

## SNAPSHOT

### Fruit and Vegetables Subsector Standing Groups – A formal channel for public-private dialogue



Photo: CeProSARD's Staff

In accordance with the European Union regulations, Macedonian Law on Agriculture and Rural Development from 2010, prescribes establishing operational Subsector Standing Groups within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE). The goal is to launch sustainable communication channels that will enable regular exchange of information and ideas between the governmental institutions and agricultural sectors' participants.

Derived from the law and officially established with the Minister's Decision, two Subsector Standing Groups for fruit and vegetables became operational recently with the USAID AgBiz Program support. In addition to MAFWE representatives, the groups consist of representatives nominated by associations of agricultural producers, processing industry representatives and traders. Also, the groups include advisory members such as representatives from the National Extension Agency (NEA), scientific institutions and consumer organizations. The lack of operating procedures, the outline of members' authorities and responsibilities and strategic planning, was the main obstacle for the initiation of proper functioning. Therefore, as a part of the *Strengthening Public-Private Dialogue Through the Increased Utilization of Effective Advocacy for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables and Processed Vegetables Value Chains* component, USAID AgBiz Program in cooperation with CeProSARD led and facilitated the strategic planning process for both subsector standing groups.



**Working atmosphere during the preparation of Operational Programs for the fruit and vegetable subsector working groups**

As a result of this activity Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals and Operational Program have been developed and submitted to MAFWE. In addition, the Manual for Operations was completed by the assistance of CeProSARD's team. Through active participation of all stakeholders in fruit and vegetable subsectors - farmers, processors, experts and MAFWE employees, mutual priorities and crucial activities were agreed upon and identified with intention to be implemented in the next three years. The activities with the highest priority are proposed in the Operational Program for 2013 and a part of these activities will be financed from the National Support Programs.

The implementation of these activities set the standards and framework for the process of creation of sustainable Subsector Standing Groups with the endorsed structure and working procedures. The same approach and documents are being used for other subsector standing groups within the Ministry. By supporting and facilitating functioning of the fruit and vegetable subsector standing groups, USAID AgBiz Program and CeProSARD created favorable preconditions for sustainable business communication and strengthened private public dialogue.