

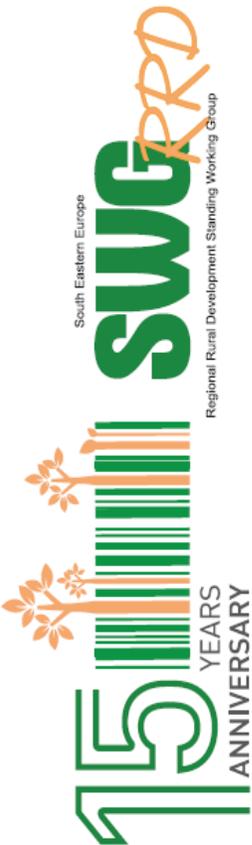


# Agricultural Policy Forum 2020

## *Agriculture and rural development policy in the Western Balkans in times of pandemic*

**WORKING GROUP 1: Impact of COVID-19 on agriculture, food and rural areas  
in the Western Balkans**

12 October 2020  
Online meeting



# Main Purpose of the WG

- **Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG)** on Impact of COVID-19 on agriculture, food and rural areas in the Western Balkans:
  - **Summarizing national actions** and measures taken for coping with the COVID-19 crisis and mitigating their effects
  - **Assessing the socio-economic impacts** of COVID-19 on food systems in the WB
  - **Recommending national and regional strategic approaches and policies**, as well as joint actions for overcoming the consequences and providing stimuli to accelerate the recovery and build resilience.

# Key Assets

1. Climate conditions
2. Labour force
3. Social Capital (in some WB countries)
4. Resilience of small holdings and family farms
5. Regional cooperation
6. Opportunity for rural tourism development
7. Opportunity for development of short supply chains
8. Increased demand for real estate in rural areas
9. Raised awareness of the importance of agriculture in the whole country economy



# Key Barriers

1. Dependence on imported input supplies
2. Restrictions in foreign trade
3. Lack of formality in the agriculture sector
4. Lack of derogations from consumer protection standards implementation for small farmers
5. Lack of internet coverage in rural areas (e-commerce) and digital literacy
6. Lack of transparency and evidence in policy-making
7. Lack of processing facilities and logistical infrastructure



# Ways Forward



1. Short-term intervention measures to support farmers in times of pandemic – compensation schemes
2. Full formalisation of farmers
3. Greater self-sufficiency (less dependent on imports), less foreign input supply dependency
4. Strengthen regional collaboration with focus on trade facilitation and policy dialogue (each country will focus on their advantage to raise competitiveness and the price index will be stabilized)
5. Consolidate and utilize regional platforms (such as SWG) to share experience, accumulated knowledge and best practices among WB Countries
6. Broaden IPARD with more active measures
7. Stimulate cross-border investments. Remove national barriers, improve market infrastructure for cross border investing, remove cross border tax barriers, international technical assistance to support cross border investment.
8. Increase the use of research and transfer of innovation and technology

