

Project

Grafting Our Future onto the Old Roots

community-based in-situ conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties and the associated traditional agricultural landscape in the Region of Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece, and Macedonia)

FINAL AND EVALUATION REPORT

Grafting our Future onto the Old Roots: Final and Evaluation Report

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Introduction

Since its inception, there have been three interim reports that included a detailed financial section and a short narrative part providing brief information on the accomplishments, findings, major outputs, and problems of the project during the different phases of the implementation of the project. The aim of the report is to reflect on, and evaluate the work of the project “*Grafting Our Future onto the Old Roots*” (hereinafter: “*the Project*”) as a whole as well as on the deliverables and outputs. This report considers the processes undertaken by the Project, lessons learnt and potential ‘hidden’ outcomes that may be of use to the community. The writing of this report, like the project, has been a joint effort. The major responsibility for the writing was undertaken by Oliver Avramoski, the Co-ordinator of the Project with inputs from the project assistants, Jovanco Sekuloski and Ardian Mihali and many participants in the project.

The first section of this report presents a brief description and scope of the project, emphasizing its multipurpose in nature. The second section presents the analysis and key findings, lessons and recommendations of the processes undertaken by the Project. The following section presents the allocation of the financial resources of the project. Next is the list of the products and outputs followed by a set of conclusions and recommendations.

1. Project Description

In 2003 the Prespa Park Co-ordination Committee decided to support the project “Grafting our future onto the old roots: community-based *in-situ* conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties and the associated traditional agricultural landscape in the Region of Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece, and Macedonia).” The overall goal of the Project was to develop sustainable and participatory approaches to *in-situ* conservation of fruit tree varieties and their wild relatives within the traditional

mountainous agricultural systems in the Ohrid and Prespa region. The following are the general objectives of the Project:

- ❑ *Recovery and conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties and their wild relatives through participation of farming communities and other groups;*
- ❑ *Develop linkages between agricultural genetic conservation and use;*
- ❑ *Increase public participation in, and awareness and acceptance of, biodiversity and agrobiodiversity in particular as well as landscape conservation;*
- ❑ *Foster cross-border exchange of information and cooperation with respect to agricultural and landscape conservation.*

The project was implemented by the ALLCOOP - Alliance for Lake Cooperation on Ohrid and Prespa (Albania and Macedonia) as the lead organization and the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) from Greece as a partner organization and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) as the principal source of financing. The project was implemented from April 2003 to January 2005 throughout the region of Ohrid and.

2. Key findings, lessons and recommendations

The activities implemented under the Project were diverse and linked to specific issues such as identification, dissemination, and *in-situ* conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties, exchange of experience and know-how, education and awareness raising, networking of local orchardists, to mention some of them. Following the general objectives of the Project all activities can be assigned to one or more of the four general areas here referred to as “processes:”

2.1. Recovery and conservation

Inventory is an essential to provide a base line for the process of recovery and conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties. Thus, at the onset of the Project the main task was to assess and survey what different farming systems exist and which species are currently being cultivated or used by them.

SPP organized preliminary research on traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Greek part of the Prespa region. The survey was conducted from June through August 2003 by

Ms. Vicky Kleftoyanni, postgraduate student of the Biology Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, under the supervision of Professor Despina Vokou, and with the assistance of the SPP staff. Whereas Vafiadis (1940) reports on the cultivation of fruit trees in the Greek part of the region of Prespa during the first half of the last century, there are no recent data on the survival and use of traditional varieties in Greek Prespa. Given the limited scope of the survey within the Project the findings can be thought of only as tentative conclusions on the status of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the area; a more systematic research effort would be needed to identify those species and varieties that have a potential for development, generating rural income. As the study revealed, there are a few old trees currently in the Greek Prespa. Fruit production, once rather significant activity in the Greek Prespa, during the last decades has greatly diminished, currently covering approximately 1.2 hectares only. Over time the production of fruits was replaced by other more profitable cultivars, intensively grown beans in particular, and the traditional fruit varieties have either disappeared or have undergone spontaneous hybridization. The old fruit-trees are found mainly in and around villages, some of which are currently deserted, but also near roads connecting villages, and the nearby mountains. In many cases, two or more different types of the same fruit tree are found in one place. The sites (18 in total) where each fruit tree was found are given in Table 1 and mapped on Figure 1 and Figure 2 of Attachment I. Apple trees (*Malus sp.*) are the most ubiquitous in Greek Prespa. They are found in many places. Among the samples that were identified, three known varieties were represented, (i) Reinette du Canada, (ii) Black Ben Davis, (iii) Belfort. A great number of hybrids were also found. Some of the unidentified samples were without fruits, so it was not possible to examine whether they belonged to varieties, local or not, or if they were spontaneous hybrids. The total number of apple trees in the area covered by the survey was approximately 150. Only few cultivated pear trees (*Pyrus communis*) were found in the surveyed area. There were, however, a great number of wild pear trees (*Pyrus amygdaliformis*) in the area. In consequence, many spontaneous hybrids exist. Other species of fruit trees were also included in the survey: cherry (*Prunus avium*); wild plum (*Prunus ceracifera* or *P. myrobalana*); mulberry (*Morus alba*); quince (*Cydonia oblonga*); fig (*Ficus carica*); almond (*Prunus amygdalus*); walnut (*Juglans regia*); hazelnut (*Corylus avelana*) and chestnut (*Castanea sativa*).

Key finding:

None of the old orchards surveyed in the Ohrid and Prespa region are currently being managed as working orchards. The vast majority of sites visited contained old fruit trees in a senescent state. All of the extant orchards no longer contained their full compliment of fruit trees, usually because trees had died through a combination of old age, physical damage and disease.

