to involve farmers in funding the services they receive.
- **Program Management and Efficiency:** Improving the management of extension programs, setting clear priorities, and utilizing appropriate delivery methods (e.g., mass media, digital platforms) can enhance cost-effectiveness. Empowering farmers to take ownership of

programs and involving them in priority-setting can also increase the sustainability and effectiveness of extension services.

4.4 Financing the Extension Services, Public-Private Partnership

Even where public financing of extension is justified (because of positive externalities and market failures), private service delivery is often more efficient in serving farmers. This mainly happens because the provider's and the farmer's incentives are aligned: they both know that if the provider's recommendations do not result in a good outcome, the farmers will not renew the service agreement. This is the reason for the development of contracting extension services, and de-linking funding from service delivery. It requires a system to monitor farmers' satisfaction with the service. Provided that such a system is working, competitive contracting introduces a private-sector mentality of cost-consciousness and results-orientation, even in public institutions.

The idea that farmers have to pay for extension services represents a well-established trend in OECD countries. The following table shows some alternatives available for public-private financing and provision of extension services¹.

Finance provision Service provision	Public	Farmers	Other private
Public	Traditional extension	Fee-for-service extension	Contracts with public institutions Information provided with the sale of inputs
	Subsidies to extension service providers	Commercial advisory services	Extension provided to contract growers
Private	Publicly financed contracts for extension services	Sale of newspapers, magazines	Advertising in newspapers, radio, television, and magazines

¹Reproduced from Alex, G., Zip, W., Byerlee D., with input from the AKIS Thematic Team (2002). "Rural extension and advisory services: New directions", Rural Development Strategy Background Paper #9, ARD. World Bank, Washington, DC.

Kosovo Context: Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can offer an efficient way to deliver extension services in Kosovo:

- **Competitive Contracting:** The government could contract private service providers to deliver extension services, ensuring that providers are incentivized to perform well. Monitoring systems should be established to track farmers' satisfaction and service outcomes.
- **Shared Costs and Responsibilities:** PPPs can help align incentives between the public sector and private providers. Farmers could contribute to the cost of services, ensuring that they are invested in the outcomes. This approach can introduce a private-sector mentality of cost-consciousness and results-orientation into the provision of extension services.
- **International Support:** Leveraging support from international donors and organizations can help finance and implement PPPs in the extension service sector. These partnerships can provide technical assistance, funding, and best practices to enhance the effectiveness of extension services in Kosovo.

By considering these options and tailoring them to the specific context of Kosovo, the MAFRD supported by EREA project can develop a robust framework for financing and delivering agricultural extension services that meet the needs of local farmers and contribute to sustainable agricultural development.

5. The Extension Services Organization and Management

While scholars mainly agree that extension systems are barely functioning at all in most countries, this does not mean that they gave up looking for reasons and solutions. In the literature several factors causing the underperformance of extension systems are highlighted².

²Feder, G., Willett, A., Zip, W. (2001). "Agricultural extension: Generic challenges and the ingredients for solutions". In: Wolf, S., Zilberman, D. (Eds.), *Knowledge Generation and Technical Change: Institutional Innovation in Agriculture*. Kluwer, Boston, pp. 313–356.

5.1 Dimension and Complexity

The number of farmers is generally large and the cost of reaching them is high. Furthermore, even within a given region, required information varies due to variations in soil, microclimate, crop, and the capabilities of different farmers. With a large number of extension officers, there is the need for a bureaucracy that manages them: this often does not lead to a participatory approach to priority setting.

Here are relevant options and measures based on the context of Kosovo:

Challenge: The large number of farmers and the high cost of reaching them, combined with variations in soil, microclimate, crops, and farmer capabilities, make extension services complex.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Localized Extension Agents:** Implement a decentralized approach by hiring local extension agent's familiar with regional variations, the best here is to strengthen and to better use the existing municipality information centers established by EU Project 2012-2014. This can improve the relevance and effectiveness of the advice given.
- **Use of Technology:** Develop and deploy mobile applications and online platforms to disseminate region-specific agricultural information, reducing the need for extensive physical reach.
- **Participatory Approaches:** Engage farmers in setting priorities through regular local meetings and feedback mechanisms to ensure that extension services address their specific needs.

5.2 Dependence on the policy environment

The efficiency of extension work depends on complementary policy and institutional actions that may constrain the availability of factors like credit, input and seed supplies, and price incentives. In general, the value of the information is diminished when the terms of trade are tilted against agriculture and the dimension of farms is relatively small.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Integrated Policy Framework:** Advocate for an integrated agricultural policy framework that aligns extension services with credit, input supply, and market access policies.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage partnerships between the government and private sector to ensure a stable supply of inputs and credit facilities.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Strengthen the role of farmer associations in policy advocacy to ensure that the terms of trade are favorable to agriculture.

5.3 Interaction with research and development

Even when the national research system is functioning, priorities are not necessarily aligned with those of the extension managers. The two sectors often compete for public budgets. Researchers, being more educated, have a higher status than extension officers, and this limits coordination and feedback among them.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Collaborative Platforms:** Establish collaborative platforms for researchers and extension officers to share priorities and align goals. Regular joint meetings and workshops can facilitate this alignment.
- **Joint Projects:** Promote joint research-extension projects where extension officers participate in research trials and demonstrations, ensuring practical applicability and immediate feedback.

5.4 Difficult monitoring and assessment of the impact of extension

It is difficult to trace the relationship between extension inputs and their impact at the farm level. The managerial cadres monitor the field staff in terms of input indicators, that are much easier to collect. The inability to attribute impact and thus assess performance has an adverse impact on the incentives of extension staff to exert themselves in outreach to farmers.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Impact Evaluation Frameworks:** Develop clear frameworks and indicators for evaluating the impact of extension services, focusing on both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.
- **Farmer Feedback Systems:** Implement regular surveys and feedback systems from farmers to assess the effectiveness of extension services and make necessary adjustments.

5.5 Weak accountability

Since the performance of extension personnel is evaluated in terms of their workloads, the field staff are not accountable for the quality of their work. As a result, the accountability to the farmers is only nominal, and individual incentives are biased. The entrenched top-down attitude is an obstacle to the introduction of systematic participation by the farming community in problem definition, problem-solving, and extension programming.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Performance-Based Incentives:** Introduce performance-based incentives for extension workers, tying rewards to measurable improvements in farmer outcomes.
- **Community Accountability:** Establish community accountability mechanisms where farmers participate in evaluating extension staff performance.

5.6 Weak political commitment and support

In countries where agriculture is a relatively large sector farmers as an interest group are a weak contender for public investment resources. In developed countries where the agricultural sector produces a small quota of the GDP, resources are available to the more efficient farms that, by the way, are those less in need of extension services. Income transfers to the larger number of small and inefficient farms belong more to a social policy than to an agricultural policy. These contributions give more political payoff than what can be obtained by an extension system.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

In many countries, including Kosovo, agriculture may not receive adequate public investment, particularly for extension services.

- **Advocacy for Agricultural Investment:** Strengthen advocacy efforts to increase political commitment and public investment in agriculture, highlighting its importance for economic development and food security.
- **Leveraging International Support:** Seek support from international organizations and donors to supplement public investment in extension services.

5.7. Other public duties in addition to extension

Governments are often inclined to utilize extension staff for other duties related to the farming population. Such duties include collecting statistics, administering loan paperwork, dealing with input distribution, etc. This happens at the expense of time for technological information dissemination.

Kosovo Context and Measures:

- **Dedicated Extension Roles:** Advocate for clear delineation of roles, ensuring that extension staff focus primarily on providing agricultural advice and support.
- **Streamlining Administrative Tasks:** Use technology to streamline administrative tasks such as data collection and loan processing, freeing up extension staff for their primary duties.

By addressing these challenges with context-specific measures, Kosovo can enhance the effectiveness of its extension services and support sustainable agricultural development.

6. Financial sustainability

The public-good nature of many extension services makes cost recovery at the individual beneficiary level difficult. The dependence on public funding, in turn, is problematic because weak political commitment implies lower budgets, relative to the large clientele that needs to be served. The image of ineffectiveness and unenforceable accountability is possibly another reason for the reluctance to direct large budgets to extension.

6.1 Alternative models to address extension systems weaknesses

In the past three decades, reflecting attempts to overcome some of the weaknesses inherent in the public extension, newer approaches emerged, which depart from the traditional public service models and entail institutional innovations and reforms, often pluralistic.

6.2 Decentralization

The decentralization of extension services has the same public delivery and public funding characteristics of traditional centralized extension but transfers the responsibility for delivery to local governments (municipalities or their groups). This model has several advantages: it improves accountability, as agents are paid by local governments, and being democratically elected is keen on receiving positive feedback on the service from the clientele electorate. Political commitment may be stronger. The scale of operation is reduced, which improves management capacity.

