Republic of North Macedonia
Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy

2025 AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORUM
2nd – 5th June Ohrid, North Macedonia

20 Years
South Eastern Europe SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

Agricultural Policy Forum 2025

Navigating EU Integration and impact of Climate Change on Agriculture: Ensuring the future of our farmers and food in South East Europe

Ohrid, North Macedonia
03 - 05 June, 2025

Regional Climate Partnership
GERMANY – WESTERN BALKANS

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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Agricultural Policy Dialogue

GFA CONSULTING GROUP
General Agent BMEL
Berlin Office

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2025 AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORUM
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20 Years SWG RRD
South Eastern Europe
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB)

Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG Secretary General

Regional Climate Partnership
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Sofia Declaration

- The **Green Agenda** for the Western Balkans **- endorsed on 10 November 2020**;
- **Commitment** by the Leaders from the Western Balkans to **implement actions** in **five pillars**:
    1. Climate, energy, mobility
    2. Circular economy
    3. Depollution
    4. Sustainable agriculture and food systems
    5. Biodiversity

EU Western - Balkans Summit, Brdo pri Kranju 2021
Brdo Declaration

- Acknowledging the commitment of the Western Balkans leaders to fully implement the **Green Agenda;**
- WBs welcoming the agreement on the related **Action Plan** for the implementation of the **Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda;**
- Confirming that in line with the **Green Deal**, the Agenda is a key driver for the transition to **modern**, **carbon-neutral**, **climate- resilient** and **resource-efficient** economies;
- The **EU** will continue to **support the region** in the **implementation of the Green Agenda.**

1.1. Action Plan for implementation of the Sofia Declaration

SWG given mandate to support the **implementation** in the following pillars:

Pillar 3. Depollution

Action 42: Integrate soil protection in other policy areas and establish a regional soil partnership to improve knowledge exchange and identify examples of best practices for soil protection from pollution and degradation – **focus on soil.**

Pillar 4. Sustainable Agriculture and Food systems

Action 44: Align the agri-food and primary production sector with the EU standards on food safety, plant and animal health and welfare and environment, and address effluent, manure and waste management.

Action 45: Strengthen the official sanitary controls along the entire food chain and improve the traceability and labelling of food products – **focus on wine, animal and plant products.**

1.2. Action Plan for implementation of the Sofia Declaration

Action 46: Promote environmentally-friendly (zero pollution) and organic farming and reduction of synthetic chemical products used in food production – **focus on organic agriculture.**

Action 47: Cooperate with scientific, education, business and agricultural holdings to facilitate transfer to innovative and environmentally friendly technologies and farming methods – **focus on Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System AKIS.**

Action 48: Devise actions to reduce waste in rural and coastal areas.

Action 49: Step up efforts for sustainable development of rural areas with implementation of LEADER.

Action 50: Support investments in renewable energy production and technologies as well as GHG emission reductions and adaptation to climate change measures in agriculture.

Pillar 5. Protection of Nature and Biodiversity

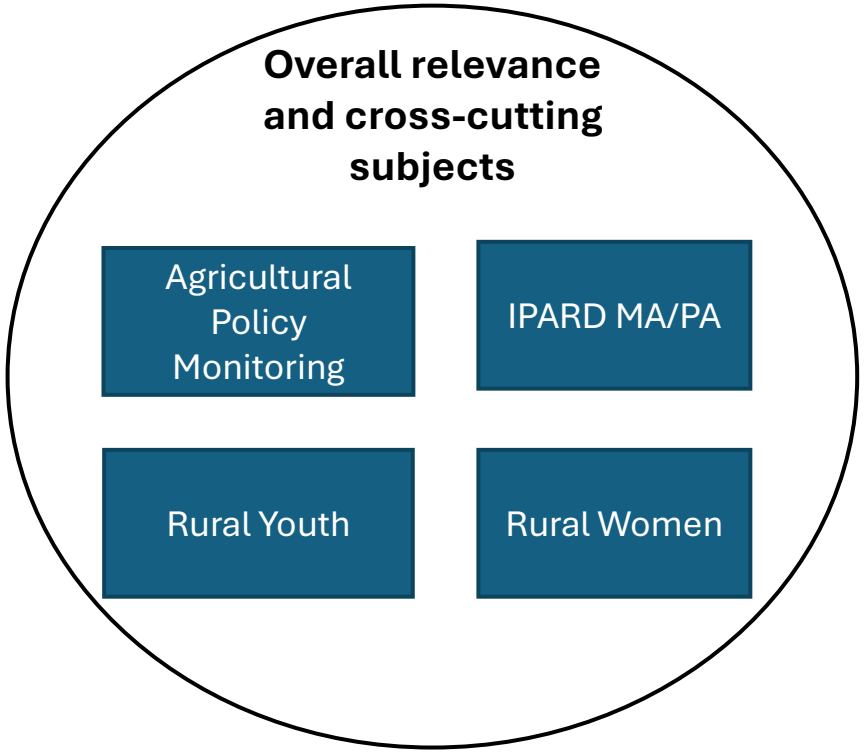
Action 53: Develop and implement a Western Balkans Forest Landscape Restoration Plan.