The extent of the territory on the Macedonian part of the Ohrid and Prespa region required that the areas with rich diversity of traditional fruit-trees are identified before a more detailed field work is carried out. Based on the preliminary research conducted during the development of the Project plan, it became apparent that the mountainous parts of the Region have particularly rich diversity of local and traditional fruit-tree varieties. The following were identified as priority areas: the upper part of Sateska River catchment; catchment of Koselska River; Galicica Mountain and western slopes of Baba Mountain. The inventory of traditional fruit tree varieties was prepared following twenty-three one-day field trips conducted over the period from May to November 2003. The assessment team included the Coordinator of the Project, the Project Assistant in Macedonia, Professor PhD Mile Grupce – one of the leading national experts in the field - and Petar Bakreski, a farmer from Leskoec near the city of Ohrid. Other local farmers regularly participated in the discovery and identification of old fruit-trees. In the Koselska river catchment the following villages and their immediate surrounding were visited: Kosel, Leskoec, Livoishta, Skrebatno, and Vapila. Additional data were collected from interviews with people from the villages Dolno Lakocherej, Gorno Lakocherej, Kuratica, Openica, Sirula and Svinishta. Several field-trips were organized to villages within and in the immediate vicinity of the Galicica Nacional Park. In the Ohrid region the assessment team visited the village of Velgoshti, located on the western slopes of the Galicica Mountain, just outside the protected area of the Galicica National Park. Other villages, situated within the boundaries of the GNP were also visited: Ramne, Gorno Konjsko and Ljubanishta. On the Prespa side the assessment team visited the village of Leskoec located within the boundaries of the GNP and the villages of Evla and

Bolno, laying few kilometers outside the park. Other villages in Prespa were also visited, such as Ljubojno and Brajchino, situated on the foothills of the Baba Mountain, few kilometers from the border of the Pelister National Park.

The field research revealed that, though in a constant decline, traditional fruit-tree species and their varieties are still to be found in many places, often represented by solitary trees and sometimes in orchards made up of dozens of trees. Apples and pears are particularly ubiquitous. Some seventeen varieties of apples and nine of pears were registered in the inspected areas. Among apples “Tetovka,” “Karapasha” and “Kolacharka” were the most frequent, “Alamanka,” “Boskop” and “Kozsara” are somewhat less widespread, whereas “Mislinka” and “Tropalka” were registered in one site only. Among pears “Kajkushka,” “Kantarka,” and “Tiranka” were frequently found, whereas “Crvenushka,” and “Zimorka” are to be found only in the village of Zavoj. A detailed list of the varieties and the sites of occurrence is given in Table 2 of Attachment I of this report. Several varieties were difficult to identify and many others that did not bear any fruits due to early frosts in 2003 are yet to be discovered and identified.

On the Albanian part of the Ohrid and Prespa region there was a rather limited field research in the “Mala Prespa” (Small Prespa) region. The Project Assistants of ALLCOOP in Albania and Macedonia and local farmers from the villages of Globochani and Dolna Gorica carried out one day field research to assess the occurrence and identity of traditional fruit trees in and around these villages. Apart from a number of trees of wild pear (*Pyrus amygdaliformis*) a few traditional varieties and cultivars were observed.

Key lesson:

The process of locating sources of local varieties or arranging for the grafting onto stock-wood is slow. Likewise identification of old fruit-trees proved to be slow and expensive and a number of older trees with high quality fruits remained un-named. It is likely to take at least a further five years to complete the process of discovery and identification of traditional varieties in the areas identified during the Project.

Some of the named varieties in the pilot village of Zavoy are marked on the ‘map of the village of Zavoy’ presented on the information board in the village and in the project brochure “Grafting our future onto the old roots” (also see Figure 3 in Attachment I of this report). Other varieties were, however, neither mapped nor labeled. Data concerning the name of the variety and their location of all registered varieties are stored in an electronic data-base (Microsoft Access) available to the farmers and the general public.

The conservation measures carried out under the Project included:

- ❑ *Recovery of old orchards;*
- ❑ *Development of new orchards of traditional fruit varieties;*
- ❑ *Grafting of solitary trees of wild apples and pears with traditional local varieties;*
- ❑ *Production of seedlings of the local traditional varieties in nurseries.*

Following the development of modern, industrial farming systems, traditional ways of agricultural production and the related old varieties of fruit-trees were largely abandoned and close to disappearance in some regions. Although fruit-growing has long history in the Ohrid and Prespa region, few old orchards can be found now, usually in and around the remote and abandoned villages in the mountainous areas. Some of the oldest and largest traditional orchards in the region are found in the village of Leskoec and its immediate vicinity in the Prespa region of Macedonia. In the autumn of 2003, a small tract of land in the village with some 10 apple trees of at least four varieties, planted in 1934, was cleared of wild scrub growth and fenced to prevent damages from the grazing livestock. The lack of cooperation and co-ordination with the few local farmers still residing in the village precluded other restoration actions. As a result, during the following year the orchard has again become overgrown with bushes and grass.

In other places orchards of traditional varieties were raised anew. In the “Mala Prespa” region of Albania, some 40 seedlings of apples, pears and cherries growing wild in two neglected and abandoned orchards, located on the “Beli” peninsula, were grafted with scions of old varieties from the Ohrid region in Macedonia. Unfortunately, many

scions failed, particularly on the cherry seedlings, and more were destroyed by the grazing livestock or by negligent shepherds. In a similar way, two new orchards were raised in the vicinity of the village of Zavoy in the Ohrid region. More than 130 seedlings were grafted with scions of old apples, pear, plums and cherries occurring locally. The orchards were fenced and regularly cleared of brush by the farmers from the village. Due to the regular care, control and supervision of the new seedlings and the full cooperation of villagers the two orchards are in a very good condition. **The two newly established orchards in the village of Zavoy represent a very successful model of in-situ conservation of the local agrobiodiversity, and showcase of how responsible farmers and cooperative local communities are crucial for the success.**

Developing new orchards by grafting seedlings growing wild is possible in few cases however, usually in abandoned areas and former orchards. In other cases, to establish a new orchard it would be necessary to re-plant seedlings of wild apples, pears, plums and cherries, growing wild in other areas, and graft them afterwards. Because the grafting is possible only two to three years after replanting the seedling, more time is needed before the new orchard of traditional varieties is raised. Some 40 seedlings of wild apples and pears from Zavoy were re-planted in two locations: a private parcel in the village of Leskoec, few kilometers from Ohrid and on the land around the church of Saint Bogorodica (Virgin Maria), near the village of Skrebatno, some 10 km from the city of Ohrid. The seedlings are to be grafted with scions from traditional fruit varieties in early spring or late summer of 2005.