The devolution of extension functions to farmers' associations, rather than to local governments is likely to have a greater impact on accountability, as the employer represents even more closely the clientele, and thus the incentives for higher quality of service are better. In both approaches there may appear difficulties with maintaining agents' quality due to the loss of economies of scale in training; however, in a small country and with remote participation online this can be solved by centralized sessions of training.

6.3 Fee for service, privatized extension

Under such an arrangement, small groups of farmer's contract extension services to address their specific information needs. The cost is partially or reimbursed by the government and this set-up decouples the provision of the service from its funding. The government can pool different sources into a single fund, attracting donor's money by ensuring transparency and efficiency. It is better to have the group of farmers pay for the service and then reimburse them.

It is possible to assign vouchers to farmers with which they pay for the service, while the extension service can exchange the vouchers for money. Farmers can receive the vouchers for free but they should pay a low but significant amount of the nominal value: in this way, a better match of

incentives between farmers and extension officers is achieved. The consultancy of vouchers can also take place through auctions: in this way, the system is made more efficient and the farmers' willingness to pay is revealed³. The free-rider problems and non-rivalry in information use are resolved by defining the public good at the level of a small group and having the whole group share in the cost. The difficulty of tracing extension impact is much less of a problem. Different types of farmers, e.g. smaller scale farms or women farmers, may have to pay a smaller quota for the vouchers: this is a solution to the inefficiency arising from the fact that particular groups of farmers have a lesser ability to prejudge the value of information and tend to undervalue it.

6.4 Farmer field school

In Italy, between 1860 and 1935 several regional administrations developed the so-called traveling university chairs: teams made up of an expert agronomist and two assistants traveled the countryside with a horse-drawn cart where he transported seeds and other inputs. They stopped in villages preferably on market days where, in front of an audience of farmers, they held practical agronomy lessons.

More recently a similar methodology, the farmer field school (FFS), was designed as a way to introduce knowledge on integrated pest management (IPM) to irrigated rice farmers in Asia. A typical FFS entails some 9–12 half-day sessions of hands-on, farmer experimentation and non-formal training to a group of 20–25 farmers during a single crop-growing season. The FFS seeks to rectify the problem of accountability. This aspect is addressed in two ways: (i) The official trainers who conduct the field school are bound by a strict timetable of sessions within a prespecified curriculum, which can be easily verified by supervisors; and (ii) continuous interaction with a cohesive group of trainees creates accountability to the group, which is enhanced by the participatory nature of the training methods.

A key drawback of the farmer field school approach is its cost, which is likely to raise problems of financial sustainability. The intense training activities are expensive per farmer trained.

³In Chile's experience, where farmers' cost sharing was expected to gradually increase, the demand for vouchers has fallen sharply

7. Recommendations for Future Consultancy's or Policy Adjustments

Based on the consultancy's outcomes and lessons learned, the following recommendations are proposed for future consultancy's or policy adjustments:

1. **Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Strengthen collaboration with local government agencies, NGOs, and private sector partners to ensure sustained support for agricultural extension services.
- Foster inclusive decision-making processes that prioritize the voices and needs of farmers and rural communities.

2. **Continued Capacity Building:**

- Expand training programs and knowledge exchange initiatives to build the capacity of extension service providers and farmers in emerging agricultural technologies and market trends.
- Implement mentorship programs and peer-to-peer learning platforms to sustain knowledge transfer and skills development.

3. **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:**

- Introduce incentives and certification programs to encourage widespread adoption of sustainable farming practices, such as organic farming and integrated pest management.
- Conduct regular awareness campaigns and workshops on environmental stewardship and resource conservation.

4. **Scaling and Replication:**

- Develop a scaling strategy to replicate successful consultancy components in other regions with similar agricultural challenges and opportunities.
- Collaborate with regional and international partners to adopt best practices and lessons learned for broader application.

7.1 Suggestions for Sustaining and Scaling the Impact of the Consultancy

To sustain and scale the impact of the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Long-term Funding and Resource Allocation:** Secure continued funding and resources to maintain extension service centers, ongoing training programs, and monitoring and evaluation activities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust M&E framework to track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for continuous improvement.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policy reforms and investments in rural development and agricultural extension services at local, regional, and national levels.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster strategic partnerships with private sector entities to expand market opportunities, access to technology, and value chain integration for farmers.

In conclusion, the Extension/Advisory Service Mechanism consultancy has laid a strong foundation for sustainable agricultural development and economic empowerment in the target regions. By building on the consultancy's successes and implementing the recommended strategies, stakeholders can ensure lasting positive impacts on rural economies, agricultural practices, and community well-being.

Appendix I:

Proposal for a Cooperative Model for an Extension/Advisory Service in Kosovo

Organizing an extension/advisory service in Kosovo can be a complex task, but here is a structured idea to create an effective and sustainable cooperative model:

- **Rationale:** A cooperative model can encourage participation from various stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, and government bodies. It ensures that the service is aligned with the needs of the community it serves.
- **Structure:** The cooperative can be governed by a board consisting of representatives from farmers, agricultural experts, and local government officials. This ensures diverse input and democratic decision-making.

Furthermore, the Cooperative in Kosovo aims to revolutionize agricultural support systems by fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among farmers and agricultural experts. This model envisions the establishment of a robust network where farmers, extension consultants, and advisory service providers can connect, exchange ideas, and access essential resources to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability. By forming a cooperative, stakeholders can pool their expertise and resources, enabling more efficient delivery of extension services tailored to the unique needs of Kosovo's agricultural sector.

This model emphasizes the importance of grassroots participation and empowerment, particularly among small-scale and marginalized farmers. Through collective action and cooperation, farmers can amplify their voices, address common challenges, and advocate for supportive policies and programs. Additionally, a cooperative will serve as a platform for capacity-building initiatives, training programs, and knowledge dissemination, empowering farmers with the skills and information needed to thrive in today's dynamic agricultural landscape. Overall, the Proposed Initial Model holds immense potential to catalyze positive change and drive sustainable agricultural development in Kosovo, ultimately contributing to the prosperity of rural communities and the nation as a whole. Involvement of National Associations:

National associations like Mjedra e Kosoves, PePeKo, ORGANIKA, and AGRODEV play a critical role in supporting contract farming and extension services. Here's how they can be involved:

Collaborative Training Programs: Develop joint training programs where national associations work with extension officers to provide specialized knowledge and skills to farmers.

Train-the-Trainer Programs: Train representatives from these associations to become trainers themselves, multiplying the reach and impact of extension services.

As well as EREA must use the associations' influence to advocate for supportive policies and financial incentives from the government.

Representation in Policy Dialogues: Ensure these associations have a seat at the table in policy dialogues with MAFRD/DTAS to align national agricultural policies with the needs of contract farmers.

EREA must work with associations to secure funding from international donors, NGOs, and private sector partners to support extension services and cooperative initiatives.

Encourage associations to pool resources and share infrastructure, such as processing facilities and marketing channels, to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Drawing from the cooperative models in Italy, here are key strategies for ensuring financial sustainability:

a. Diversified Income Streams:

- **Value-Added Products:** Encourage cooperatives to diversify their product offerings by developing value-added products (e.g., jams, juices, organic produce) that can command higher market prices.
- **Service Fees:** Implement a system where cooperatives charge a fee for advisory services, training, and use of shared facilities.

b. Access to Markets and Fair Pricing:

- **Market Access Programs:** Develop programs that help farmers access domestic and international markets, ensuring they receive fair prices for their products.
- **Contracts and Price Stability:** Use contract farming agreements to provide price stability and reduce market risks for farmers.

c. Cooperative Governance and Management:

- Professional Management: Hire professional managers with expertise in agriculture, finance, and business development to run cooperatives efficiently.
- Member Participation: Foster active participation and ownership among cooperative members to ensure transparency, accountability, and commitment to collective goals.

d. Financial Support and Credit Access:

- Microfinance and Loans: Establish microfinance schemes and low-interest loan programs to provide farmers with the necessary capital to invest in their farms and cooperative activities.
- Subsidies and Grants: Secure subsidies and grants from government agencies and international donors to support the initial phases of cooperative development.

Example of Best Practices from Italy:

- Integrated Supply Chains: In Italy, successful cooperatives have integrated supply chains that link production, processing, and marketing, ensuring value addition at each stage and better returns for farmers.
- Cooperative Federations: Italian cooperatives often form federations that provide additional support services, such as research and development, legal advice, and bulk purchasing of inputs, reducing costs and increasing bargaining power.

