

Innovation Hub Factsheets 2024

High Nature Value Farming in Western Stara Planina, Bulgaria

The Western Stara Planina innovation hub sits in north-western Bulgaria, on the border with Serbia. Its purpose is to create an environment where it is financially and socially possible to farm in harmony with nature, without further damaging this exceptionally beautiful mountainous region, rich in wildlife and rare pastures. The project works closely with other NGOs, gaining the confidence of local residents and policy influencers.



In-field monitoring



Landscape in Western Stara Planina

Notable successes and challenges 2023–2024

STEP held two meetings on Result-based agri-environment payment schemes (RBAPS) to finalise decisions on key grassland indicator species.

Field visits to three new farms were undertaken to create identification guides for these indicator species, while work continues modifying the tables created for RBAPS.

Two meetings were held with the Bulgarian Bird Protection Society (BSPB) looking for synergies and ways to cooperate on RBAPS testing in the Sakar and Strandja Mountains in 2025.

STEP also released two beautifully shot short films demonstrating the importance of these landscapes. They also participated in Agroecology-TRANSECT webinars focusing on policy work.

Summary

STEP are looking forward to their involvement in a project called Wonder Common Lands, organised by Women Organization and Networking for Development of Rural Common lands.