It is expected that over the years the newly established orchards of local traditional fruit-trees will become a valuable source of graft-wood for other orchardists and growers in the Ohrid and Prespa region.

The most rapid and effective way to disseminate the traditional varieties, particularly those that are threatened with extinction was, however, by grafting a great number of solitary seedlings and trees growing wild. Up to 600 seedlings and trees were grafted in the Ohrid region during the summer of 2003 and late winter of 2004. In the village of Zavoy, Krste Trajcheski and Naum grafted more than 500 seedlings and trees located in the yards around the households and churches of the village, along the roads

and paths in and around the village, but also in the surrounding hills and mountains. In the same way, in the vicinity of the village of Velgoshti and Leskoec, on the western slopes of the Galicica Mountain up to 100 seedlings of wild apples and pears were grafted by Cvetko Trpevski and Risto Shokaroski - farmers from Velgoshti. Also, Rizman Arifi from the village of Gorenci grafted more than 50 fruit-trees growing wild in the vicinity of the village. Other local farmers, shepherds or local villagers also played an important role in the success of these efforts by taking care of the new shoots (regularly or occasionally) and by raising support and the awareness within their communities.

Recommendation:

Aftercare is the key for the successful development of the orchards and solitary trees grafted under this Project. Over the years the young trees would require regular pruning to encourage them to reach the necessary height and to take out any side growth from below the graft level. Also, for the first few years it is necessary to control competing weeds around the base of each tree. There is, however, a real risk of lack of manpower resources over the following years. This would result at best, in slow development of trees and at worst, in the death of a small percentage. Thus, the long-term success and benefits of the actions realized under this Project would depend on the awareness and the support from the local farmers and communities.

In the long-run, the dissemination, conservation and the use of traditional fruit-tree varieties would largely depend on the establishment and development of highly professionalized nurseries managed by individual orchardists or organizations that are well connected to the farming community. With this recognition in mind, the Project provided a technical and financial support to Cvetko Trpevski from the village of Velgoshti – an individual farmer that has long experience in the production of rootstocks of some traditional varieties of apples, pears, plums, peaches and cherries. In the following years Cvetko Trpevski will expand the assortment and increase the number of rootstocks of traditional varieties available to the customers in the region and beyond.

Key finding:

The Project has stimulated a great deal of interest throughout the region and beyond so that the local nursery in the village of Velgoshti has taken on the provision of planting stock as a commercial venture and a wider range of varieties is now available.

2.2. Linking the conservation and use of traditional fruit-trees

There are many reasons why we should conserve traditional varieties of fruit-trees. These include conservation of agro-biodiversity, production of organic food, conservation of traditional landscapes and the related bio-diversity, and others. Most of them are interrelated and co-dependent as are the ecological, social and economic components of the traditional agro-ecological systems within which traditional varieties of fruit-trees were developed and maintained over the millennia. Likewise, the conservation efforts should be supported by appropriate strategies and policies that integrate the ecological, social and economic aspects. The strategies and policies for rural development could provide such comprehensive framework, particularly for *in-situ* conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties. In order to promote and demonstrate an integrated approach to conservation of old varieties of fruit-trees by the rural communities in the mountainous areas of the Ohrid and Prespa region, the project team selected the village of Zavoy as the “pilot village” of this project. Thus, farmers from Zavoy were closely involved in most of the project activities in Macedonia, and to a lesser extent in Albania. With the assistance from experts and experienced farmers from the region, farmers from Zavoy were involved in discovery, identification and inventory of the traditional fruit-tree varieties in Zavoy and their *in-situ* conservation. Aside from the conservation activities, such as establishment of new orchards and grafting campaigns in and around the village, farmers from Zavoy organized one-day “diversity fairs” in Ohrid and Resen. These events gave several hundreds of citizens the opportunity to see and taste many local old varieties of apples and pears, fresh or processed products, such as canned fruits or jams, but also other organic products, including cheese and local traditional food.

As mentioned above, traditional fruit-tree varieties are currently scarce and most often can be found in the villages of the mountainous areas where traditional agriculture is still practiced and where old fruit-trees have an important role to play. On the other hand, the traditional socio-ecological systems in the mountainous rural areas cannot continue to exist relying exclusively on the agricultural production. The profound socio-economic changes brought-up by the industrialization and globalization processes have often caused depopulation and disintegration of the traditional systems. Traditional farmers cannot sustain the competition from the modern farmers of the fertile plains which have been systematically supported by the state over a long period of time through the support of applied scientific and technological innovation, as well as through subsidies for energy, machinery, fertilizers, rootstocks, and other inputs. To revert this negative trend it is necessary to elaborate rural development policy that puts agriculture in its broader rural context. Such a policy should recognize that the viability of rural areas cannot depend on agriculture alone, but agriculture plays an important role in protecting the rural environment, in producing safe and high quality food and in contributing to maintaining the attractiveness of rural areas for tourists, young people and new residents. From this perspective, the conservation of traditional fruit-trees can be linked to a number of social and economic aspects.

For instance, local traditional fruit varieties often perform well in organic agriculture as they tend to be adapted to low input levels. In many cases, the lower yield capacity is associated with better taste and increased nutritional value. Thus, a better price for the products may be attained, which can compensate for the lower yields or for the higher costs of small-scale production or because of the intensive use of man-power in harvesting or processing instead of mechanization or because of the more expensive transportation and marketing. On the other hand, achieving higher prices depends on the identification of products and markets, and the willingness of the consumer to pay the price. Hence, awareness of product quality, and the organisation of new producer–processing–consumer relationships are important elements in improving the economic attractiveness of traditional fruit varieties for farmers. In line with this argument, the Project made a special effort to improve the awareness among the general public of the importance of traditional fruits and their processed products as healthy food. The

activities concerning promotion, public awareness and education are explained in more detail in the following section.