Recommendations for EREA:

- Facilitate Dialogue and Collaboration: Initiate and facilitate dialogue between national associations, MAFRD/DTAS, and other stakeholders to develop a coordinated approach to extension services and cooperative development.
- Leverage International Experience: Apply best practices from successful cooperative models in Italy and other countries to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of cooperatives in Kosovo.

Criteria for Licensing of Associations/Cooperatives

Obtaining a license is mandatory for legal entities offering advisory services in agriculture and rural development that are linked to public and international funding and donations. Legal entities utilizing public and international funds must be licensed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,

and Rural Development. Based on the Law on Advisory Services in Agriculture and Rural Development, No. 04/L-74/ (Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo No. 04/19 March 2012), as well as Administrative Instruction 08/2015 of MAFRD, Protocol No. 2999, dated 06.11.2015, the necessary criteria for obtaining a license for providing advisory services for agriculture and rural development are determined as follows.

Interested companies, associations or cooperatives seeking licensing to provide advice for agriculture and rural development must fulfill the criteria outlined in Article 5 of Administrative Instruction 08/2015 as follows:

1. Possession of a registration certificate for conducting business activities;
2. Employment of at least two (2) certified advisors who possess valid certificates according to Law No. 04/L-074 on Advisory Services for Agriculture and Rural Development;
3. Demonstration through contracts of the advisors from paragraph 1.2 of this article that they have been employed for at least six (6) months prior to the license application, along with evidence of fulfilling tax obligations at the Kosovo Tax Administration;
4. At least one (1) year of work experience in providing advisory services in the fields of agriculture, forestry, and rural development;
5. Availability of necessary space and equipment for providing advisory services, such as:
 - At least 6 m² per individual as employed in the legal entity;
 - Training room of at least 25 m² equipped with training inventory for a minimum of 10 people.

In addition to these minimum criteria for obtaining a license, the legal entity must be registered in the register of licensed legal entities where the data of the legal entity are recorded. The license issued by MAFRD is valid for five years. Upon expiration of the license, the legal entity is obliged to reapply if it continues to engage in advisory activities with public funds and international donations. The staff of the licensed company must be certified and registered in the Registry of Certified Advisors. If the legal entity for providing advisory services in agriculture and rural development is not licensed and is not registered in the register of advisory entities and utilizes public funds or international donations, punitive provisions are also envisaged based on Article 23 of the law on advisory services.

Step-by-step implementation approach of the model

The expert team strongly believes that the EREA Project should initially focus on providing technical assistance to the Department of Technical Advisory Services (DTAS) to draft or update the legal framework for establishing agricultural cooperatives. It is essential that all procedures and requirements—ranging from cooperative registration, operation, and member roles to financial aspects—be clearly outlined in either legislative or administrative regulations. Without a well-defined legal framework, the EREA Project will encounter significant challenges in advancing this process effectively.

Moreover, the EREA Project should facilitate a dialogue between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD) and key existing associations such as Mjedra e Kosoves, Organika, AGRODEV, and PePeKo. If MAFRD is willing to delegate certain responsibilities to these organizations, it would significantly streamline the provision of technical assistance by EREA.

Feedback from focus group discussions indicates that these organizations face substantial challenges, including limited financial resources and insufficient human capital. While IADK appears to be an exception, other organizations lack the technical, professional, and financial sustainability necessary for long-term success. Many rely heavily on the support of international organizations like Caritas, which suggests that without such external support, their viability is in question.

By addressing these issues, EREA can not only lay a solid foundation for the development of agricultural cooperatives but also enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the involved organizations.

To successfully introduce and implement the Cooperative Model for Extension/Advisory Services in Kosovo, the expert team recommends that MAFRD and EREA carefully evaluate both proposed mechanism models to determine which one best aligns with their strategic goals, operational capabilities, and the specific needs of Kosovo's agricultural sector. They should consider factors such as resource availability, scalability, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability in

making their decision. Ultimately, the choice between the first and second model should be guided by a comprehensive assessment of these criteria. These efforts are crucial for preparing cooperative structures and ensuring the model's effectiveness and sustainability:

1. Forming Cooperatives:

- **Encourage Participation:** Motivate farmers to form new cooperatives or join existing initiatives and organizations.
- **Provide Support:** Offer legal and administrative assistance for cooperative formation, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations.

2. Creating Governance Structures:

- **Establish Governance:** Implement transparent and democratic governance structures within each member.
- **Develop regulations:** Create regulations and operating procedures to guide cooperative operations and ensure accountability.

3. Developing and Implementing Extension Programs:

- **Needs-Based Programs:** Design and implement extension programs tailored to the identified needs of farmers.
- **Comprehensive Topics:** Cover essential topics such as crop management, pest control, soil health, marketing strategies, and financial management.

4. Utilizing Technology:

- **Incorporate ICT Tools:** Use information and communication technology (ICT) tools, such as mobile apps, SMS services, and online platforms, to deliver extension services efficiently.
- **Training:** Provide training on the use of these technologies to both extension workers and farmers, ensuring effective utilization.

5. Establishing Monitoring Systems:

- **Monitor Progress:** Develop a system to regularly monitor the progress and impact of the extension programs.

- **Collect Data:** Gather data on key performance indicators, such as crop yields, income levels, and adoption of new practices, to assess the effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

6. Conduct Evaluations:

- **Perform periodic** evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the programs.
- **Use feedback** from farmers and extension workers to make necessary adjustments.

Identified challenges and guidance on establishing the model

To establish a robust Cooperative Model for Extension/Advisory Services in Kosovo, the key challenges must be addressed strategically. Continuous stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and adaptive management are essential for success. Here's a concise guide to tackling each identified challenge:

1. Resistance to Change:

- Engage local leaders and influential farmers as leaders of the new model. Highlight success stories and demonstrate the tangible benefits of cooperative extension services.

2. Financial Sustainability:

- Diversify funding sources, including government support, donor funding, and cooperative member contributions. Develop income-generating activities within cooperatives, such as collective marketing and value-added processing.

3. Limited Technical Knowledge:

- Partner with academic institutions and international organizations to provide technical expertise and training. Encourage knowledge sharing and peer learning among farmers.

4. Infrastructure and Technology Gaps:

- Invest in necessary infrastructure such as demonstration farms, training centers, and ICT tools. Seek support from the government and development partners for infrastructure development.

5. Legal and Regulatory Barriers:

- Advocate for policy reforms that support the cooperative model and extension services. Work with policymakers to create an enabling environment for cooperatives.

6. Coordination and Communication:

- Establish clear communication channels among stakeholders. Use regular meetings, newsletters, and online platforms to facilitate information exchange and coordination.

Leadership and Implementation of the model

The MAFRD will act as the lead agency responsible for overseeing the entire implementation process. This includes policy formulation, coordination with other government departments, and securing funding. Responsibilities are to develop the strategic framework and policies for the Cooperative Model. Facilitate stakeholder engagement and form the Steering Committee. Monitor and evaluate the implementation progress and outcomes.

Steering Committee: The Composition of the steering committee consist of the representatives from MAFRD, agricultural cooperatives, farmers' associations, academic institutions, NGOs, and private sector partners. Their role is to provide strategic direction, ensure stakeholder alignment, and oversee the implementation of the cooperative model. The responsibilities are to approve strategic and business plans. Resolve any implementation issues or conflicts. Review monitoring and evaluation reports.

Integration of the National Advisory Service (NAS): The NAS will be integrated into the Cooperative Model as the primary provider of extension services and technical advice. Its responsibilities are to deliver specialized training and extension services to farmers. Develop extension materials and resources. Use ICT tools to reach a wider audience of farmers.

Coordination Mechanism: The NAS will work closely with cooperatives to identify specific needs and tailor services accordingly. NAS experts will train and support local extension workers embedded within cooperatives to ensure consistent and high-quality advisory services. Establish a system for continuous feedback from farmers and cooperatives to the NAS, ensuring that services remain relevant and effective.

Financing and Resource Allocation: MAFRD will secure the funding sources as national budget allocations for agriculture and rural development. Fund the initial setup and administrative costs of the cooperative model. Support ongoing training and capacity-building programs. Provide

subsidies or grants for infrastructure development. In an ideal manner the MAFRD allocate budget for initial assessments, stakeholder engagement, training programs, and cooperative formation. Ensure funds for infrastructure development such as demonstration farms, training centers, and ICT tools. Plan for ongoing costs, including salaries for extension workers, training materials, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

International Donors and Development Agencies: Diversify funding sources, including donor funding through grants, technical assistance, and project funding. In this point the financial responsibilities are to provide financial support for pilot projects and scaling up successful models. Fund specific training and capacity-building initiatives. Support technology and infrastructure investments. Expenditures are like pilot project costs, training and capacity-building programs, ICT tools and infrastructure development.