Action 57: Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Framework - **focus on Agrobiodiversity.**

Note: The implementation of Action 53 and Action 57 is in involvement of SWG is based on a non-formal agreement with IUCN.

Action Plan for the GAWB – actions under coordination of SWG

Action 42:	Soil partnership and degradation					
Action 44:	Quality standards - Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Wine	Quality standards – Meat and Dairy	Plant health (phytosanitary)	Animal health and welfare (veterinary)	Manure and plant waste management
Action 45:	Traceability and Labelling for animal food stuff	Traceability and Labelling for non - animal food stuff				
Action 46:	Organic Agriculture	Synthetic Chemical Products (pesticides and fertilizers)				
Action 47:	AKIS					
Action 48:	Solid waste and floating debris management					
Action 49:	LEADER					
Action 50:	Climate change adaptation measures	Support investments in renewable energy				
Action 53:	Forest Management					
Action 57:	Agrobiodiversity (info hub)					



Legend:

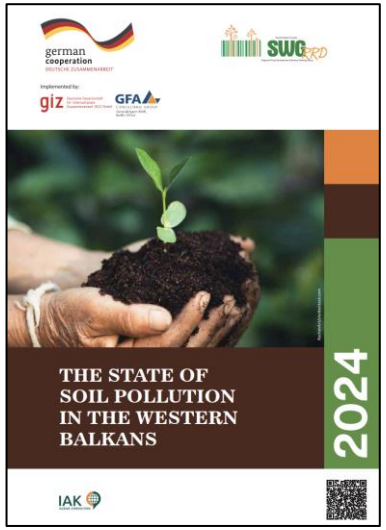
Actions for which resources are partially secured until 2025/26

Actions for which resources are not secured

2. Advancement in the implementation of GAWB in Regional Context

Action 42: REAWG Regional Soil Partnership

- **Achievements up to date:**
  - **Regional Soil Partnership** established,
  - **Digital Soil Maps** collected,
  - **Assessment** of the current situation and GAP analysis with recommendations,
  - Proposed **harmonization** of the national classifications with the WRB classification of soils.
- **Ongoing process**
  - Compile and summarize the existing knowledge on soil contamination related policies,
  - Overview of regional thresholds for contaminants,
  - Collect available information and data on contaminated sites in the region.
- **Plans and needs for the future**
  - Establishment of **Regional Soil Information system**,
  - Further strengthening of the Regional Soil Partnership,
  - Soil group continue the work within the **Regional Climate Change Adaptation Task Force**.

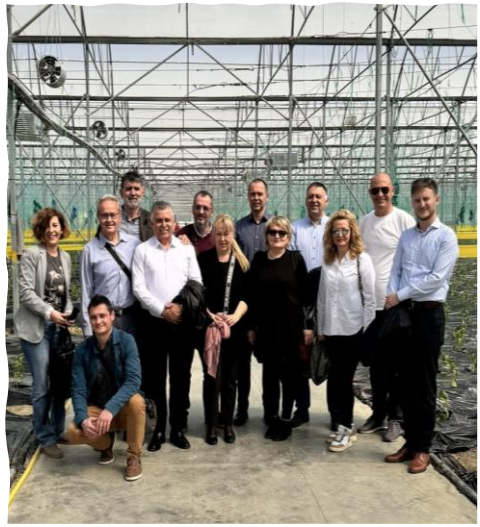


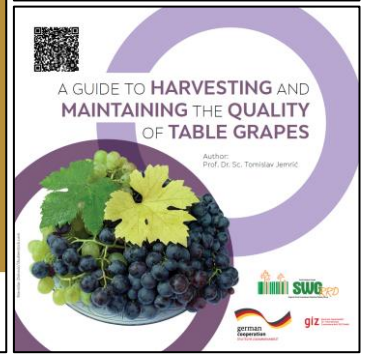
Action 44: REAWG Market Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

➢ **Achievements up to date**

- **Prepared seven assessments** for countries/territories and the State of the art of marketing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables in the Western Balkan region.
- Supported **transposition or harmonization** of the EU CMO regulations into domestic legal regulation in most Western Balkan countries (except Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Prepared and distributed informational handouts and guidance on **post-harvest handling techniques** for 12 economically significant fruit and vegetable species.
- Trainings on **Marketing Standards and Inspection Procedures for Quality Control** of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables for institutions/staff and control bodies responsible for implementing marketing standards.