Farmers in Zavoy were also made aware of the importance of the package design, and proper labeling of their products. A special packaging and labeling was designed for all fruits and processed products, such as fruit compotes and marmalades, honey and honey products, goat cheese and milk and others, presented by the farmers from Zavoy at the “diversity fairs”. Furthermore, the Project promoted and supported the establishment of the “Fruit-Net”, a non-governmental association of orchardists and farmers committed to conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the region of Ohrid and Prespa. The organization was established in September 2004 by the orchardists and farmers that participated in the various activities of the Project. In cooperation with ALLCOOP and other NGOs from the Ohrid region, “Fruit-Net” is currently implementing a pilot project for preservation and promotion of the traditional sustainable patterns of production and consumption in the village of Zavoy through a financial grant from the Country office in Skopje of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe based in Budapest, Hungary.

Key lesson:

Although the interest for and demand of rootstocks, fruits and products of the traditional fruit-trees has increased considerably over the last two years, much more could have been achieved, had there been a more aggressive and intensive communication with the local, national, and perhaps international businesses.

On top of active use value, because of its special nature, traditional fruit-tree varieties and the associated agricultural landscapes also have a high existence (passive use) value. Scenic values, recreation and regional identity are closely linked. As patches, rows, scattered individuals and even single trees, traditional orchards can enhance the local scenic values of the rural landscape. With the differing shapes, sizes and colors of blossoms, leaves and fruits, fruit-trees enrich the scenery’s variety and diversity in space as well as time. Thus, the abandonment of traditional agricultural production in mountainous would inevitably lead to deterioration of rural landscape because the

cultivated landscape is a much more appealing one than the various stages of progression of an abandoned land. Currently, the supply of traditional agricultural landscape generates economic benefits for which farmers receive little if any remuneration. Though many vital environmental and socio-cultural benefits of the traditional rural landscapes cannot be monetized, this market failure can be corrected through the development of alternative tourism (eco-, agro- and rural-tourism) crafts, services, new activities related to the environment, etc. Accordingly, under this Project several actions were aiming at an improved image of the village of Zavoy as a tourist resort and recreational site. Aside from the promotion of Zavoy in the media two information boards were mounted – one along the regional road Ohrid-Resen-Bitola and one in the village. The village of Zavoy was also promoted by a brochure published in January 2005 under this Project. The development of eco-tourism in the village of Zavoy is one of the priorities of “Fruit-Net”. Building on the achievements of this Project, the ongoing activities of “Fruit-Net” and its NGO partners are focusing on establishing links between eco-tourism and commercial environmental education programs for schoolchildren.

Recommendation:

The integration of the social, economic and environmental aspects of conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the “pilot village” of Zavoy will be achieved through linking the traditional agricultural production with a diversified and flexible eco-, and agro-tourism programs. Through the support of the traditional agricultural production and the related lifestyles in the village of Zavoj, the highly differentiated landscape will be preserved and improved. The attractive landscape, the healthy environment and locally produced organic food will make the village more attractive for tourists. Tourism activities and the traditional agricultural production will mutually reinforce each other so that the current trend of transformation of the village into a weekend tourist settlement will be stopped and reversed.

The coupling of conservation and the use of traditional fruit-tree varieties should prove successful in the long-run, however, some immediate benefits are already evident. Thanks to the intensive media campaign and the “diversity-fairs” farmers from Zavoy

were able to establish contacts and cooperation with several local businesses. The marketing and the improved image of the village of Zavoy as a tourist destination and a site of organic production has increased the number of visitors. **The interest for and demand of rootstocks, fruits and products the traditional fruit-trees have been increased considerably over the last two years.** On the other hand, it was obvious that more could have been achieved, had there been a more aggressive and intensive communication with the local, national, and perhaps international businesses.

2.3. Public participation, awareness raising and education

Public awareness is the foundation for community sensitization and increased effective participation of farming communities in in-situ conservation of traditional fruit-tree species and their varieties. The public participation is not only important in primary data gathering, but also to develop changes. **Low stakeholder participation leads to low stakeholder ownership and lack of support to project outputs. Most of the lasting impacts or major failures of the Project relate directly to the degree of shareholder support for project outputs and processes.** For instance, contrary to the success achieved in the Ohrid area and the village of Zavoy in particular, and despite the initial success in generating some interest among a number of interested farmers and citizens, there was a lack of a sustained commitment and few concrete actions in the Prespa region. It is more than a coincidence that there is a low awareness of the possibilities for growing traditional fruit tree varieties that is obvious from the discussions of the small groups during the seminar on agrobiodiversity organized at the onset of the project. The interest of the farmers from the “Mala Prespa” region was mostly focused on restoring the industrial type of agriculture in fruit growing that once was an important source of income for the local communities. Likewise, **there was a degree of skepticism and resistance among the leading agronomists in the region who once lead the state-wide campaign for intensification of fruit-growing agriculture and advocated for abandonment and grubbing of orchards and even individual trees of traditional varieties.** Like in many other countries in Europe and beyond, national governments in the Ohrid and Prespa region subsidized the removal of traditional orchards of apple, pear and peach trees because the system was no longer considered profitable.

Different kinds of public awareness methods including personal contact, group interviews, participatory approach, media campaigns, and others were used in this Project. To facilitate the participation of the local orchardists and farmers two special workshops were organized during the first phase of the project implementation. The first workshop, “Strategies for *li-situ* conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Region of Lake Ohrid and The Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece And Macedonia)” was held on July 11, 2003, in “Vila Saint Sofia”, Ohrid, Macedonia. Twenty-three orchardists, farmers, experts and NGO representatives from Albania, Greece and Macedonia actively participated in the workshop. The agenda of the Meeting and the list of the participants are given in Attachment II of this report. The main issues discussed by the small groups at the meeting as well as the panel discussion at the end of the meeting are summarized in Attachment III. At the meeting the participants agreed on the proposal to establish an informal network of farmers in the region concerned with the conservation of the traditional fruit varieties with a view to establish an association. During this event, the project team of ALLCOOP organized a press conference for the local media and the public was informed about the main goals and objectives of the project and the specific objectives of the workshop. The goal of the second meeting, held on July 25, 2003, in “Vila Saint Sofia”, Ohrid, Macedonia, was to review the progress in discovery and identification of traditional varieties in the region and develop a plan for conservation actions and measures. The meeting was attended by the lead expert farmers participating in the project activities and the ALLCOOP’s project team (see Attachment IV).