Cooperatives and Farmers: Funding sources can be secured also through membership fees, cooperative revenues, and contributions. Financial responsibilities are to contribute financially to the cooperative's operating costs. Invest in collective marketing and value-added activities. Pay for specialized training or services beyond the basic offerings. As expenditure are membership fees and contributions. Costs of collective marketing activities. Payments for specialized training or services, etc.

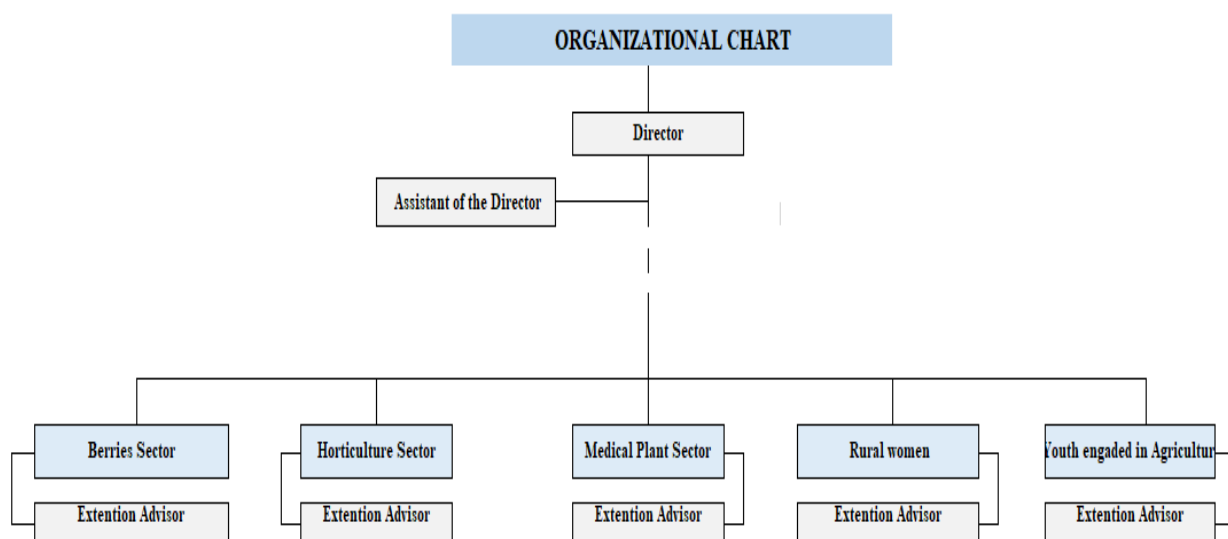
Private Sector Partners: can contribute in the funding sources like a corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, sponsorships, and partnerships. As some financial responsibilities are to provide funding for specific projects or initiatives. Invest in technology and infrastructure that benefits the cooperatives. As expenditures are sponsorship of training programs. Investment in agricultural technology and infrastructure, etc.

Projected Budget for the Proposed Cooperative Model

Annual costs				
	unit	unit cost	amortization	total cost
Director	1	15,000.00		€ 15,000.00

Office assistant	1	10,200.00		€ 10,200.00
Municipality advisor	0	0		€ 0
Private consultant, standard fee	5	12,000.00		€ 60,000.00
Private consultant, proficiency premium	5	1,200.00		€ 6,000.00
Office rent	1	10,800.00		€ 10,800.00
Basic equipment, office	1	12,000.00	10	€ 1,200.00
Specialized equipment	1	9,000.00	3	€ 3,000.00
Field visit expenses (12 supported municipalities by CARITAS)	2640	20.40		€ 53,856.00
Other activities expenses	44	270.00		€ 11,880.00
<u>Total annual cost</u>				<u>€ 171,936.00</u>
Annual financing				
Public	75.00%		€ 128,952	
Farmers	10.00%		€ 17,194	
Donors	15.00%		€ 25,790	
<u>Total financing</u>				<u>€ 171,936.00</u>

Organizational chart for the initial proposed model



Consultant Selection - Criteria and Process

1. **Qualifications:** Consultants should have relevant degrees in agriculture, agronomy, veterinary science, or related fields. Practical experience in farming or rural advisory services is crucial.
2. **Selection Process:**
 - Open call for applications.
 - Initial screening based on qualifications and experience.
 - Practical tests and interviews to assess problem-solving skills and field knowledge.
 - Final selection by a committee comprising members from the cooperative board.

Schedule and Work Structure - Work Schedule

- **Field Visits:** Consultants should allocate at least 3 days a week for field visits. Each visit can be planned based on the crop cycle, livestock needs, and specific issues faced by farmers.
- **Study and Research Collaboration:**
 - 1-2 days a week should be dedicated to studying the latest agricultural practices, technologies, and research findings.
 - Collaborate with local agricultural universities and research institutions to stay updated and contribute to ongoing research.

Number of Visits - Frequency:

- **Regular Visits:** Each consultant can manage a roster of farms, aiming for bi-weekly visits to each farm during peak seasons and monthly visits during off-peak seasons.
- **On-Demand Visits:** Additional visits can be arranged based on specific needs or emergencies, ensuring that farmers have timely access to advice.

When Not Visiting Farmers Activities

- **Study and Research:** Consultants should stay updated with the latest research, trends, and technologies in agriculture. They can also engage in field trials and pilot consultancies to test new methods.

- **Training and Workshops:** Conduct workshops and training sessions for farmers, focusing on best practices, new technologies, and sustainable farming techniques.
- **Collaboration:** Work with research institutions to contribute to studies and publications. Share field data and insights to support academic research.

Equipment Needed - Basic and Advanced Equipment

1. Basic Equipment:

- **Transportation:** Reliable vehicles for field visits.
- **Communication Tools:** Mobile phones, tablets, and laptops for data collection and communication.
- **Field Tools:** Soil testing kits, portable diagnostic kits for plant and animal health, and measuring tools.

2. Advanced Equipment:

- **Drones:** For aerial surveys and crop monitoring.
- **GPS Devices:** For precise field mapping and data collection.
- **Software:** Farm management software for record-keeping, analysis, and reporting.
- **Extension Kits:** Educational materials, brochures, and guides for farmers.

Additional Considerations

- **Funding and Sustainability:** Explore funding options from government grants, international aid, and membership fees. Ensure a sustainable financial model.
- **Training for Consultants:** Continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish a system for farmers to provide feedback on the services, ensuring continuous improvement.

By adopting this cooperative model and structured approach, the extension/advisory service in Kosovo can become a robust and effective system, driving agricultural development and supporting the farming community.

Duties for the Proposed Staff of the Cooperative Model

Tasks for the Director of Extension/Advisory Services:

1. Manage Extension Consultants:

- Oversee the activities and performance of Extension consultants.
- Provide guidance and support to ensure they meet their objectives.

2. Coordinate with Research Activities:

- Identify innovative practices and technologies suitable for the specific area.
- Collaborate with researchers to adapt and implement these innovations.

3. Identify Subject Matter Specialists:

- Recruit and engage experts to address specific agricultural problems.

4. Prepare Monthly Visit Schedules:

- Develop and distribute schedules for farm visits and consultations.

5. Organize Farmer Activities:

- Plan and execute workshops, field days, and other educational events for farmers.

6. Support E-Consultants with Complex Queries:

- Assist E-consultants in finding solutions to challenging agricultural questions.

7. Monitor Performance and Assign Premiums:

- Track individual E-consultant performance.
- Assign proficiency premiums based on the quality of work and farmer satisfaction.

8. Build and Maintain GIS of Farms:

- Collaborate with an assistant to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) for recording farm data.
- Use GIS data for yield tracking, enterprise positioning, and creating application forms for the CAP.
- Consider offering GIS services as a paid option for farmers.

9. Foster Collaboration with Municipalities:

- Negotiate with local municipalities for additional working days to support extension activities.

10. Define Strategy with Extension Consultants:

- Periodically develop and refine strategies with E-consultants.
- Ensure dissemination of consistent key messages, including:
 - Supply aggregation.
 - Equipment sharing.
 - Group purchasing for discounts.
 - Workforce sharing.
 - Machinery maintenance.
 - Enhancing market power through associations or cooperatives.

11. Design Voucher Scheme:

- Collaborate with the ministry and local municipalities to create a voucher system.
- Distribute vouchers worth €70 to farmers for use in paying the entity.
- Facilitate the exchange of vouchers for monetary reimbursement.

