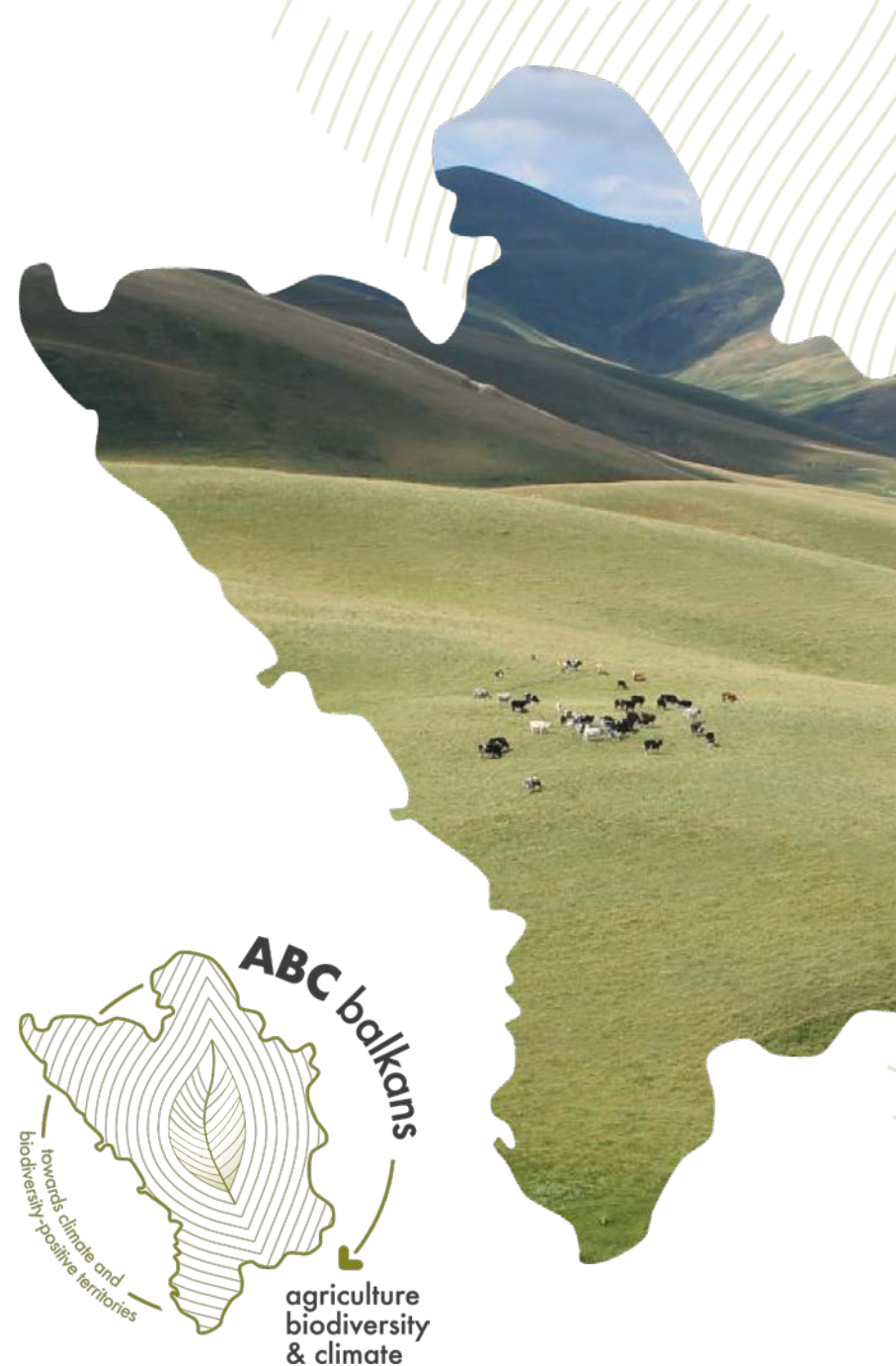


Adaptative Grazing Practices in Pester Plateau – example of Sjenica sheep

Tamara Zivadinovic (Mena)
MOVING project



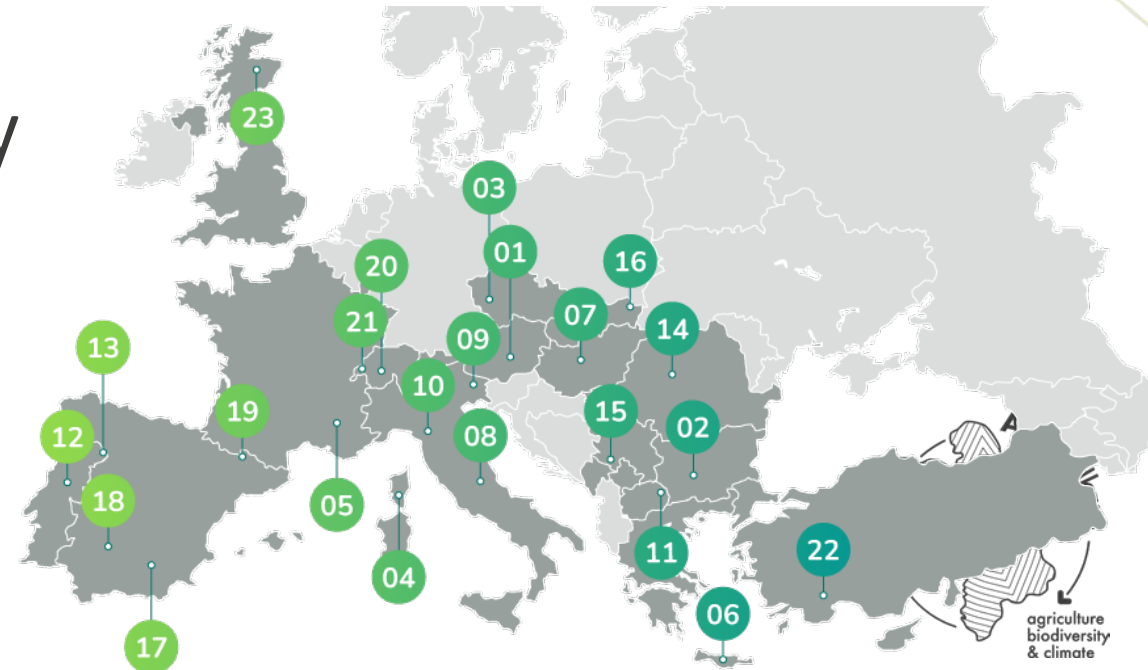
Introduction - the MOVING project

H2020 project (2020-2024)

16 countries 23 mountain regions -
case studies, good practices

MAP/Living laboratory methodology

Value chain approach



What is MOVING?



MOVING (MOUNTAIN Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green growth) – is a four - year project (2020 - 2024) gathering 23 partners and coordinated by University of Córdoba, Spain. The project is funded by the **Horizon 2020** programme.



The **project main objective** is to build capacities and co-develop relevant policy frameworks across Europe for the establishment of value chains that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas to climate change.

Description of the Sumadija and Western Serbia Reference Region



- **MRR** – Sumadija and Western Serbia
- **MRL** – Pester plateau



- **MRR of Sumadija and Western Serbia** belongs to
- **Dinarides (Dinaric Alps)**, South-eastern Europe,
- connecting countries from Slovenia, to North Macedonia.
- MRR area - the river of Drina on the west to the West Morava on the south, bordering with Montenegro, Kosovo* and North Macedonia.

- **MRL Pester plateau (Sjenica and Tutin areas):**
- highlands 1150m to 1492 m, with protected areas (Ramstar site, Nature reserve, many endangered and protected species, etc.)
- the largest and highest karst field of the Balkans, temperature extremes (- 35 to 40 °C).
- Multi - cultural and multi - national area (Serbian orthodox and Muslim Bosniaks); economic activity is - livestock production (cattle and sheep). Underdeveloped area
- Nomadic/free range livestock systems and grazing on natural pastures result in high - quality meat and milk

Sjenica lamb PDO - characteristics and criteria of the VC quality scheme



- Nomadic/free range livestock systems
- Grazing on natural pastures (many medicinal herbs)
- Traditional knowledge of local farmers
- High-quality meat and milk
- Family production (large families, multi-generational)
- PDO is protected at national level (in 2012)
- **Specific breed** – Sjenica sheep, present for centuries, adapted to harsh conditions
- **Traditional processing** - home based cheese production, traditional meat products, interconnected to the local communities lifestyle
- **Dependency on of middle man and no developed producer organisations** (cooperatives and associations)



