

Rural development through agriculture and environment in SEE

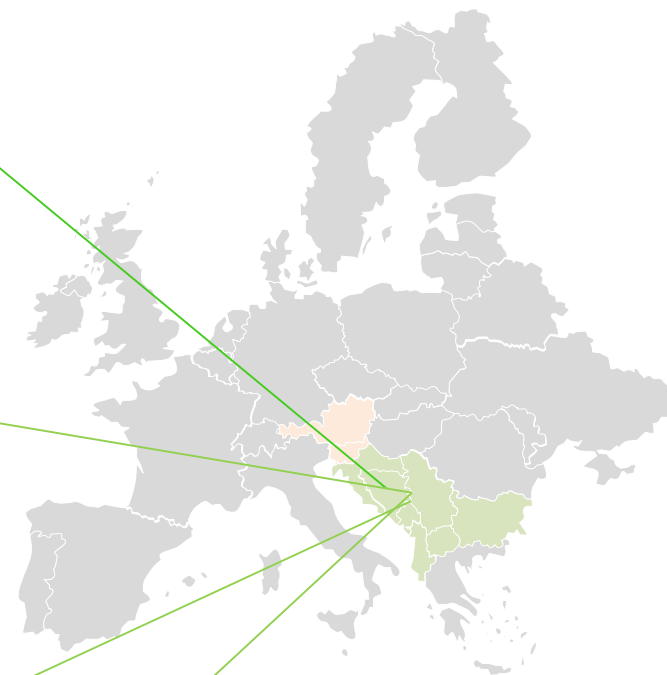
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SWG Head Office/Secretariat

The “**SWG**” stands for
**Regional Rural
Development Standing
Working Group in South
Eastern Europe.**

It is an **International
Intergovernmental
Organization**, consisted of
governmental institutions
responsible for agriculture and
rural development in
respective countries and
territories of Southeastern
Europe.

Its managing and coordinative
body is the SWG Head
Office/Secretariat, based in
Skopje, Macedonia.

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General Objective:

To facilitate close co-operation between the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and Forest management and other stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development and to support EU integration in SEE

Specific Objectives:

- To improve the common understanding of agriculture and rural development policies

- To assist the improvement of implementation structures and systems for agriculture and rural development, with specific emphasis on cross border cooperation

- To improve the understanding and use of implementation tools for agriculture and rural development

- To identify and share information and application of good practice in agriculture and rural development to broaden the rural agenda

Core Functions

- Conducting and facilitating **policy analysis** and presentations;
- **Capacity building** of Member Institutions and other stakeholders;
- Identify and develop **tools for agriculture and rural development** considering the regional aspects;
- **Networking** to share experiences and information among Member Institutions;
- Identification and implementation of **regional projects**.

Member Institutions

- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, **Albania**
- Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations,
-Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of
the *Republic of Srpska*, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry,
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and
Herzegovina
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food, **Bulgaria**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, **Macedonia**
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, **Montenegro**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management, **Serbia**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, **Kosovo***

Kosovo "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."*

Observer Institutions

- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, **Austria**
- Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, **Germany**
- Ministry of Rural Development, **Hungary**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, **Italy**
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, **Slovenia**
- Ministry of Agriculture, **Croatia**
- Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture Water Management and Forestry,
Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, **Serbia**

Areas of Cooperation

- Rural development;
- Agriculture and agro-industry;
- Trade and economic development;
- Environmental protection;
- Protection and promotion of cultural heritage;
- Alternative tourism;
- Water and Forest management;
- Food safety;
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in rural areas.



Environment and sustainable management of agriculture, water, forest areas in SEE

2010 - 2012

- successfully completed project on: “Regional cooperation and networking in the forestry and water management sector and sustainable development in the river basins of the SEE”
- publication of a baseline study on “Integrated Water and Forest Management in South Eastern Europe”;
- establishment of Regional Expert Advisory Working Group on agriculture, environment, water and forest management under the umbrella of the SWG;
- development of regional operational plan on common opportunities and challenges in respect to management of natural resources and its implementation;
- preparation for implementation of Area Based Development program in cross-border rural areas in SEE region.

SWG ERD

Environment and sustainable management of agriculture, water, forest areas in SEE

2013

- development of a program on rural development through sustainable management of water, forest and mountain areas in SEE;
- development of four regional project ideas on sustainable forest and water management in SEE countries:
 - Ecosystem services in SEE region;
 - Harmonization of risk assessment methods on erosion and torrents ;
 - Flood management in SEE region;
 - Recognizing social, ecological and economic benefits from protective forests in countries in South Eastern Europe.