Tasks for an Extension Consultant in the Berries Sector

1. Provide Technical Advice:

- Offer guidance on best practices for berry cultivation, including soil preparation, planting, irrigation, fertilization, and pest management.
- Advise on optimal varieties of berries suited to local conditions and market demand.

2. Conduct On-Site Consultations:

- Visit berry farm's regularly to assess crop health, soil conditions, and overall farm management practices.
- Provide tailored recommendations to improve yields and quality.

3. Organize and Lead Training Sessions:

- Plan and conduct workshops, field days, and demonstrations to educate farmers on innovative techniques and new research findings.
- Develop training materials and resources for farmers.

4. Facilitate Access to Resources:

- Assist farmers in sourcing high-quality seeds, plants, and other necessary inputs.
- Help farmers connect with suppliers and service providers.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:

- Track the implementation of recommended practices and their impact on farm productivity and profitability.
- Collect data on yields, quality, and other relevant metrics for continuous improvement.

6. Support Pest and Disease Management:

- Identify common pests and diseases affecting berry crops.
- Recommend effective control measures, including integrated pest management (IPM) strategies.

7. Promote Sustainable Practices:

- Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly farming practices.
- Advise on organic farming methods, water conservation, and soil health management.

8. Market Development and Access:

- Provide information on current market trends, pricing, and consumer preferences.
- Assist farmers in developing marketing strategies and finding new markets for their produce.

9. Assist with Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure farmers are aware of and comply with relevant agricultural regulations and standards.
- Help farmers with the certification process for organic or other specialty markets.

10. Support Farm Business Management:

- Offer advice on financial planning, record-keeping, and business management.
- Help farmers analyze costs and returns to improve farm profitability.

11. Collaborate with Researchers:

- Work with agricultural researchers to test and promote new technologies and practices.
- Serve as a link between research institutions and farmers to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.

12. Build Farmer Networks:

- Foster cooperation and information-sharing among berry farmers.

- Promote the formation of farmer groups or cooperatives to enhance collective bargaining power and resource sharing.

13. Develop Extension Materials:

- Create and distribute newsletters, fact sheets, and other educational materials on berry farming.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to disseminate information widely.

14. Conduct Needs Assessments:

- Regularly assess the needs and challenges faced by berry farmers.
- Tailor extension services and programs to address these needs effectively.

15. Participate in Extension Programs:

- Engage in broader extension activities and programs that benefit the agricultural community.
- Represent the berry sector in extension meetings and forums.

Tasks for an Extension Consultant in the Horticulture Sector

1. Provide Technical Advice:

- Offer expertise on various horticultural practices, including crop selection, planting techniques, irrigation systems, fertilization, and pest control.
- Advise on best practices for growing fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, and other horticultural crops.

2. Conduct On-Site Consultations:

- Visit horticultural farms and gardens regularly to evaluate crop health, soil conditions, and overall farm management.
- Provide personalized recommendations to improve productivity and crop quality.

3. Organize and Lead Training Sessions:

- Plan and conduct workshops, field days, and demonstrations to educate farmers and gardeners on the latest horticultural techniques and research.
- Develop training materials and resources tailored to the specific needs of the horticulture sector.

4. Facilitate Access to Resources:

- Assist horticulturists in sourcing high-quality seeds, plants, and other essential inputs.
- Help farmers and gardeners connect with reliable suppliers and service providers.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:

- Track the implementation of recommended practices and their impact on crop yields, quality, and farm profitability.
- Collect and analyze data on various horticultural metrics for continuous improvement.

6. Support Pest and Disease Management:

- Identify common pests and diseases affecting horticultural crops.
- Recommend effective control measures, including integrated pest management (IPM) strategies.

7. Promote Sustainable Practices:

- Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly and sustainable horticultural practices.
- Advise on organic farming methods, water conservation, and soil health management.

8. Market Development and Access:

- Provide information on current market trends, pricing, and consumer preferences in the horticulture sector.
- Assist horticulturists in developing marketing strategies and finding new markets for their produce.

9. Assist with Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure farmers and gardeners are aware of and comply with relevant agricultural regulations and standards.
- Help with the certification process for organic or other specialty markets.

10. Support Farm Business Management:

- Offer advice on financial planning, record-keeping, and overall business management for horticultural enterprises.
- Help farmers analyze costs and returns to improve profitability.

11. Collaborate with Researchers:

- Work with agricultural researchers to test and promote new horticultural technologies and practices.
- Serve as a bridge between research institutions and horticulturists to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.

12. Build Horticulture Networks:

- Foster cooperation and information-sharing among horticulturists.
- Promote the formation of grower groups or cooperatives to enhance collective bargaining power and resource sharing.

13. Develop Extension Materials:

- Create and distribute newsletters, fact sheets, and other educational materials on horticulture.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to disseminate information widely.

14. Conduct Needs Assessments:

- Regularly assess the needs and challenges faced by horticulturists.
- Tailor extension services and programs to address these needs effectively.

15. Participate in Extension Programs:

- Engage in broader extension activities and programs that benefit the horticultural community.
- Represent the horticulture sector in extension meetings and forums.

16. Promote Innovations:

- Identify and promote innovative horticultural practices and technologies that can enhance productivity and sustainability.
- Encourage experimentation and adoption of new methods among horticulturists.

17. Organize Community Events:

- Plan and coordinate community events such as plant sales, horticultural shows, and garden tours to engage the public and promote horticulture.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and networking opportunities among horticulturists and the wider community.

Tasks for an Extension Consultant in the Medical and Aromatic Plants Sector

1. Provide Technical Advice:

- Offer expertise on the cultivation practices for various medicinal and aromatic plants, including planting techniques, irrigation systems, fertilization, and pest control.
- Advise on the best practices for harvesting, drying, and processing to maintain the quality and efficacy of the plants.

2. Conduct On-Site Consultations:

- Visit farms and facilities regularly to assess plant health, soil conditions, and overall farm management practices.
- Provide tailored recommendations to improve productivity and quality specific to medicinal and aromatic plants.

3. Organize and Lead Training Sessions:

- Plan and conduct workshops, field days, and demonstrations to educate growers on the latest techniques and research findings in the medical and aromatic plants sector.
- Develop training materials and resources focused on the unique needs of these plants.

4. Facilitate Access to Resources:

- Assist growers in sourcing high-quality seeds, seedlings, and other essential inputs.
- Help connect farmers with suppliers and service providers specialized in medicinal and aromatic plants.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:

- Track the implementation of recommended practices and their impact on yields, quality, and farm profitability.
- Collect data on various metrics related to medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation for continuous improvement.

6. Support Pest and Disease Management:

- Identify common pests and diseases affecting medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Recommend effective control measures, including integrated pest management (IPM) strategies tailored to these specific plants.

7. Promote Sustainable Practices:

- Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly and sustainable farming practices.
- Advise on organic cultivation methods, water conservation, and soil health management specific to medicinal and aromatic plants.

8. Market Development and Access:

- Provide information on current market trends, pricing, and consumer preferences for medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Assist growers in developing marketing strategies and finding new markets for their produce.

9. Assist with Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure growers are aware of and comply with relevant agricultural regulations and standards, especially those pertaining to medicinal plants.
- Help with the certification process for organic or other specialty markets.

10. Support Farm Business Management:

- Offer advice on financial planning, record-keeping, and business management for medicinal and aromatic plant enterprises.
- Help farmers analyze costs and returns to improve profitability.

11. Collaborate with Researchers:

- Work with agricultural researchers to test and promote new technologies and practices in the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Serve as a link between research institutions and growers to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.

12. Build Grower Networks:

- Foster cooperation and information-sharing among growers of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Promote the formation of grower groups or cooperatives to enhance collective bargaining power and resource sharing.

13. Develop Extension Materials:

- Create and distribute newsletters, fact sheets, and other educational materials specific to medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to disseminate information widely.

14. Conduct Needs Assessments:

- Regularly assess the needs and challenges faced by growers of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Tailor extension services and programs to address these needs effectively.

15. Participate in Extension Programs:

- Engage in broader extension activities and programs that benefit the agricultural community, with a focus on medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Represent the sector in extension meetings and forums.

16. Promote Innovations:

- Identify and promote innovative practices and technologies that can enhance the productivity and sustainability of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Encourage experimentation and adoption of new methods among growers.

17. Organize Community Events:

- Plan and coordinate community events such as plant sales, herbal shows, and garden tours to engage the public and promote medicinal and aromatic plants.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and networking opportunities among growers and the wider community.

18. Support Value-Added Processing:

- Advise on value-added processing techniques, such as essential oil extraction, herbal product formulation, and packaging.
- Help growers explore opportunities for creating value-added products to increase income.