Contributions of the mountain VC and the territory through quality scheme development

PDOs from this VC registered at national level :

- **Sjenica Lamb Meat**
 - ✓ strong reputation, the label is not promoted and used - the meat is not linked to its extraordinary origin.
 - ✓ low valorisation and high “fraud possibility”
 - ✓ Usually sold as a whole or half animal - hard for the use of the modern urban small family.
- **Sjenica cheese (in brine),**
 - ✓ Connected to the Sjenica lamb VC
 - ✓ higher valorisation of the product
 - ✓ Balancing between products in years like 2022 (high prices of inputs)
- **Sjenica stelja (dry sheep meat)**
 - ✓ Not enough valorised outside the region



By-products

- No outlets for sheep skin and wool - considered as waste
- Low level of innovations in the VC



Theoretical approach

RRT

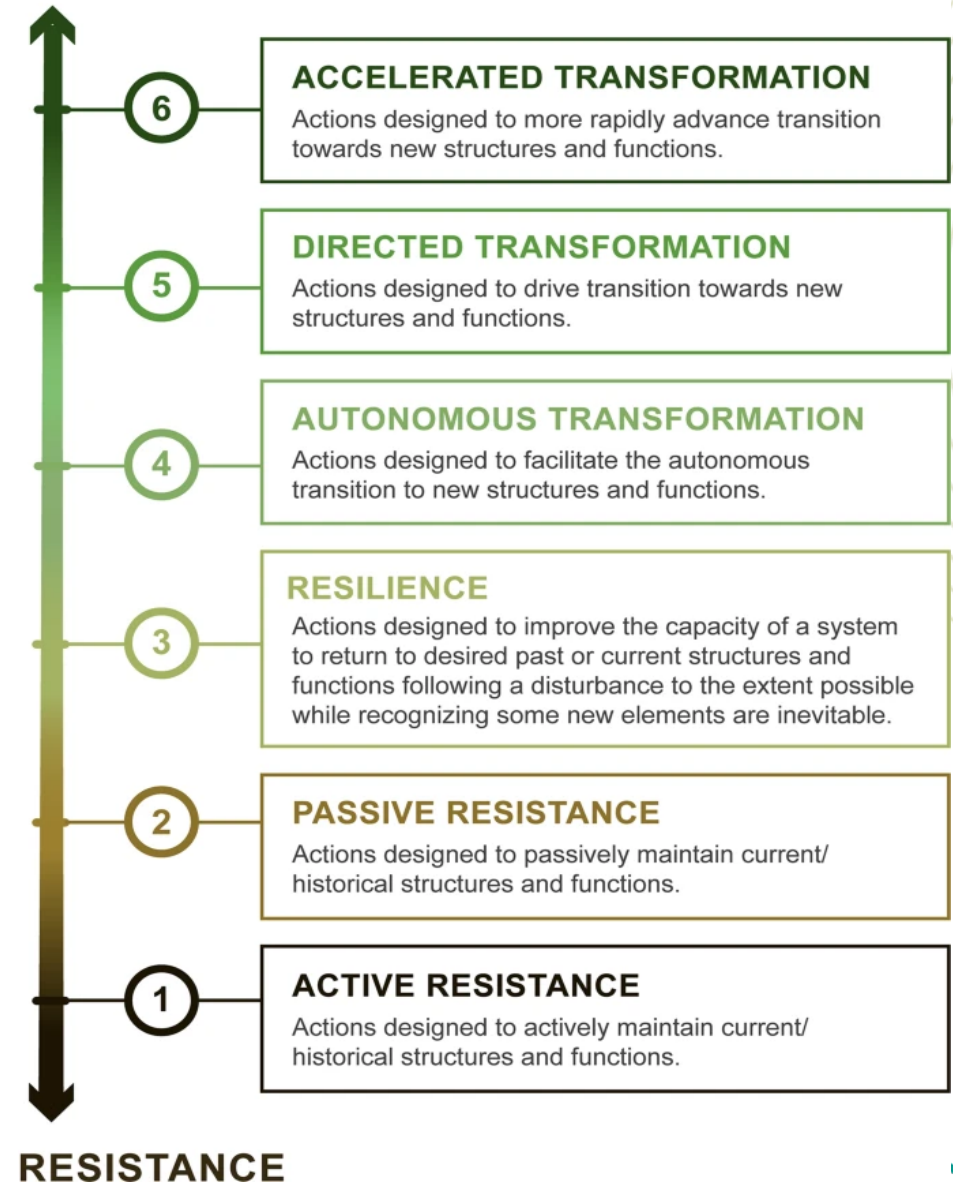
*resistance resilience
transformation*

*Typology reveals differential
conservation approaches across
ecosystems and time.*

