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## FOREWORD

*A sustainable world means working together to create prosperity for all. ...  
Even when early innovations start to succeed, it is not uncommon to see growing ...  
/Jacqueline Novogratz, founder and CEO of Acumen Fund, 2011/*

Conference “Rural Development 2013: Innovation and Sustainability” is an international event designed to bring together key stakeholders involved in agricultural and food systems, natural resources and rural development research for discussion on the most important issues impacting our efforts to address the Challenges of Tomorrow. The importance of collaborating internationally relies upon the communication and sharing of research results, plans, resources and lessons learned by all international stakeholders.

Rural development originates from combining innovatively a wide range of different and often, refigured resources, which consequently flow into a set of new activities, interactions, transactions and networks. Only through a successful mix of technological, social, organizational and institutional elements, and emerges through stakeholder interaction and learning Innovation occurs. Therefore, the 6<sup>th</sup> international conference of Rural Development is orientated to innovations and sustainability.

Innovation – the process by means of which social and economic needs are met with new ideas and new products, services or business and organizational models are created; they are successfully introduced into existing markets or are capable of creating new markets. Innovation is a key factor, as in most developed countries it has long been the main engine for the economic growth, enabling achievement of high business efficiency and profitability, and rapidly improving quality of life.

Sustainable growth means building a resource efficient, sustainable and competitive economy, exploiting leadership in the race to develop new processes and technologies, including green technologies and bio-based economics, using the EU-scale and foreign networks. Such an approach will help to prosper in a low-carbon, resource constrained world while preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of resources. It will also underpin economic, social and territorial cohesion.

It is a great pleasure for us to welcome at our conference the scientists from our neighbouring countries and those coming from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries.

All the participants will be awarded the possibility to express their attitudes towards the scientific issues related to the Food Safety and Security, Engineering and Environment of Biosystems, Multifunctional Approach to Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Social Innovations of Regional Rural Development Future and Present Policy of Agriculture and Rural Development.

May this conference be a useful step in meeting the challenges faced by Agricultural, Food system and rural communities. Proceedings of the International Scientific conference “Rural Development<sup>1</sup>” (ISSN 1822-3230 (print), ISSN 2345-0916 (online)) have been published periodically every two years since 2003. The proceedings are indexed and abstracted in the international databases: Thomson Reuters ISI Web of Science (since 2005) and Academic Search Complete via EBSCO (since 2009). The research papers meet the requirements of editorial board and are reviewed by two reviewers under single-blind refereeing process.

The editorial board of the proceedings “Rural Development 2013: Innovations and Sustainability” hope that the scientific ideas presented in the research papers are meaningful not only for the researchers in the fields of agriculture and rural development, but also for the students, politicians and decision makers in the EU, national, regional, local organizations of agriculture and rural development. These ideas will promote constructive debate and search for new solutions, sharing the experience and will encourage further cooperation in and sustainability of rural areas development.

Vice-Rector of the Aleksandras Stulginskis University  
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<sup>1</sup> Website of the scientific journal – [http://www.asu.lt/rural\\_development/en](http://www.asu.lt/rural_development/en)

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