



FOCUS
FOOD CONSUMER SCIENCE IN THE BALKANS



FOCUS-BALKANS project 1st Newsletter

Project description

FOCUS-BALKANS is a small collaborative project financed by the 7th Framework Programme FP7. The general objective of the project is **to improve competencies and understanding in the field of consumer food science in the Western Balkan countries (WBC)**. The scientific results of the research will make important contribution to the public health and consumer protection and to the achievement of the objectives within the Framework Programme 7. The specific objectives are to:

- Develop the competences and understanding of public organizations, private enterprises and NGOs in the WBC countries regarding food consumer science (training);
- Develop a network of universities, institutes, high schools, consumer organizations, NGOs and private enterprises active in the field of food consumer science that are able to develop joint-research activities (networking);
- Have a better understanding of food consumers in the WBCs, with a focus on products with positive nutritional properties (fruits and health/Diet foods) and/or sustainability (organic and traditional food products).

Four studies on niche markets plus one quantitative survey are systematically being conducted by WBC organizations as a mechanism of learning-by-doing.

The project is divided in twelve work packages which are divided into five tasks.



Project beneficiaries

In total 15 institutions take part to the FOCUS-BALKANS project.

	<p>AGRIDEA - the Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas - supports people who commit themselves to improving the quality of life in rural areas.</p>
	<p>SEEDEV is a network of experts and professionals from various European Countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland and UK), who have experience of working in South Eastern Europe.</p>
 <i>Nobody's Unpredictable</i>	<p>IPSOS Strategic is a company for market, media and public opinion research in the region .</p>
	<p>GEM is a private consulting company composed of Agrofood engineers, agricultural sector and agro food industry.</p>
	<p>LEI works for government and industry developing economic knowledge in the fields of food, agriculture and green space.</p>
	<p>ENITA of Clermont, Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs des Travaux Agricoles de Clermont-Ferrand, France, is a National Graduate School of Agronomy which aims at training students in mountain agronomy, food quality & economics, and rural development. (VetAgro Sup has been created by decree on the 24th December 2009, through the merging between the Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Lyon and the Enita Clermont).</p>
	<p>Faculty of Economics, Belgrade is the largest and the most prominent academic and educational institution in the country in the field of economic science.</p>
	<p>University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics & Business is an integral scientific educational institution. The departments, formed as scientific educational units perform all research and educational activities at all levels of studies.</p>
	<p>Republic Institute for Health Protection (RIHP) is a leading scientific institution for specialized preventive healthcare in Macedonia and teaching basis of the Medical Faculty for the subjects of public health.</p>
	<p>Zootechnical department, the Biotechnical faculty, within the University of Ljubljana is organized as an independent unit performing graduate and postgraduate education in the field of zootechnics, animal science, food technology and bio-economics.</p>
	<p>The School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development from the University of Newcastle is a leading institution in research and teaching in agriculture, food and the rural environment, housing over 50 academic and technical staff with expertise spanning agricultural science, agricultural economics, food marketing and rural sociology.</p>
	<p>University of Parma, Department of Economy, Agroeconomic session has always have been interested in reflecting on the national and European politics regarding agriculture and the agrofood system.</p>
	<p>ECOZEPT is a German-French based private market research and marketing consulting agency engaged, in sustainable agro-food markets, doing research and development in market intelligence systems and marketing approaches for agrofood niche markets.</p>
	<p>The Faculty of Agriculture in Banjaluka is a leading educational and research institution in the area of agriculture. The main fields of activities are education researches in the area of plant sciences, animal sciences and other related fields.</p>
	<p>Institute of Public Health as a preventive-medical-health organization deals, among other tasks, with healthy lifestyles, quality of nutrition and nutrition habits, analyzing of health quality of foods, consumer goods and drinking water.</p>

Partners impression about FOCUS-BALKANS project



Bajic Borko, Institute of Public Health,
Montenegro

"I find the FOCUS-BALKANS project important not only for its scientific value but also because of making new contacts and partnership.

The Project offers education and gaining of new knowledge and experience in the field of research methods and approaches by eminent experts.

I greatly appreciate this way of working through intensive trainings and networkings.

Since now we managed to get some valuable information and image of consumers' behaviour which will help us to improve knowledge system on food consumption."



Martine Laniau, GEM, France

"FOCUS-BALKANS is for me a very nice adventure with the fantastic opportunity to discover new persons and new cultures, new ways of working.