Key finding:

The Project helped many local orchardists, farmers and other people being enthusiasts about traditional fruit-tree varieties to deepen their contacts and have tapped into a genuine pool of goodwill. These people are the best advocates for the conservation and use of traditional fruits among the members of their local communities.

The “diversity fairs” proved to be one of the most effective methods of public awareness raising. These events were organized three times; two were open to the general public in Ohrid and Resen and one was organized for journalists from the national written

and electronic media in Macedonia as well as representatives of the German Embassy in Skopje. Several hundreds of citizens in Ohrid and Resen were able to become more familiar with more than 30 local varieties of traditional fruits (apples, pears, quinces, plums). The vast majority of the exposed products came from the village of Zavoy. Several families from this village also prepared a range of fruit products (drinks, marmalades and canned fruits) as well as some medicinal plants and milk products (e.g. goat cheese). These events were supported by an intensive media campaign that included broadcasting of special video clips and reports on the local TV and radio stations.

The youngsters were the target group of the “Grafting Days” campaign organized on September 2, 2004 in the village of Zavoy. Some fifteen schoolchildren from primary schools in the villages of Leksoec and Kosel and the city of Ohrid were trained in several grafting techniques. The event took place in one of the two newly raised orchards of traditional fruit trees in the village of Zavoj. During the course, an expert agronomist delivered a short presentation on grafting techniques that was accompanied by practical demonstrations. Also, with assistance of two expert farmers the schoolchildren grafted a number of threes on their own. The event was attended by the local TV stations in the Ohrid region and reported to their audience in the evening news journal.

2.4. Cross-border exchange of information and cooperation

A number of actions were focusing on developing cross-border exchange of information and cooperation with respect to conservation of traditional fruit-trees and the related traditional agricultural landscape. Development of the cross-border cooperation was one of the principal objectives of the workshop “Strategies for *in-situ* conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Region of Lake Ohrid and The Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece And Macedonia).” In order to facilitate the exchange of know-how and information as well as the achievements of the Project, a special brochure was published in Macedonian language and a two-page summary in English and Albanian. The personal contacts between experts and farmers provided an important avenue for an informal, though regular and rather intensive, exchange of experiences and information across the state borders in the Ohrid and Prespa region.

Key lesson:

The exchange of information and know how was hampered by the different priorities, interests and capacities in the three countries sharing the Ohrid and Prespa region. The current visa regimes between the countries presents a major obstacle to a more intensive and effective face-to-face communication among experts, farmers and NGO representatives interested in conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the region.

3. Major products and outputs

- ❑ **Preliminary assessment of traditional fruit-tree varieties** in the Ohrid and Prespa region (Albania, Greece and Macedonia). The details are presented in the assessment reports prepared for the Greek and Macedonian part of the region separately.
- ❑ **In-situ conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties** in the Ohrid and Prespa region (Albania, Greece and Macedonia). Conservation actions included (1) recovery of old orchards (in the village of Leskoec, Prespa, Macedoni); (2) development of new orchards of traditional fruit varieties (4 in Macedonia – Leskoec, Skrebatno and two in Zavoy - and, two in Globochani, Mala Prespa, Albania); (3) grafting of solitary trees of wild apples and pears with traditional local varieties (up to 600 in total); (4) production of rootstocks (support for the nursery in Velgoshti). Also, seven farmers in the villages were supplied with grafting materials and tools.
- ❑ **One days workshop on the importance of agrobiodiversity:** “Strategies for *in-situ* conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Region of Lake Ohrid and The Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece And Macedonia).” Held on July 11, 2003, in “Vila Saint Sofia”, Ohrid, Macedonia; attended by 23 orchardists, farmers, experts and NGO representatives from Albania, Greece and Macedonia.
- ❑ **“Diversity Fairs”:** The first event was organized on November 8, 2003, on the main square of the city of Ohrid, Macedonia. The second “diversity fair” was organized at November 18, 2003, at the main square of the city of Resen, Macedonia. The third was a special presentation set-up in the Hotel “Millennium Palace” in Ohrid, for

journalists from the national written and electronic media in Macedonia as well as representatives of the German Embassy in Skopje.

- **“Grafting Days”** – a training course on grafting techniques for schoolchildren. Fifteen schoolchildren from primary schools in the villages of Leksoec and Kosel and the city of Ohrid were trained in grafting techniques.
- **Promotion and presentation of organic food-products:** Several hundreds of citizens in Ohrid and Resen were able to become more familiar with more than 30 local varieties of traditional fruits (apples, pears, quinces, plums). The vast majority of the exposed products came from the village of Zavoy. Several families from this village also prepared a range of fruit products (drinks, marmalades and canned fruits) as well as some medicinal plants and milk products (e.g. goat cheese).
- **Promoting and Developing eco-tourism in the village of Zavoy:** Two information boards were set up; one along the regional road Ohrid-Resen-Bitola and one in the village of Zavoy.
- **A computer animated video-clip:** the central tool for the media campaign of the Project. The video clip was broadcasted for more than 90 days on two local TV stations in the Ohrid and Prespa region. Thirty days of broadcasting on the local TV station “TV-M”, based in Ohrid, Macedonia and covering the entire Ohrid region (including the city of Pogradec and its vicinity in Albania and the city of Struga and its vicinity, in Macedonia). More than 60 days of broadcasting on the local TV station “NTV”, based in Ohrid, Macedonia and covering the entire Ohrid region (Albania and Macedonia).
- **Brochure “Grafting our Future onto the Old Roots”:** 600 copies, 24 pages-full colour; 18 figures, one table, one map; in Macedonian language with summaries in Albanian and English. The brochure was promoted to the general public and the local media at a special event organized on February 8, 2005, in “Vila Saint Sofia”, Ohrid, Macedonia.