19. Assist with Certification and Quality Standards:

- Guide growers through certification processes for organic, fair trade, or other relevant standards.
- Ensure compliance with quality standards specific to medicinal and aromatic plants to enhance marketability.

Tasks for an Extension Consultant Focusing on Women Engaged in Agriculture

1. Provide Technical Training and Advice:

- Offer specialized training on agricultural best practices, including crop production, livestock management, and sustainable farming techniques.
 - Tailor advice to the specific needs and challenges faced by women farmers.
- 2. Conduct On-Site Consultations:**
- Visit women-operated farms regularly to assess crop health, soil conditions, and farm management practices.
 - Provide personalized recommendations to improve productivity and sustainability.
- 3. Organize and Lead Training Sessions:**
- Plan and conduct workshops, field days, and demonstrations specifically designed for women in agriculture.
 - Develop training materials and resources focused on empowering women farmers.
- 4. Facilitate Access to Resources:**
- Assist women farmers in sourcing high-quality seeds, inputs, tools, and technology.
 - Help connect them with suppliers, service providers, and financial institutions.
- 5. Support Business and Financial Management:**
- Offer guidance on financial planning, record-keeping, and business management.
 - Provide training on accessing credit, grants, and other financial resources.
- 6. Promote Leadership and Capacity Building:**
- Encourage and support women to take on leadership roles within their communities and agricultural organizations.
 - Provide capacity-building programs to enhance their skills and confidence.
- 7. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:**
- Track the implementation of recommended practices and their impact on farm productivity and profitability.
 - Collect data on various metrics to measure the success and areas for improvement.
- 8. Support Pest and Disease Management:**
- Identify common pests and diseases affecting crops and livestock.
 - Recommend effective control measures, including integrated pest management (IPM) strategies.
- 9. Promote Sustainable Practices:**

- Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly and sustainable farming practices.
- Advise on organic farming methods, water conservation, and soil health management.

10. Facilitate Market Access and Development:

- Provide information on market trends, pricing, and consumer preferences.
- Assist women farmers in developing marketing strategies and finding new markets for their products.

11. Organize and Promote Cooperative Activities:

- Foster the formation of women's cooperatives or groups to enhance collective bargaining power and resource sharing.
- Promote activities such as group purchasing, equipment sharing, and joint marketing.

12. Support Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure women farmers are aware of and comply with relevant agricultural regulations and standards.
- Help with the certification process for organic or other specialty markets.

13. Collaborate with Researchers:

- Work with agricultural researchers to test and promote new technologies and practices.
- Serve as a link between research institutions and women farmers to facilitate knowledge transfer.

14. Build Networks and Partnerships:

- Foster cooperation and information-sharing among women in agriculture.
- Build partnerships with NGOs, government agencies, and other organizations that support women in agriculture.

15. Develop Extension Materials:

- Create and distribute newsletters, fact sheets, and other educational materials specifically for women farmers.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to disseminate information widely.

16. Conduct Needs Assessments:

- Regularly assess the needs and challenges faced by women in agriculture.
- Tailor extension services and programs to address these needs effectively.

17. Promote Innovations and Technologies:

- Identify and promote innovative practices and technologies that can enhance productivity and sustainability.
- Encourage experimentation and adoption of new methods among women farmers.

18. Organize Community Events:

- Plan and coordinate community events such as farmer's markets, agricultural fairs, and networking events to engage women in agriculture.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and networking opportunities.

19. Provide Social Support Services:

- Offer support and resources for issues such as childcare, healthcare, and education, which can impact women's ability to engage in agriculture.
- Connect women farmers with relevant social services and support networks.

20. Advocate for Policy Support:

- Advocate for policies and programs that support women in agriculture at local, regional, and national levels.
- Engage with policymakers to address the unique challenges faced by women farmers and ensure their needs are represented.

Tasks for an Extension Consultant Focusing on Youth Engaged in Agriculture

1. Provide Technical Training and Advice:

- Offer specialized training on modern agricultural practices, including crop production, livestock management, and sustainable farming techniques.
- Tailor advice to the specific interests and challenges faced by young farmers.

2. Conduct On-Site Consultations:

- Visit youth-operated farms regularly to assess crop health, soil conditions, and farm management practices.
- Provide personalized recommendations to improve productivity and sustainability.

3. Organize and Lead Training Sessions:

- Plan and conduct workshops, field days, and demonstrations specifically designed for young people in agriculture.
- Develop training materials and resources focused on empowering young farmers with the latest agricultural knowledge and techniques.

4. Facilitate Access to Resources:

- Assist young farmers in sourcing high-quality seeds, inputs, tools, and technology.
- Help connect them with suppliers, service providers, and financial institutions.

5. Support Business and Financial Management:

- Offer guidance on financial planning, record-keeping, and business management.
- Provide training on accessing credit, grants, and other financial resources.

6. Promote Leadership and Capacity Building:

- Encourage and support young people to take on leadership roles within their communities and agricultural organizations.
- Provide capacity-building programs to enhance their skills and confidence.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:

- Track the implementation of recommended practices and their impact on farm productivity and profitability.
- Collect data on various metrics to measure the success and areas for improvement.

8. Support Pest and Disease Management:

- Identify common pests and diseases affecting crops and livestock.
- Recommend effective control measures, including integrated pest management (IPM) strategies.

9. Promote Sustainable Practices:

- Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly and sustainable farming practices.
- Advise on organic farming methods, water conservation, and soil health management.

10. Facilitate Market Access and Development:

- Provide information on market trends, pricing, and consumer preferences.
- Assist young farmers in developing marketing strategies and finding new markets for their products.

11. Organize and Promote Cooperative Activities:

- Foster the formation of youth cooperatives or groups to enhance collective bargaining power and resource sharing.
- Promote activities such as group purchasing, equipment sharing, and joint marketing.

12. Support Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure young farmers are aware of and comply with relevant agricultural regulations and standards.
- Help with the certification process for organic or other specialty markets.

13. Collaborate with Researchers:

- Work with agricultural researchers to test and promote new technologies and practices.
- Serve as a link between research institutions and young farmers to facilitate knowledge transfer.

14. Build Networks and Partnerships:

- Foster cooperation and information-sharing among young people in agriculture.
- Build partnerships with NGOs, government agencies, and other organizations that support youth in agriculture.

15. Develop Extension Materials:

- Create and distribute newsletters, fact sheets, and other educational materials specifically for young farmers.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to disseminate information widely.

16. Conduct Needs Assessments:

- Regularly assess the needs and challenges faced by young people in agriculture.
- Tailor extension services and programs to address these needs effectively.

17. Promote Innovations and Technologies:

- Identify and promote innovative practices and technologies that can enhance productivity and sustainability.
- Encourage experimentation and adoption of new methods among young farmers.

18. Organize Community Events:

- Plan and coordinate community events such as farmer's markets, agricultural fairs, and networking events to engage young people in agriculture.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and networking opportunities.

19. Provide Mentorship and Support:

- Establish mentorship programs that connect experienced farmers with young farmers for guidance and support.
- Offer ongoing support to help young farmers overcome challenges and succeed in their agricultural endeavors.

20. Advocate for Policy Support:

- Advocate for policies and programs that support youth in agriculture at local, regional, and national levels.
- Engage with policymakers to address the unique challenges faced by young farmers and ensure their needs are represented.

21. Utilize Digital and Social Media:

- Leverage digital platforms and social media to reach, educate, and engage young farmers.
- Promote online resources, virtual training sessions, and e-learning opportunities.

22. Promote Agripreneurship:

- Encourage and support young farmers in developing agribusiness ventures.
- Provide training on entrepreneurship, value-added processing, and market development.

