

# SWG Strategy Outlook 2021-2025

SWG Head Office/Secretariat

# Introduction

- The SWG Strategy represents the main areas of work to realize our goals and serves as a tool for compelling the core functions to achieve results;
- Defines the principles of operation and the priority areas of interventions to be achieved in the forthcoming five years, developed in consultation with Governments and responsible Ministries from SEE countries;

# Background

## Implementation of SWG Strategy 2015-2020 (achievements):

- Extended operations and maintenance of regional offices in **six (6) locations**;
- Facilitation and organization of **ten (10) regional high level political dialogues**;
- Increased participation of **members and observers**;
- Organization of **fifteen (25) Assembly Sessions**;
- Performed over **ten (10) evidence-based policy papers and assessment reports**;
- Over **4,500 stakeholders** trained on PCM, business plan development, value chain & clustering, employment and technical policy measures;
- Over **170 people-2-people events** supported with more than **350 business contacts** created;
- **62 jobs** created;
- **47 businesses and start-ups** supported in rural areas.

# Future outlook

In the next five years SWG will work on:

Objective 1: supporting regional cooperation and reconciliation;

Objective 2: enabling inclusive and effective agriculture & rural development policies;

Objective 3: improving competitiveness in rural areas;

Objective 4: making use of natural resources sustainable; &

Objective 5: strengthening stakeholder capacities for EU-compliant economic diversification.

# Future outlook

## SWG Strategy 2021-2025

### ***Objective 1: supporting regional cooperation and reconciliation***

- Facilitate regional policy/political dialogues and platforms on topics of need among the SEE countries;
- Cultivate institutional cooperation through building and maintaining relevant regional technical working groups;
- Address trilateral and multilateral matters in a ad hoc thematic discussions;
- Develop declarations and political statements to foster cooperation practices;
- Increase political commitment to multi-stakeholder approach governing and efficient EU approximation processes;
- Active contributor and member of regional agendas and structures (RCC, SEE 2020 Strategy, Balkan Rural Development Network and etc.)

# Future outlook

## SWG Strategy 2021-2025

### ***Objective 2: enabling inclusive and effective agriculture & rural development policies***

- Improve evidence-based decision making (development of assessments and reports);
- Support governments on establishment and implementation policies, programs and strategies;
- Promote inclusive and sustainable policies and governance mechanisms (climate change, agro-environment, biodiversity and etc.);
- Assist in the approaches for IPARD measures;
- Develop of reliable agricultural data and indicators;
- Conduct studies on relevant emerging issues;
- Strengthen and coordinate cooperation networks with academia and CSO for effective policy making.

# Future outlook

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### ***Objective 3: improving competitiveness in rural areas***

- Facilitate and coordinate regional stakeholder groups and encourage their commitment to local community development;
- Develop inclusive and efficient value chains;
- Improving access to productive resources, markets, and services;
- Mobilizing investment support for business models in value chain to increase productivity and value added to agriculture and non-farm activities;
- Support local partnerships via people-2-people tools;
- Support to development and use of digital tools;
- Create new employment and generation of income;
- Increase involvement of women and youth in entrepreneurial initiatives and start ups.

# Future outlook

## SWG Strategy 2021-2025

### ***Objective 4: making use of natural resources sustainable***

- Create policy documents and assessment reports on EU compliant environmental measures for updating existing and developing new policies and legislation as well as with creating municipal and regional land-use plans;
- Strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue to improve policy coordination and avoid overlapping;
- Getting ahead with circular economy, waste management plans developed- to be implemented;
- Develop the approach for multifunctional land use and assessment of ecosystem services;
- Encourage “green initiatives” as added value in business model development to generate permanent income (ex. honey, ecotourism, timber).



# Future outlook

## SWG Strategy 2021-2025

### ***Objective 5: strengthening stakeholder capacities for EU-compliant economic diversification.***

- Establishment of Regional Knowledge Transfer (international and regional) Platform;
- Enhancing governments' capacities to policy and program development and implementation in-line with EU approximation process (IPARD, LEADER and etc.);
- Strengthening local capacities on value chain development, producer groups and clustering;
- Enabling relevant stakeholders to harness funding opportunities for improving competitiveness and start ups (project preparation, business plan and etc.);

# Future outlook

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## *Implementing mechanisms*

Regional level:

- Agricultural Policy Forum, Annual Meeting of the Ministers, Assembly Sessions

National level:

- Technical expert advisory working groups and networks among policy makers, academia and CSO

Local level:

- Regional offices in cross-border regions, Regional stakeholder groups

# Approach

The Strategy is based on the hypothesis that the SEE countries who are at varying levels of EU integration and reform processes will contribute to the achievement of the regional agenda for sustainable economic growth, and that all countries can prosper by learning from one another, generating ideas together, and improving our policies based on the principles of inclusiveness and flexibility.

- The SWG approach will:
- *Build upon core expertise and experience*
- *Leverage comparative advantages*
- *Apply a more comprehensive and inclusive approach*
- *Adapt frameworks, upgrade skills and deepen partnerships*

# Levels of Engagement

- In achieving the goal and objectives of the Strategy, the SWG will enhance its engagement at three complementary levels:
- *with Member countries to support them in their efforts to promote development;*
- *with international efforts to seek effective solutions to emerging regional issues and development challenges; and*
- *with local stakeholders from the cross-border regions to support rural socio-economic development.*

# Implementation

- The strategy has the purpose to follow the SWG's work on development in the upcoming period of five (5) years. The implementation will be handled on behalf of the SWG Head Office/Secretariat and Regional Offices.
- The implementation period from 2021-2022 will give the SWG an opportunity to align and amend the activities proceeding with the Strategy and initiate some other actions that will better suite the needs of the SWG members and stakeholders. At the end of 2022, during the SWG annual Assembly
- The Secretary General is responsible for facilitation of the work on the Strategy and lead the implementation process, coordinate the Secretariat and the regional offices and foster joint actions among the Member institutions.

# Report & Monitoring

- The SWG Assembly will follow and review the process and progress of Strategy implementation. During the annual SWG Assembly sessions, the Secretary General will inform the Delegates on the results of the objectives to be achieved.
- Monitoring and reporting on the Strategy progress will also be presented to Ministers/Heads of Delegations during the SWG Annual Meeting of the Ministers. The SWG Delegates and Member institutions in close cooperation with the SWG Secretariat will assess the development of the implementation process and its successful mainstreaming