Most of all I have discovered the "Balkans soul", so cordial and generous. During our very fruitful meetings, we share some very convivial moments, that could not be forgotten.

Also, for all of us, especially for Balkans countries partners, lot of work has been planned. Work is sometimes rather intense, with all activities having to be done at the same time.

Stress is not absent of the project, but fortunately we have anti-stress fruit juices to bring us serenity...

The adventure is not finished and I am glad to continue work with such an efficient team, motivated and always helpful."

First FOCUS-BALKANS Achievements

WP 1: STATE OF THE ART. Theoretical approaches, methods, market and consumers studies already available for the Balkans.

- [Delivery of the national report for the six countries under review \(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYRo Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia\).](#)

225 publications from the Western Balkan Countries have been gathered and analyzed. The main conclusions highlight that there is a lack of primary data and a disproportion between qualitative and quantitative studies: the quantitative are dominant.

For **products with health claims**, the focus is rather on nutritional analysis of dietary habits with regards to health. In Serbia and Slovenia, the food demand and potential growth is analyzed, underlying the potential of marketing and technology. One of the conclusions highlighted in Slovenia is that nutritional labeling is still far from becoming a part of common eating decision.

For **traditional products**, there are scientific results in Slovenia and Croatia showing a general positive image of traditional products, in market opportunities as well as in the consumers perception. In Serbia, the existing researches analyze how traditional food production could be a way to achieve competitive market advantages or as part of the gastronomy. The food safety point is also a research orientation on traditional products.

As regard to **organic products**, many studies have been gathered but the main highlights are that in Slovenia, the main determinants of organic food consumption found are the availability in the shops, the income, the visual attractiveness and health and environment considerations.

Fruits products are not yet analyzed under the scope of consumption.

- [Description of "State of the Art" of the theoretical approaches, methods, market and consumer studies already available for the Balkans.](#)

In this deliverable the boundaries of the FOCUS-BALKANS research and dissemination work are described. Some basic definitions are formulated and the theories of food consumption analysis are summarized.

On the basis of data available and methods already used in the Balkans food marketing approaches and research methods to be used in FOCUS-BALKANS are outlined.

The general and theoretical background of the project and each of its case studies is described.

- [Database on Publications in food consumer sciences in the Western Balkans countries](#)
Available at <http://www.focus-balkans.org>

WP 2: Description of the knowledge system for consumer research related to food in the Western Balkans (identification of the core and satellite actors to be involved in the project).

- [Analysis of the current situation within the knowledge system including collaborations between specific fields in all the concerned countries](#)

This report is a description of the knowledge system of consumer research related to food in the WBC. It scans the current situation and identifies the most relevant players. The knowledge system is composed of several entities which as institutions and individual groups (working in the field of food consumer science). This report localizes the knowhow and experience of these stakeholders.

- [Database on stake holders of the Western Balkan Countries involved in Food Consumer Sciences](#) for different types of activities (producers, processors, packaging, distributors, state administrations, researches, educations, professional organizations, consumer organizations).

Current FOCUS-BALKANS activities:

WP 5: Consumer study implementation for fruits and nutrition balance

Market research and research on consumer attitudes for fruits and fruits products

Methods:

- In depth interviews with experts and consumers;
- Focus groups.

WP 6: Consumer study implementation for products with health claims

Research on consumer attitudes and behaviors with Nutritional and Health claims.

Methods:

- In depth interviews with experts, processors and retailers;
- Focus groups.

Next FOCUS-BALKANS Training

We are organizing **FOCUS-BALKANS Training module** on Food Consumer Science (Frameworks, Protocols and Networks for a better Knowledge of Food Behavior) on **Traditional food and sensory analysis**. The training will be organized on **21st and 22nd June in Ljubljana, Slovenia**. The [flyer](#) attached and the [program](#) will provide you with more information and the possibility to [register on line](#). The application should be filled on line before **15th May 2010**.

The participants would benefit of a limited number of available training grants that cover training costs, accommodation, meals and travel expenses. Criteria for grants allocation are the motivation of applicants and the relation of their research / professional activity with Food Consumer Sciences.

FOCUS-BALKANS Website:

The project website is only in English. It will be soon translated in all Western Balkan Countries languages. The website contains global information about the project and trainings and meetings presentations. The most interesting part is the database page, with information on publications and organizations.

Link: <http://www.focus-balkans.org>

