

## ***Farming and Growing in Bosnia & Herzegovina: Need for standards and certification***

### **Background**

The Northern part of BiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina, see the Map) situated along/around the major river network of the former Yugoslavia with its highly fertile soil and favourable climate conditions provides ideal conditions for farming and agricultural production. Even so, and regardless of an increasing local and international demand for agricultural products, this economic activity in the region remains undeveloped. In fact, current local production is far below the domestic demand; for example, in the year 2004 the import of animal products (meat, milk and fish) exceeded the export by more than 10 times in BiH. Constraints for such low production and underutilization of local resources are for the most part administrative in nature; barriers for export are far greater than those of import. Certainly some of the main barriers are the legislative and institutional frameworks that should regulate the certification of production in conformity with EU standards. There is a lack of licensed and adequately trained organizations in the country capable of providing certification for domestic production. Currently there is only one such organization (KRAV from Sweden) located in Sarajevo (mainly for organic agricultural production) in BiH. Apparently this organization entered the market as part of an EU humanitarian program. Nevertheless, the KRAV service is not accessible to many areas of the country including the above region. Also it is obvious that less and less people in BiH believe that comprehensive humanitarian programs will, on a longer term, improve economic conditions in the country particularly in its periphery. Instead, an increasing number of entrepreneurial individuals are becoming convinced that free market orientation, self-reliance and adequate commercialization of resources is the only 'way out'.



AP No. 3729 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS  
February 2003

Department of Public Information  
Cartographic Section

## Proposal

NGO Kraina (see <http://www.euqif.ba/index.html>) - a non-government organization for regional economic development located in Banjaluka- the commercial and administrative hub of the Northern Region is seeking with an international organization, primarily from the EU, for cooperation in the area of certification/inspections for standard compliance. This initiative is fully supported by a number of organisations and agencies from both private and public sector, these are: Agriculture Institute of Banjaluka (see [http://www.hridir.org/countries/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina/PROVCOUN/INSTITUTES/agricultural\\_institute\\_banjaluka](http://www.hridir.org/countries/bosnia_and_herzegovina/PROVCOUN/INSTITUTES/agricultural_institute_banjaluka)) , Organization for Economic Restructuring and Privatization - an

government agency in the Republika Srpska (constitutive part of BiH)- Banjaluka City Council and a Farming Association from the region.

Certification needs to be introduced to make it possible for domestic producers to market their products credibly, as inspected products representing a good environment, good animal husbandry, good health and social responsibility . With this in mind we are committed to maximising our natural resources within the boundaries of sustainable development by creating standards for agriculture/animal products including organic production, carrying out all necessary requirements.

Such a certification program should cover both conventional and organic production of the following products:

- Animal products – meat (beef, lamb, pork, chicken), dairy products, honey
- Fish and fish products
- Fruit and vegetables including wild harvesting e.g. berries in different forms (fresh, dried, and other related products)
- honey and honey products
- Flower culture, mushroom production, nursery production, and production of medicinal and aromatic plants.

In a more general term we require to setting standards for; farming and growing, processing and manufacturing, fish farming, health and beauty products as well as retailing and catering.

This initiative assumes a long-term collaboration based on commercial and mutual interests with selected organisations.

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