- **Media campaign:** Five TV-reports (3-5 minutes each) prepared by the professional team of local TV station “TV-M” and broadcasted during the central news program throughout September 2003; Three special interviews with the members of the project team and participating farmers broadcasted during the central news program of the local TV station “TV-M”; Radio-add and two interviews with the project assistant broadcasted by the (only) local radio station in Resen.

- **Establishment of “Fruit-Net”** a non-governmental organization, based in Zavoy, Macedonia. The mission of the organization is to conserve and promote the use of traditional local fruit-tree varieties in the Ohrid and Prespa region. The organization was established at the constitutional meeting held on September 18, 2004 in Leskoec, Macedonia and registered as a legal entity on November 19, 2004. The orchardists, farmers and experts closely involved in the implementation of the Project are the founding members of “Fruit-Net”.

4. Administrative and financial management

The implementation the Project was expected to extend over a period fourteen months (April 2003 to May 2004). After receiving consent from the grantor, the implementation period was extended for additional eight months. The extension was needed in order to extend the period of intensive care of the newly developed orchards as well as the numerous individual trees grafted during 2003 and 2004 in different places in the region. Due to this changes the schedule for the implementation of some other activities was also changed (e.g. publishing and promoting the project brochure, etc.). It was also necessary to reallocate the sources of financing among the budget items. The most significant reallocation was the transfer to the “Communications” budgeted from several others, most of all from the budget item “Travel costs”. The total amount of sources used was lower for 307 EUR than originally planed. The vast of the saved sources comes from the budgeted item “Translations.”

5. Conclusions

There are many reasons why we should conserve traditional varieties of fruit-trees. These include conservation of agro-biodiversity, production of organic food, conservation of traditional landscapes and the related bio-diversity, and others. Developing an inventory of traditional fruit tree varieties in the region was an essential to provide a base line for recovery and conservation. The field research in the Greek part of the Prespa region revealed quite a few old trees, the remnants of the once rather significant agricultural production in the Greek Prespa. Despite the dramatic and ongoing decline, many traditional fruit-tree species and their varieties still can be found in many places in the Macedonian part of the Ohrid and Prespa region. Apples and pears are particularly ubiquitous. However, in most cases, these varieties are represented by old fruit trees in a senescent state; none of the old orchards surveyed are currently being managed as working orchards. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the assessment of the survival and use of traditional varieties in the region is not complete as a number of older trees with high quality fruits remained un-named. Thus, the process of discovery and identification should continue over the next few years.

The long-term success and benefits of the conservation measures implemented under the Project would depend on the level of awareness and the support from the local farmers and communities. A high level of commitment is needed over the coming years in order to help the young trees to reach the necessary height and to control competing weeds around the base of each tree. There is, however, a real risk of lack of manpower resources over the following years. On the other hand, it is very likely that many of the conservation initiatives set off by the project will continue well in the years to come. The prospects are realistic because of the relatively high level of interest generated through the Project among the general public and the farming community in the region. Moreover, the Project helped many local orchardists, farmers and other people being enthusiasts about traditional fruit-tree varieties to deepen their contacts and have tapped into a genuine pool of goodwill. This enthusiasm would be well supported by the work of the nursery in the village of Velgoshti, as well as the possibility for obtaining scions from the newly established orchards, free-of-charge. There are two important issues, however,

that would need greater attention over the years to come. First of all, efforts should be made to promote and strengthen the partnership between farmers, non-governmental organizations and local businesses with a view to creating monetary incentives for conservation efforts by the farmers. The development of eco-tourism is one of the possible avenues. The second issue concerns the transboundary cooperation in conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Ohrid and Prespa region. Much can be gained through improved cross-order cooperation of NGOs, farmers and concerned businesses in the region. The current initiatives to promote the entire region of Ohrid and Prespa as a significant transboundary tourism destination, and eco-tourism destination in particular, opens the doors to many innovative programs and initiatives, many of which could bear on the rich agrobiodiversity in the region and the great variety of traditional fruit-trees in particular.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT I

Table 1. Sites where fruit trees were found in the visited places (numbers correspond to the sites indicated in Figure 1 and 2; Annex I)

Fruit tree	Site
<i>Malus</i> sp.	3, 4, 5, 12, 16, 14
- Reinette du Canada	17, 18
- Black Ben Davis	5
- Belfort	9
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	14,17
<i>Pyrus communis</i> , local varieties	5,11
<i>Pyrus amygdaliformis</i>	11,14
<i>Prunus avium</i> , varieties	5, 6, 16
<i>Prunus avium</i>	1, 5, 9, 15
<i>Prunus amygdalus</i>	8, 10, 14
<i>Prunus ceracifera</i> or <i>P. myrobalana</i>	1, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16
<i>Juglans regia</i>	2, 3, 5, 9, 14, 15, 18
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	7
<i>Morus alba</i>	4, 16
<i>Ficus carica</i>	11
<i>Corylus avelana</i>	1, 13
<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>	3, 4, 9, 14, 16, 17

ATTACHMENT I

1. Gaidhouritsa
2. from Ayios Yermanos to Gaidhouritsa
3. watermills near Ayios Yermanos
4. Agios Germanos
5. east of Ayios Yermanos
6. between Ayios Yermanos and Laimos
7. Laimos
8. on the old road from Laimos to Milionas
9. Milionas and surrounding area
10. on the old road from Milionas to Platy

Figure 2. Visited sites in the vicinity if the Macro Prespa Lake, Greek Prespa region.

ATTACHMENT I

11. Dhaseri (ruins)
12. Pyxos (ruins)
13. Vrondero
14. Angathoto (ruins)
15. Sfika (ruins)
16. southwest of Oxya
17. Oxya
18. Seltsa

Figure 3. Visited sites in the vicinity if the Micro Prespa Lake, Greek Prespa region.