Peterson St-Laurent, G., Oakes, L.E., Cross, M. et al
Commun Biol 4, 39 (2021).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s42003-020-01556-2>

TRANSFORMATION



PDO "Sjenica lamb» Value chain characteristics



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Rural dynamics are currently weak, which is partly due to the lack of sufficient income for livestock farmers.



Farmers

- CC is not yet seen to have a major impact on the value chain, but some changes are noticed
- additional sources of hay from and outside of the region
- Increment of the duration of grazing,
- bringing water to the sheep by truck
- opportunistic switches, depending on the available fodder resources and product prices, between meat and cheese production

Policies

- Subsidies are not an incentive to adapt to climate change, but important for keeping the production at stable level.
- Direct payments are the same for all farmers in Serbia, and not specific to the mountains, but to the type of production.
- Organic production is subsidised, but has no influence on adaptation or mitigation of CC.

Broader networks

- Strong connections to wider social networks is able to ensure the survival of rural communities.
- Partly achieved through family support, including remittances from the diaspora

The Sjenica sheep Pester plateau RESILIENCE



The dynamic is dominated by a negative demographic trend

- a high level of migration caused by lack of opportunities
- unfavourable rural livelihoods, often prone to poverty or lower life standard

Accumulation of difficulties:

- the PDO has not yet unfolded its positive effects on prices and incomes,
- the situation of farmers is weakened by an economic capacity
- the state that does not allow specific support for extensive mountain farming.

The logic of the local community is "RESILIENCE"

- through the individual activation of external domestic solidarity mechanisms
- adaptation of agricultural practices,
- to push for the development of the PDO effects through connections and synergies with other value chains in the same region.

Main Value chain contributions to sustainability and resilience of the Pester plateau: barriers and opportunities

- Sjenica sheep production depends on a supply of green feed in the short summer season. The season is extending, more demanding in summer and mowing time of the year (June)
- Robust and less demanding sheep - a good choice for the fragile but rich pastures and meadows, management is crucial to secure enough supplies of food.
- Water management is one of the key elements for maintaining production, while observing changes in precipitation and water supply for the flock.
- Outmigration and maintaining social and family structures, either through family cooperatives or other ways of sustaining the labour force, as a key pillar.
- The dairy production is part of the gender job division and female labour involvement is in decline.
- There is little formalisation and cooperation between producers established, so external actors continue to have the upper hand.
- Strong dependence on middleman and lack of access to end markets, leave farmers with little margin, and value chain organisation exposes them to market risks.

Steps taken with the MAP actors and the project to support sustainability and resilience



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- Awareness raising and demonstration of interventions that can influence the reduction of emissions and the adoption of agricultural practices adapted to the new climate regimes
- Working in a participatory manner with stakeholders.
- MAP (multi - actors platform) developed collective foresight activities with participatory workshops (in last two years).
- Consortium is currently in a process of drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations for different types of actors at local, national and European levels.
- Strong involvement of producer groups/associations and all levels of government at Serbian level are critical for implementation of the defined strategies and adoption of recommended policies.

How to improve the resilience and sustainability of the VC and the territory



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Value chain part	Current situation	Desired situation	Actions
Production/sales	No meat or other products labeled as PDO	Sjenica lamb meat sold under the PDO label at national and international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating producer organisation for PDO product management • Certification of production/products • Promotional campaign
Processing	Animals are sold as live, or as meat – the whole animals or halves; no specific cuts	Specific cuts are available at the delicacy butcher shop and restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of local knowledge on meat cuts • Training for butchers and restaurant chefs at wider market (specifically bigger cities)
Whole value chain	Low level of innovations	New innovative ways in production, processing and product promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, regional and national initiatives for supporting innovative solutions, specific for the region
Connecting production to the territory	Low level of adaptivity, some practices are showing level of adjustment to CC	Adopting to new environment conditions, embedding sustainability in CoP of the PDO products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new adopting strategies • Including young people to the planning (forecast)



Thank you!

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