Environment and sustainable management of agriculture, water, forest areas in SEE

2014

- involvement of Public Forest Enterprises in SEE region in regional activities; establishment of a separate sub-working bodies for water and forest management;
- involvement in the SEE Strategy 2020 of Regional Cooperation Council, pillar dimension on Environment (agriculture, forestry, water management and water, food & energy nexus);
- preparation for implementation of Area Based Development program in cross-border rural areas in SEE region – 2nd phase;
- initiation of activities for solid waste management in 3 pilot areas, in cooperation with NALAS;

Common challenges in SEE region

- Mountain, river-basins areas and rural areas in the cross-border regions are of remote character with very low economic growth;
- Marginalization of cross-border rural and river-basin areas with the lowest household income and are most vulnerable to out-migration;
- Population and economy in the agriculture and river-basin regions are permanently faced with risks of natural hazards:
 - Cause-impact chain: low income area PLUS insufficient mountain/forest – water resource management; resulting in emigration and land degradation, poorer ground water quality, soil erosion, higher flood risks, forest fires, deforestation;
 - Expected effects of climate change in the region have the potential to increase these problems
- Bad infrastructure;
- Under-valued territorial capital especially the local heritage;
- Low level of fundamental services (health, education, social etc.);
- Low level of business/ economic activities.

Goals for Sustainable Development

- To enhance rural entrepreneurship and the overall rural economy by strengthening the national & regional cooperation on water, land and forest management and use of natural resources;
- To strengthen the capacities of SMEs in the rural cross-border areas on cooperation and trade;
- To harmonize national agriculture, forestry and water policies, including the integration of protective aspects and awareness raising on protection of natural resources and ecosystems;
- To promote mutual understanding and regional cooperation among the stakeholders in particular taking care of the cross-boarder aspects;
- To contribute to sustainable economic growth of a particular region by facilitating implementation of identified actions and in particular by providing investment support with the possible highest added-value and catalytic effects to the rural economies.

SWG
SRD

Goals for Sustainable Development

- Sustainable management of forests in relation to water
 - i. To maintain and enhance the protective functions of forests for water and soil, as well as for mitigating water-related natural disasters through sustainable forest management.
- Coordinating policies on agriculture, forests and water
 - i. Develop adequate or improve existing institutional arrangements to better cooperating in addressing the interrelations between natural resource issues;
 - ii. Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) post-2013, greening measures for ecosystem resilience and improving resources efficiency
 - iii. Coordinate natural resources management policies through national rural development and forestry programs and water resources management plans and strategies and appropriate levels;
- Forest, water and climate change
 - i. Develop a deeper understanding of the potential consequences of climate change on forest, land and water interactions, including desertification and biodiversity loss, as well as the frequency scale and intensity of natural disasters (floods, droughts, forest fires)

SWG
RRD

Sustainable development priorities

Key Priorities	Opportunities
1. Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of eco, ethno, mountain, spa and tourism based interests; • Introduction to public-private partnership model; • Promotion of synergies b/w sectors; • Opportunities for production of electricity from renewable sources (solar, hydro and wind energy); • Utilization of positive legislation regarding the production of solar energy . • Utilization of clean rivers for fishing tourism.
2. Agriculture and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new processing methods into agriculture; • Potential of development of different sectors (organic agriculture, fishing, herbs and etc.) ; • Utilization of soil-climatic conditions for agricultural development and utilization of sources of renewable energy; • Training of farmers in good agricultural practices and introduction of standards that are required in countries that import agricultural products (Global GAP); • Promote economic activities in related sectors – economic recovery of agribusiness ; • Development of rural and eco tourism;

Sustainable development priorities

Key Priorities	Opportunities
3. Economy (SMEs and entrepreneurship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of competitiveness and innovativeness of SME sector through; cooperation b/w economic sectors; • Natural resources which through their sustainable use allow diversification of the economy (base for wood industry, food production and food processing, textile industry, energy production, etc.); • Promoting cooperation and partnership b/w public and private sector .
4. Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very rich and diversified natural resources, biodiversity and landscape – modern market trends (recreation, good environmental visits and etc.); • Better utilization of natural resources; • Develop information system, sector strategy and promote regulations/law enforcement; • Regional and inter-minicipal cooperation for preservation of natural resources .

Source: Baseline analysis for SWG ABD project on cross-border cooperation_2012

Thank you!

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