ATTACHMENT I

A PRELIMINARY LIST OF TRADITIONAL FRUIT TREE VARIETIES IN THE OHRID AREA

Species/Variety	Location	Source of information
Apples		
1. Alamanka	Leskoec; Zavoj	Bakreski, Trajceski, Taseski
2. Angelika	Nursery of C.T.	Trpeski
3. Basalma	Nursery of C.T.	Trpeski
4. Bosno	Leskoec; Openica	Bakreski, Avramoski
5. Vretenarka	Zavoj	Trajceski, Taseski
6. Dolgubesto (vretenarka)	Zavoj	Trajceski, Taseski
7. Karapasa	Leskoec (?); Kosel, Nursery of C.T.	Bakreski, Trpeski
8. Kiselo	Zavoj	Trajceski
9. Kozara	Kosel	Avramoski
10. Kolacarka	Kosel;	Avramoski
11. Krastavo (kozara)	Livoista, Zavoj	Ginoski
12. Лепочвет	Livoista	Ginoski
13. Letno	Kosel, Nursery of C.T.	Trpeski
14. Tropalka	Zavoj	Trajceski
15. Mislinka	Zavoj	Trajceski, Taseski
16. Prespansko Crveno	Leskoec (???)	Bakreski
17. Tetovka	Kosel;	Avramoski
Peach		
18. Bozdoganka	Zavoj	Trajceski, Taseski
19. Vodnica	Livoista/Sirula	Ginoski
20. Zimorka	Zavoj	Trajceski, Taseski
21. Kajkuska	Leskoec; Gorenci, Nursery of C.T.	Bakreski, Arifi,
22. Kantarka	Livoista, Nursery of C.T.	Ginoski
23. Krastava	Livoista	Ginoski
24. Tiranka	Leskoec, Ohrid (K.P.), Nursery of C.T.	Bakreski, Razmoski
25. Crvenusa	Zavoj; Gorenci	Trajceski, Taseski, Arifi
26. Serbetka	Kosel; Gorenci; Zavoj	Arifi, Trajceski, Taseski, ...
Others		
27. Dalbazlija (cherry)	Velgosti, Kosel	Trpeski, Grupce
28. Grcka (cherry)	Velgosti, Leskoec	Grupce, Bakreski
29. Petrovka (grape)	Kosel	Avramoski

Figure 4. Map of the village of Zavoy and its vicinity.

ATTACHMENT II

WORKSHOP ON AGROBIODIVERSITY
STRATEGIES FOR *IN-SITU* CONSERVATION OF TRADITIONAL FRUIT TREE VARIETIES
IN THE REGION OF LAKE OHRID AND THE PRESPA LAKES (ALBANIA, GREECE AND
MACEDONIA)

(July 11, 2003, "Vila Saint Sofia", Ohrid, Macedonia)

AGENDA

July 11, 2003

- 09.00 - 09.45 **Arrival of the participants from Albania and Macedonia;**
09.45 - 10.00 Registration;
- 10.00 - 10.10 **Opening note:** the goals and expected results of the workshop (*Oliver Avramoski*, ALLCOOP, Macedonia);
10.10 - 10.30 Introduction of the participants;
10.30 - 11.00 The traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes (Prof. Dr. *Mile Grupce*, Faculty of Agronomy, Skopje, Macedonia);
11.00 - 11.20 Approaches to the protection of agricultural biodiversity (*Oliver Avramoski*, ALLCOOP, Macedonia);
11.20 - 11.40 Coffee break;
11.40 - 12.00 *In-situ* conservation of agricultural biodiversity in traditional landscapes (*Dejan Panovski*, ALLCOOP, Macedonia);
12.00 - 12.20 Linking biodiversity conservation and tourism: experiences and lesson learned in the Greek part of the Prespa Region (*the speaker to be announced*; Society for the Protection of Prespa);
12.20 - 12.30 Presentation of the initial results of the project "*Grafting our future onto the old roots: community-based in-situ conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties and the associated traditional agricultural landscape in the Region of Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece, and Macedonia)*" (*Jovanco Sekuloski*, ALLCOOP, Macedonia);
12.30 - 14.00 Lunch;
14.00 - 14.10 Introduction to work in small groups;
14.10 - 15.40 **Work in small groups:**
Group I: Discussion over the approaches to a long-term in-situ conservation of the traditional fruit tree varieties in the region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes;
Group II: Agrobiodiversity conservation in the protected areas in the region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes;
15.40 - 16.00 Presentation of the results of the work in small groups;
16.00 - 16.40 Discussion;
16.40 - 17.00 Recommendations and conclusions.

Side event (during the lunch break):

Establishing the "Fruitways": discussion over the initiative to establish/develop a network of professionals, practitioners and enthusiasts working or interested in conservation of traditional fruit-tree varieties in the Region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes (Albania, Greece and Macedonia).

WORKSHOP ON AGROBIODIVERSITY
**STRATEGIES FOR *IN-SITU* CONSERVATION OF TRADITIONAL FRUIT TREE VARIETIES
IN THE REGION OF LAKE OHRID AND THE PRESPA LAKES (ALBANIA, GREECE AND
MACEDONIA)**

(July 11, 2003, "Vila Saint Sofia", Ohrid, Macedonia)

List of Participants

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Todor Malevski | ALLCOOP-Albania, Globocani, Albania |
| 2. Ilo Malevski | Farmer, Dolna Gorica, Albania |
| 3. Oliver Duma | Farmer, Dolna Gorica, Albania |
| 4. Lando Tale | Farmer, Dolna Gorica, Albania |
| 5. Ginoski Tode | Farmer, Livoista, Macedonia |
| 6. Marija Mladenovska | Teacher, NGO Jagoda, Leskoec, Macedonia |
| 7. Petre Klimoski | Vapila, Macedonia |
| 8. Jonce Petreski | Agronomist, Ohrid Macedonia |
| 9. Cvetko Trpeski | Farmer, Velgosti, Macedonia |
| 10. Risto Sokaroski | Farmer, Velgosti, Macedonia |
| 11. Kire Razmoski | Farmer, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 12. Mile Grupcev | Prof. Dr., Agronomist, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 13. Ardian, Mihali, | ALLCOOP-Albania, Dolna Gorica, Albania |
| 14. Miltos Gletsos | SPP, Athens, Greece |
| 15. Dejan Panovski | Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 16. Oliver Avramoaski | ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 17. Jovanco Sekuloski | ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 18. Pere Bakreski | Farmer, Leskoec, Macedonia |
| 19. Fotini Vakitsidou | SPP, Agios Germanos, Greece |
| 20. Suzana Dimoska | Zavoj, Macedonia |
| 21. Andon Bojadzi | Galicica National Park, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 22. Kristina Mojsoska | Facilitator, ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 23. Djoko Bakreski | Facilitator, ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |

ATTACHMENT III

WORKSHOP ON AGROBIODIVERSITY
**STRATEGIES FOR *IN-SITU* CONSERVATION OF TRADITIONAL FRUIT TREE VARIETIES
IN THE REGION OF LAKE OHRID AND THE PRESPA LAKES (ALBANIA, GREECE AND
MACEDONIA)**

(Issues identified by the participants working in the small groups)

Group I: Discussion over the approaches to a long-term in-situ conservation of the traditional fruit tree varieties in the region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes;

- Fruit growing should be revived in the area of Prespa in Albania breeding using the positive experience from other countries (e.g. Macedonia);
- The wild fruit tree species and varieties should be grafted with cultural ones;
- The availability of water for irrigation is an obstacle to the development of fruit growing in Prespa, Albania;
- The fruit growing can be coupled with other benefits, such as the production of organic (healthy) food, apiculture, etc.;
- Youngsters should be involved in the popularization of the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is an urgent need of inventory of the traditional fruit tree varieties in the region and rising of an orchard;
- The farmers in the region are interested in fruit growing;
- The fans of the nature should be among the target groups of the project .
- There is a need for fostering the cooperation between the farmers that are experienced in grafting;
- Caution is needed in the selection of the varieties and the specimens within the varieties;
- The new agrotechniques should be applied in the frame of the organic agriculture;
- The orchards in Prespa, Albania, should be restored;
- There is a need of pedological analysis when deciding on developing new orchards;
- There is a great opportunity for grafting the traditional fruit tree varieties on the wild fruit tree flora;
- Abandoned land and dry areas are suitable for growing the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is readiness among the farmers to volunteer in the popularization of the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is a need for loans and credits for fostering the fruit growing agriculture;

Final and evaluation report

- There is a need for donations of planting materials of traditional fruit tree varieties that can compete the modern, industrial varieties;
- The activities concerning grafting and the interested volunteers should be given grants;
- There should be exchange among the farmers in grafts (implants) of the traditional fruit tree varieties.
- There can be campaigns for grafting in the wild;
- There is a need for establishment of an association for the farmers interested in conservation of the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- The fruit growing should be modernized by using the new agricultural techniques;
- The extension services should be also involved in the development of the fruit growing.

Consolidated list of ideas and recommendations from the second group:

- There is water shortage in the region for an intensive industrial fruit growing;
- The wild fruit tree flora on the abandoned land should be ennobled through grafting with traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is an interest in the region in the development of intensive fruit growing;
- There is an urgent need for inventory and determination of the traditional fruit tree varieties and development of reference orchards;
- There is a need for financial support for the conservation of the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is a readiness for promotion and dissemination of the traditional fruit tree varieties through donations in planting materials and grafting;
- An association of farmers interested in the conservation of the traditional fruit tree varieties should be established;
- Youngsters should be involved in the popularization of the traditional fruit tree varieties;
- There is growing interest in production of organic/healthy agricultural products.

Group II: Agrobiodiversity conservation in the protected areas in the region of Lake Ohrid and the Prespa Lakes;

- The conservation of natural landscape is important for the development of eco – tourism;
- providing the wide involvement of different stake holders from local communities in protection of biodiversity and eco - tourism activities including the science is important;
- there is a need for promotion of traditional and/or organic product via diversity fairs and markets;
- there is a need for promotion of sustainable approaches and activities in eco – tourism
- external support is important for achieving sustainable eco – tourism in the region;
- public awareness and environmental education are important for the conservation of biodiversity in the protected areas; .

Grafting our future onto the old roots

- eco – tourism and agrotourism are relevant for economic development and can generate revenue for local population
- organization of diversity fairs and diversity markets can contribute to popularization of the agrobiodiversity
- the promotion of traditional and/or organic product is relevant (important) for market values of the products
- eco – tourism should be offered as an alternative to the massive tourism in Ohrid/Prespa region;
- the nature infrastructure as important element within eco – tourism
- for the promotion of sustainable activities and approach in development of eco – tourism local communities need support from outside, during the process the tourism should evolve in sustainable one
- the conservation of rural and/or natural landscape are important for development of eco – tourism
- local communities must be managers of eco – tourism and conservation of biodiversity on must include as much local stakeholders as possible
- eco – tourism development and activities need careful planning process and scientific evaluation.

Consolidated list of ideas and recommendations from the second group:

- organization of diversity fairs and diversity markets can contribute to popularization of the agrobiodiversity;
- promotion of traditional and/or organic product is relevant (important) for establishing new market values of the agricultural products;
- eco – tourism should be offered as an alternative to the massive tourism in Ohrid/Prespa region
- nature infrastructure as an important element within the eco – tourism;
- promotion of sustainable activities and approach in development of eco – tourism local communities need support from outside, during the process the tourism should evolve in sustainable one;
- the conservation of rural and/or natural landscape are important for development of eco – tourism;
- local communities must be managers of eco – tourism and conservation of biodiversity on must include as much local stakeholders as possible;
- eco – tourism development and activities need careful planning process and scientific evaluation.

ATTACHMENT IV

CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH THE KEY FARMERS FROM THE OHRID AREA

(July 25, 2003, "Vila Saint Sofia", Ohrid, Macedonia)

List of Participants

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cvetko Trpeski | Farmer, Velgosti, Macedonia |
| 2. Risto Sokaroski | Farmer, Velgosti, Macedonia |
| 3. Kire Razmoski | Farmer, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 4. Rizman Arifi | Farmer, Gorenci, Macedonia |
| 5. Krste, Trajceski | Farmer, Zavoj, Macedonia |
| 6. Naum Taseski | Farmer, Zavoj, Macedonia |
| 7. Pere Bakreski | Farmer, Leskoec, Macedonia |
| 8. Oliver Avramoaski | ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |
| 9. Jovanco Sekuloski | ALLCOOP, Ohrid, Macedonia |