



Agriculture is one of the sectors of Serbian economy the country counts on to facilitate recovery of economy, a unique sector with a positive foreign trade balance (Jevtic et al: Serbia agriculture: fact sheet 2012). Agricultural education (AE) in Serbia consists of 3 main segments: Faculties of Agriculture (FA), vocational Agricultural Middle Schools (AMS), and agricultural advisory extension services (ES) that directly communicate with agricultural producers. All the mentioned levels have undergone reform processes in the last decade. However there are some needs of the Serbian society AE doesn't have enough capacity to fulfill yet. The above mentioned segments are target groups that will benefit from the CaSA project.

Following needs of the Serbian AE have been identified: a lack of pedagogical education of students of FA during their graduate courses in agronomy - students that continue their carrier in education, as teachers in AMS or FA teachers, lack any formal pedagogical education; a need for young FA teachers to be trained in academic skills (writing project proposals, preparing budget, presenting project results, writing scientific papers); AMS teachers and agronomy experts from ES need in-service training - both categories have an obligation to upgrade their professional knowledge; ES agronomists working directly with farmers need modern means of communication, this group also expressed a need to acquire skills of writing project proposals, to be able to apply for funds, especially EU, available for ES or directly to producers. In the Report "Gaps and training needs strategy and development plan for STAR project support to applied research and extension" from 2007 prepared for the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture it is stated that advisors must establish good relations with their customers, and that the majority of Serbian agronomists need to upgrade their knowledge.

There is a general need in Serbian Society to reinforce agricultural practice, to apply newly generated scientific knowledge. Modern production practices should be available for producers. Raising public awareness about agricultural development is important for Serbian society, issues such as ecological agriculture, organic production, GMO, are responsibility of AE to inform and educate the public.

In Recommendations from the meeting "Education of rural population in Serbia and development of the village", held in Belgrade in 2009, the Committee on Education of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts concluded that Serbia has a geographically well-arranged network of AMS that might become a powerful tool in rural development with Faculties of Agriculture as consultants and mentors. A range of possibilities offered by distance learning is a resource not enough exploited in AE. So far only at the UBFA and SUNP eLearning platforms have been established.

This project proposal fits entirely into the Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Serbia until 2020: Teachers' education and Teachers as key factor of education development are educational subsystems particularly addressed in the Strategy. Areas of specific interest are: LLL, cooperation with other education levels and development of human resources. These are precisely the national priorities CaSA project intends to deal with: Training of non-university teachers and Development of LLL in the society at large. According to the Strategy "it is planned:....- to develop in-service teachers training to improve teachers' competences for encouraging students' creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; - to train all teachers to use ICT in teaching. Methods of ATL are strongly recommended in the Strategy.

One of the 3 priorities for Middle vocational education mentioned in the Strategy is production and processing of food. Finally, in the part dedicated to adult education the Strategy specifically



addresses professional development of rural population with the aim of improving agricultural practices.

In the Catalogue of programs for continuous in-service training for Teachers, Educators and Staff Associates for the school year 2012/13 and 2013/14 published by the Serbian Institute for the Improvement of Education a list of priorities prescribed is published, and “communication skills, ICTs, reinforcement of professional capacities in the area of innovative teaching methodology” are in line with the goals in CaSA.

CaSA fits into local strategies of many Serbian local communities aiming to fulfill needs in AE identified. As an example: the Strategy for Sustainable development of the city of Cacak, adopted 2011 for development of agriculture following measures are mentioned specifically: “Introducing results of scientific research to agricultural producers, agricultural advisory services and larger public; improving quality of ES to offer new knowledge and intensify production; informing and introducing good agricultural practices.”