23. Support Educational Programs:

- Collaborate with schools, colleges, and universities to integrate agricultural education into their curricula.
- Promote agricultural careers and provide information on educational opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Appendix II

Proposed Second Model for an Extension/Advisory Service Agriculture Chamber of Extension/advisory services

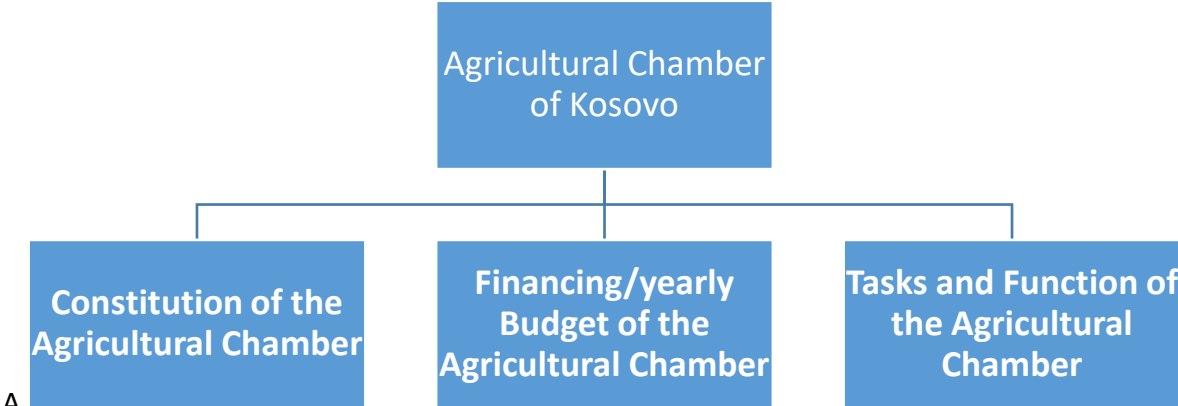
The construction of the “Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo” marks a significant step towards establishing a comprehensive extension service dedicated to the advancement of Kosovo's agricultural sector. This initiative aims to create a central organization that will facilitate the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, innovative practices, and support services to farmers across the country. The Agricultural Chamber will serve as a hub for connecting farmers with experts, resources, and training programs, thereby enhancing their productivity, sustainability, and overall economic well-being.

Key to the success of the Agricultural Chamber will be its ability to provide a wide range of services tailored to the diverse needs of Kosovo's farmers. These services will include technical assistance, business advisory, market access support, and capacity-building programs. By leveraging modern technologies and best practices in agriculture, the Chamber will empower

farmers with the skills and knowledge required to optimize their operations, increase yields, and improve product quality. Furthermore, the Chamber will play a crucial role in advocating for the interests of farmers, ensuring that their voices are heard in policy-making processes and that they have access to necessary resources and funding.

The establishment of the Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo represents a holistic approach to agricultural development, fostering collaboration between farmers, government bodies, research institutions, and the private sector. This integrated model will not only address the immediate challenges faced by farmers but also contribute to the long-term sustainability and resilience of the agricultural industry in Kosovo. By providing a fully-fledged extension service, the Agricultural Chamber aims to create a supportive ecosystem where farmers can thrive, driving economic growth and food security for the nation.

A fully-fledged extension service for benefiting the farmers



A
Chamber of Kosovo

Tasks and functions of the Agricultural Chamber-staff for the farmers' benefiting, and well-being

Law/Regulations, Tax, Social Welfare, survey of the Kosovo/International policy making

Advice for proper Land Cultivation

Advice for proper Livestock, animal husbandry

Economic aspects, survey/research market-development in Kosovo, Balkan, International

Advice for strategic Business Planning

Advice for Financing (capital market)

Advise for the subsidies/grant filling in the forms/subsidy-strategy

Advise for the use of modern and proper technology (building, machinery, fertilizers, pesticide use)

Training courses for the farmers/permanent learning

Marketing strategy for the products

Gender Agenda, gender involvement, women's participatory work

Youth Agenda, future for our youngs in rural development

- **Law/Regulations, Tax, Social Welfare**
- Participation in preparation of relevant Country-Laws, Regulations, Analysis of the regulations with relevance for the farmers, Impact on the farmers
- Analysis of taxes and the impact of the taxes on the farmers
- Regulations/consultancy/administration belonging to social welfare/social security (pensions, health insurance)
- **Land Cultivation**
- Arable land cultivation
- Grassland cultivation
- Viticulture, culture and cultivation of grapevines
- Pomiculture, growing and cultivation of fruit
- Horticulture, cultivation of vegetables,
- Cultivation of flowers, ornamental plants, orchard, nursery

- Plant nourishment
- Plant protection
- Organic farming

- **Livestock, animal husbandry**
- Livestock breeding
- Animal protection
- Animal husbandry and feeding
- Dairy farming
- Organic farming

- **Forestry**
- Silviculture, cultivation of forest trees
- Utilisation of wood

- **Economics, Business Planning, Financing, Subsidies, Agricultural Technology**
- Consultancy for good praxis in agricultural business
- Consultancy, advise and help for decision-making belonging to the subsidy-structure of the farm
- Consultancy and help at the completing of the subsidy-applying-form
- Consultancy in farm-structure, melioration, irrigation, protection against erosion
- Consultancy in agricultural road-constructions
- Consultancy for quality managements
- Consultancy for economics
- Consultancy for Technic
- Consultancy for Energy
- Consultancy for agricultural building-construction
- Direct marketing from the farm
- Organisation/participation at fairs

- **Education, participatory of women, gender-agenda, youth, young generation**
- Institute for advanced training
- Consultancy/advice on modern housekeeping
- Gender agenda, consultancy and support for women in agriculture
- Educational institution for apprentices and specialised training

A brief overview addressing the sustainability, establishment approach, and roles and responsibilities of the Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo:

Sustainability

The Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices that ensure long-term productivity and environmental health. This includes advocating for the adoption of eco-friendly farming techniques, supporting research and development in sustainable agriculture, and facilitating access to resources and training for farmers. Sustainability efforts also focus on enhancing the economic viability of farms, improving food security, and contributing to the overall well-being of rural communities.

Establishment Approach

The Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo must be established with a mission to support the agricultural sector through a collaborative and inclusive approach. The establishment process involved:

1. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving farmers, agribusinesses, government bodies, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the chamber addresses the needs and priorities of the agricultural community.
2. **Legislative Framework:** Working with policymakers to create a supportive legal and regulatory framework that enables the chamber to function effectively.
3. **Capacity Building:** Investing in the development of institutional capacities to provide comprehensive services and support to members.
4. **Funding and Resources:** Securing financial and technical resources necessary for the chamber's operations and initiatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo plays a pivotal role in the development of the agricultural sector. Its key roles and responsibilities include:

1. **Advocacy:** Representing the interests of farmers and agribusinesses in policy dialogues and decision-making processes at the local, national, and international levels.
2. **Training and Education:** Providing training programs, workshops, and educational resources to enhance the skills and knowledge of farmers and agricultural professionals.
3. **Market Access:** Facilitating access to domestic and international markets for agricultural products, and promoting the export of Kosovo's agricultural goods.
4. **Research and Innovation:** Supporting agricultural research and innovation to improve productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness in the sector.
5. **Support Services:** Offering various support services, including financial advice, technical assistance, and legal support to its members.
6. **Networking and Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration and networking among farmers, agribusinesses, researchers, and other stakeholders to foster knowledge sharing and partnerships.

The Agricultural Chamber of Kosovo is dedicated to strengthening the agricultural sector through these roles and responsibilities, aiming to achieve sustainable development and economic growth.

Assigned budget for the second proposed model

Annual costs				
	Unit	unit cost	amortization	Total cost
Director	1	1.8000		€ 18,000
Vice director	7	15.000		€ 105,000
Assistant	7	10.200		€ 71,400
municipality advisor	0	0		€ 0
Private consultant	98	12.000		€ 1,176,000
office rent	7	13800		€ 96,600
basic equipment	7	12.000	10	€ 8,400
specialized equip	7	9.000	3	€ 21,000
field visit expenses	23520	25		€ 588,000
demonstration inputs	11760	12		€ 141,120

	Total budget	€ 2,225,520		
Annual financing		14	per region	approximately 2,5 advisors per municipality
Public	75.00%	€ 1,669,140		
Farmers	10.00%	€ 222,552	38 municipalities	
Donors	15.00%	€ 333,828	1246	settlement
<u>Total yearly budget</u>		<u>€ 2,225,520</u>		

DTAS budget 750.000 in the best cases it can get 1,5 million

Donors that can accept to work coordinated with the agency: if they put say 600, the government puts another 200

7 regions 70.000 – 100,000 farmers served

Appendix III

EREA - Questionnaire for the focus group discussions

Prishtinë 11th June-2024

The questions are organized to gather comprehensive insights, focusing on efficiency, inclusivity, capacity-building, gender mainstreaming, and climate-smart agriculture.

Introduction

1. Introduction to the Focus Group:

- Welcome participants and thank them for their time.
- Explain the purpose of the focus group and what you hope to achieve.
- Outline the structure of the discussion and the approximate duration.
- Assure confidentiality and explain how the data will be used.

Ice-Breaker Questions

2. Getting to Know Each Other:

- Can you please introduce yourself and share your role or involvement in the agricultural sector in Kosovo?

Main Objectives

Objective 1: Assessing Current Extension Services

3. Current Extension Services:

- How would you describe the current extension services provided to farmers in Kosovo?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these services?

4. Service Utilization:

- How often do you or farmers you know use extension services?
- What are the most common reasons for seeking assistance from extension services?

