Lessons learnt from MOVING case study work in Bulgaria

Topic
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The MOVING case study work in Bulgaria focussed on maintaining the supply of public goods (farmland biodiversity) from High Nature Value (HNV) grasslands in the Western Stara Planina. In line with the project's research methodology, the maintenance of HNV grasslands with EU-funded agri-environment payments was conceptualised as a value chain in which the product concerned (farmland biodiversity) is **PRODUCED** via the intrinsic biodiversity of the region; PROCESSED via the traditional farming practices that a number of specific wildlife habitats (and associated species) depend upon for their continued existence; **DISTRIBUTED** and **MARKETED** via two area-based payment schemes in the Bulgarian Rural Development Programme (RDP) that compensate farmers for maintaining traditional management methods on their farmland, and; finally **CONSUMED** by wider society via the transfer of public funds collected from the contribution of EU taxpayers to the EU budget (notably the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development).

This approach was interesting as an academic exercise and substantial information was collected to develop the case study; however it was not attractive and engaging for local stakeholders. Consequently, it was difficult to sustain their interest and engagement in subsequent project activities. It would have been better to consult more effectively with local stakeholders before selection of the case study and to have chosen a more 'typical' value chain. Nonetheless, the case study did provide many important insights, including the great importance of non-governmental organisations for promoting sustainable and resilient mountain area development in south-east Europe.

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