



IDEASS IN ALBANIA

Activities Report
October 2004

Operational structure

An IDEASS office was opened in the IFAD/UNOPS PASARP Programme headquarters in Tirana, equipped with a computer, Internet connection and web address. All Ideass activities in Albania are supported by a consultant working for the International Technical Secretariat.

The Ideass office works in close collaboration with the Academy of Sciences and with the regions of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres. Furthermore, the LEDAs, local economic development agencies, of the three regions have each appointed an IDEASS liaison officer.

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Promotion of innovations in the Ideass Catalogue

After preliminary meetings with various Albanian institutions, innovations were identified from the Ideass catalogue that would be of greatest interest to the country. English language brochures on Stabilak, Biorat,

Moxibustion, Raincoat Package, Constructed Wetlands, and the Regeneration of Town Centres were printed and distributed.

Having verified general interest in these innovations, the next step was to bring out an Albanian language version of these brochures to make them known to as wide a public as possible.

This was followed by nationwide promotion activities, which led to the following results.

Biorat and Stabilak

Meetings were held with appropriate national institutions, and particularly the Director of the Institute for Plant Protection and Integrated Biological Parasite Control at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and representatives of the Ministry's Planning Department. In July 2004, the Ministry formally asked IDEASS to introduce the "Biorat" and "Stabilak" innovations at the national level. The ministry also declared interest for any future innovations involving integrated biological control and organic farming. In particular, the Ministry pointed out that control of rat infestations in towns and the countryside was a top priority and that a special fund had been allocated for this purpose.

The three economic development agencies of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore are conducting market research to identify companies interested in producing Biorat and Stabilak on a national scale. LEDA managers in the three regions believe both products can boost local development and help solve environmental problems.

Preparations are being made for missions to Albania by the Cuban institutes of LABIOFAM and CENSA, which have been scheduled for the months of January-February 2005.

Raincoat Package

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture has also shown interest in experimenting the cultivation of "Neem" in Albania. Studies are underway to assess if the plant is suited to the Albanian climate.

Moxibustion

An important collaboration agreement has been established with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to promote "moxibustion", herbal and traditional medicine, and innovations for food security (Biorat and Stabilak).

The above mentioned innovations can be introduced at the national level within the framework of WHO's strategies for Albania, as has already successfully happened for the 'mother-kangaroo' method.

Constructed Wetlands

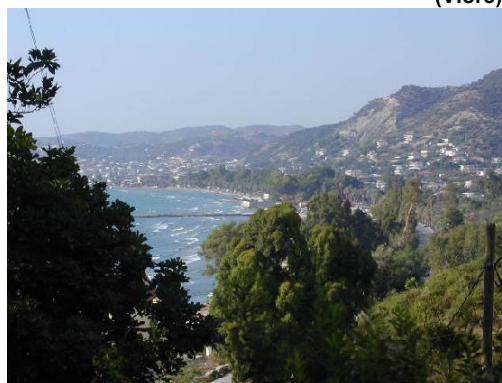
Contacts are underway with the Ministry of the Environment and with the World Bank to verify interest in this innovation. A meeting was held with the World Bank's head of environmental programmes in Tirana, who showed interest in the innovation and postulated possible co-funding for individual projects. These contacts will be intensified in the coming months.

Regeneration of Town Centres

This innovation, promoted by Cuba's Oficina del Historiador, attracted particular interest from the Shkoder and Durres LEDAs. The Albanian Academy of Sciences guaranteed support for the introduction of the innovation in Shkoder, and the project that will be developed in tandem with the installation of a GIS system in the region, as provided for in the PASARP programme.

The "Teuleda" and "Tauleda" agencies are holding meetings with local authorities to promote the innovation, which includes distributing brochures written in Albanian.

(Vlore)



6) The promotion of geothermal energy

The Academy of Sciences has asked the Ideass International Secretariat to organise a mission to Albania by experts from the Tuscany Region (Italy) to verify the potential for low temperature geothermal energy, and the possibility of developing a pilot project for the regions of Vlore, Shkoder or Durres.

From 20 to 27 June 2004 a mission to Albania was undertaken by Plinio Baldi, an Italian geologist from the CO.SVI.G. (Tuscany Region Consortium for the Development of Geothermal Energy).

Preparations for the mission involved meetings with geologists from the Academy of Sciences, including Prof. Alfred Frasheri, one of Albania's top experts in geothermal systems, the director of the "National Energy

Agency” and the Project Manager of the “Albania-EU Energy Efficiency Centre”. Preparatory activities also involved an economic development expert from the PASARP Programme and the three economic development agencies.

An analysis was made of Albanian legislation regulating the use of alternative sources of energy, in particular geothermal energy. Guidelines were drawn up for the development of a pilot project, which were then put to Mr Baldi. A possible target area for the project was identified in the Vlore Region, called “ecological valley”, where the local authorities pledged wide-ranging institutional help and support for the initiative.

During the mission, data were studied and analysed. Field studies were carried out in areas targeted for geothermal energy in the three regions, which included scientific consultancy from local geologists. Final meetings were then held with professors from the Academy of Sciences (who were always present in the surveys) and the president of the academy, to assess the results of the mission and discuss ideas. These meetings, which produced further elements to take into consideration, turned out to be extremely fruitful and all participants agreed to continue exchanging data and information with the Italian institutions in the field of geothermal energy after the Italian geologist had completed his mission.

The results emerging from the scientific mission will be set out in a report to be submitted by Mr Baldi to the IDEASS International Secretariat and the CO.SVI.G. This report will provide the basis for an assessment of the potential for developing pilot geothermal energy projects in PASARP target areas in Albania.

Plans were also made for the organisation and programming of a national conference on geothermal energy, to be held in Tirana. A provisional date was set for 27 September 2004, and a programme for the conference was established. All scientific aspects, communication areas, participating scientific committees and conference agenda were discussed with Prof. Frasheri of the Academy of Sciences, which has the final say on the programme.

This event should be linked to the decision on whether the pilot project is to be implemented and, consequently, whether PASARP, in collaboration with the Co.Svi.G., is to support initiatives involving the use of geothermic energy in the country.

■ The identification of Albanian innovations

The Academy of Sciences is collaborating to identify Albanian innovations that can be included in the IDEASS international catalogue through one of its most active research centres: the Albanian Institute of Popular Culture. The institute has singled out various Albanian achievements in the areas of culture and popular traditions, and promoted meetings with researchers, craftsmen and musicians.

(Academy of Sciences of Albania)

These meetings highlighted a deep underlying layer of Albanian popular culture and the cultural importance of knowledge and techniques that are in danger of vanishing, especially in the field of traditional textile work. In fact, a wide-range of natural techniques are used in making textiles, in selecting, treating, preserving and, especially, dyeing fibres. Today these techniques are practiced by just a few elderly craftswomen, and so risk disappearing. To prevent this from happening, it has been suggested that an IDEASS/Albania ‘section’ should be set up to support endangered traditional techniques, knowledge and practices, and rekindle interest through the people that still practice them. Should innovative traditional practices come to light, not only would they be included in the IDEASS international network but they would also constitute an added value that would help strengthen national identity. Support for these practices would produce significant opportunities for local economic development, improving family income and gender prospects, since in many cases these activities are traditionally carried out by women. The directress of the institute has agreed to produce a booklet on traditional textile work, illustrated by photographs of fine fabrics.



The economic development agencies of the regions of Shkoder, Dures and Vlore will also be researching into innovations in their areas. The Teuleda Agency of Shkoder has launched a national competition for the best business ideas, aimed especially at universities, and will submit the most innovative results to IDEASS.