Objective 2: Identifying Needs and Gaps

5. Needs and Gaps:

- What are the main needs of farmers that are currently not being met by extension services?
- Can you provide specific examples of situations where extension services fell short?

6. Inclusivity and Accessibility:

- Are extension services easily accessible to all farmers, including those in remote areas and marginalized groups?
- What barriers exist that prevent certain groups from accessing these services?

Objective 3: Developing an Innovative Model

7. Innovative Approaches:

- What innovative approaches or technologies do you think could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of extension services?
- How can extension services be better tailored to meet the diverse needs of farmers in Kosovo?

8. Inclusivity in Innovation:

- How can we ensure that innovative models for extension services are inclusive of all farmers, including women and young farmers?

- What specific strategies would you recommend to enhance inclusivity?

Objective 4: Capacity Building for Service Providers

9. Service Provider Skills:

- What are the key skills and knowledge areas that extension service providers need to improve?
- How effective are the current training programs for extension service providers?

10. Training and Development:

- What types of capacity-building programs would be most beneficial for extension service providers?
- What methods or formats (e.g., workshops, online courses, field visits) do you find most effective for training extension service providers?
- How can these programs be designed to address the specific needs of different regions and communities?
- How can we ensure that capacity-building programs are continuously updated to reflect the latest agricultural practices and technologies?

Objective 5: Gender Mainstreaming

11. Gender Inclusion:

- How well do current extension services address the specific needs of women farmers?
- What barriers do women face in accessing extension services, and how can these be overcome?
- What specific support or resources do women farmers need from extension services that they are currently lacking?
- How can extension services be tailored to better engage and empower women farmers in their agricultural activities?

12. Gender-Sensitive Programs:

- Can you suggest ways to integrate gender mainstreaming into extension services effectively?
- What specific training or resources would help service providers support women farmers better?

- What best practices or successful examples of gender-sensitive extension services have you seen or heard of?
- How can we measure the impact of gender-sensitive programs on women farmers' productivity and empowerment?

Objective 6: Climate-Smart Agriculture

13. Climate-Smart Practices:

- How familiar are you with climate-smart agricultural practices?
- Are extension services currently promoting climate-smart agriculture? If so, how effective are these efforts?
- What specific challenges do farmers face in adopting climate-smart agricultural practices?
- What kind of support or information do farmers need to implement climate-smart techniques effectively?
- How can extension services better facilitate the adoption of climate-smart agriculture among smallholder farmers?

14. Integration of Climate-Smart Strategies:

- What specific climate-smart practices do you think should be prioritized in extension services?
- How can extension services be improved to better support farmers in adopting climate-smart agriculture?
- What incentives or programs could encourage farmers to adopt climate-smart practices?
- How can extension services collaborate with local communities to promote climate-smart agriculture?
- What role can technology play in enhancing the effectiveness of climate-smart strategies in extension services?

Objective 7 Financial Aspects:

15. Perceived Value and Benefits:

- What specific benefits do you expect to gain from farm advisory services? Can you provide examples of how these services could improve your farming operations or business outcomes?
- How do you perceive the value of these advisory services about their cost? Are there particular aspects of advisory services that you believe are worth paying for?

16. Payment Willingness and Affordability:

- How much are you willing to pay for high-quality farm advisory services on a monthly or annual basis? Please specify a range that you consider reasonable.
- Are there any financial constraints or considerations that affect your willingness to pay for these services? How do you balance these costs with other farm/firm expenses?

17. Service Models and Payment Preferences:

- Which payment models would you prefer for farm advisory services (e.g., subscription-based, pay-per-consultation, bundled with other services)? Why do you prefer this model?
- Would you be more willing to pay for advisory services if they were bundled with other agricultural products or services (e.g., seeds, fertilizers, equipment)? How would this bundling affect your purchasing decision?

18. Trust and Reliability:

- How important is the reputation and credibility of the advisory service provider in your decision to pay for their services? What qualities or qualifications do you look for in a trustworthy provider?
- Have you had any previous experiences with farm advisory services? If so, what were the outcomes, and how did these experiences influence your willingness to pay for future services?

Closing Questions

19. Closing Remarks:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with extension services that we haven't covered?
- Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for improving extension services in Kosovo?

Final Steps

20. Conclusion:

- Thank the participants for their valuable insights.
- Explain the next steps, such as how the information will be used and if there will be any follow-up.
- Provide contact information for further questions or feedback.

Appendix IV

Questionnaire with Agri-enterprises

Municipality

The entity's juridical nature (Ltd, coop, JV, etc.)

The gender of the majority owner of the entity M F

The year in which the entity was established

The value of assets of the entity €

How many farmers are among the owners of the entity

How many farmers have business relations with the entity

What is the total size of land used by farmers? ha

Operations are done by the entity on raw products	collecting	cleaning	sorting
	processing		packaging

list of raw products and average quantities of the last 3 years	products	quantity	ton
the average sales of the entity in, the last 3 years		Mil €	
number of units full-time employed			
number of units part-time employed			
is the manager of the farm male or female	M	F	
how old is she /he		y. o.	
does the entity provide technical inputs to farmers?	Y	N	
does the entity offer credit to farmers for technology inputs?	Y	N	
does the entity provide advisory services to farmers?	Y	N	
the advisory service is provided by agronomists/certified personnel?	Y	N	
how many experts are working to provide Adv. Service?			
is the Advisory service free to the farmers?	Y	N	
if it is not free, how is it paid, and how much?	by the	€	
	hour/day		
	yearly	€	
	other	€	
other, explain_____			
Does the Adv. Service take place on farmer site?	Y	N	
what are the main subjects of requests of Adv. Service?	seeds	fertilizers	pesticides
	machinery	irrigation	mitigation

	adaptation marketing	management other	
other, explain_____			%
Types of clients of the entity, by % value of sales	another processor distributors, national distributors, int.nal supermarkets shops supermarkets		
the entity has a strategy to increase raw product quality		Y	N
What are the main constraints limiting product quality at the farm level? (choose 2)	varieties not adapted farmers' know-how lack of capital labor costs energy costs		
other, explain_____			
Does the manager believe that farmers can accept a decrease in the price received for their raw products in exchange for a better advisory service?		Y	N
Of how much?	0.50%	1.50%	3.00%

Appendix V

Questionnaire with farmer

Municipality

Is the owner of the land male or female	M	F
how old is she /he		y. o.
Is the manager of the farm different from the owner of the land?	Y	N
is the manager of the farm male or female	M	F
how old is she /he		y. o.
family farm (more than 70% of labor provided)	Y	N
number of units full-time employed		
number of units part-time employed		
Does the farmer keep formal accounting (double ent.)	Y	N
does the farmer keep a list of costs?	Y	N
Main sectors (providing more than 80% of income)		Income %
Berries		
Medical herbs		
Fruits, specify		
Vegetables, specify		

Other, specify

What is the extension of your farm in ha?

How many parcels

How many non-contiguous parcels

Is irrigation available Y N
which is the main constraint among production factors

land

capital

labor

Know-how

Gross income per year

< € 5,000
< € 10,000
< € 15,000
< € 20,000
< € 25,000

The number of clients that take 80% of her/his production in value

% of sales in value to the final consumer

% of sales in value to reseller

% of sales in value to the processor

does the farmer belong to a group (association /coop) Y N

does she/he sell to the group at least 60% of the product in value? Y N

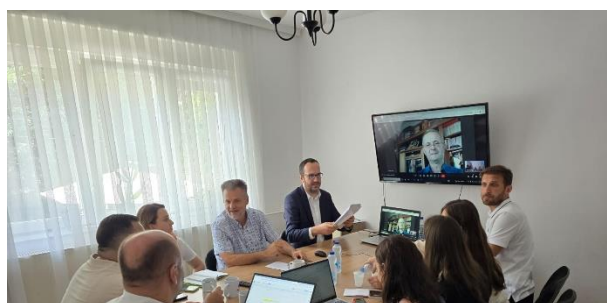
Please, list the 3 larger costs %
%

(machine renting, labour, pesticides, energy, land rent...)			%
has the farmer an agricultural education		Y	N
at which level	school	College	master
Does the farmer use external advisors, extension services		Y	N
does she/he think ES would be useful?		Y	N
If Yes, then in which sector (up to 3)	crop	orchard	vegetable
other, specify	processing management	investment	marketing
Does the farmer think that a personalized TA would increase net income by	2.00%	5.00%	7.00%

Appendix VI

Photographs from various meetings

First meeting with the FGD (AgriDev, Raspberries Kosova, PePeko, and Organica):









Meeting with FGD Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD)





Meeting with FGD Agro inputs (Agrion SH.P.K. & NTP FATI, & Agricultural Pharmacy)



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