Note: *The Working Group on Marketing Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables concluded its work at the end of 2024.*





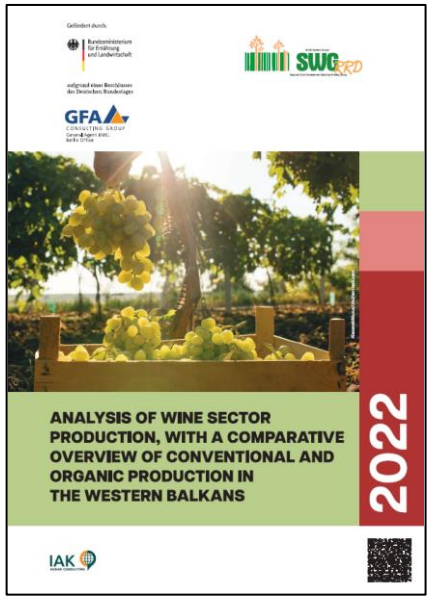
Action 44: REAWG on Wine

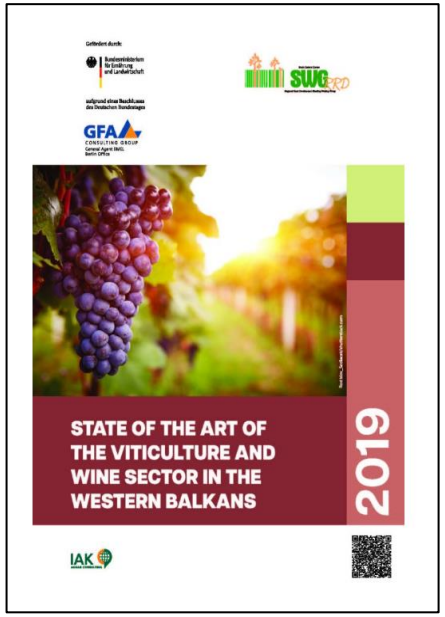
- **Achievements up to date**
  - Regional Assessment: "**State of Art of the Viticulture and Wine Sector in SEE Region**" – conducted,
  - **Regional report for the viticulture and wine sector** in SEE Region – produced,
  - Regional Assessment of the actual situation of **official vineyard registers and the wine control systems** in the partner territories – conducted,
  - Technical seminars and tutorials on different topics – organized,
  - Regional cooperation (first trial of fungus-resistant grape varieties in all WB countries; **initiation of a transnational Geographical Indication**),
  - Regional Analyses of the regional **organic viticulture and winemaking**; and analyses of the viticulture and oenology actors – conducted,
  - Defining of **GPS coordinates for the small family wineries** in the Western Balkans – produced,
  - **Wine Summer School**, SEE Advance Training course organized,
  - Imported vine seedlings of **PiWI grape vine varieties** and wine rootstocks in the WBs.

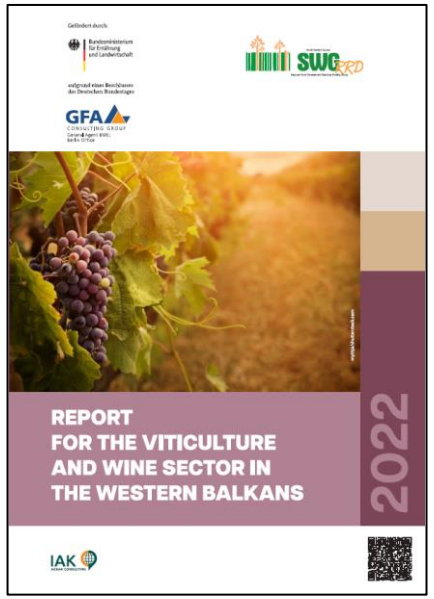
- **Ongoing processes**
  - Continuous support to the Western Balkan countries/territories in their efforts to align the **national wine regulations** among each other and with the EU regulations and quality system,
  - Strategic goals for **market development** (small producer support, wine tourism, digitalization, sustainability, organic wine production),
  - Collection of data for the **WEB Wine platform** and planned activities to continue data collection (data expansion).

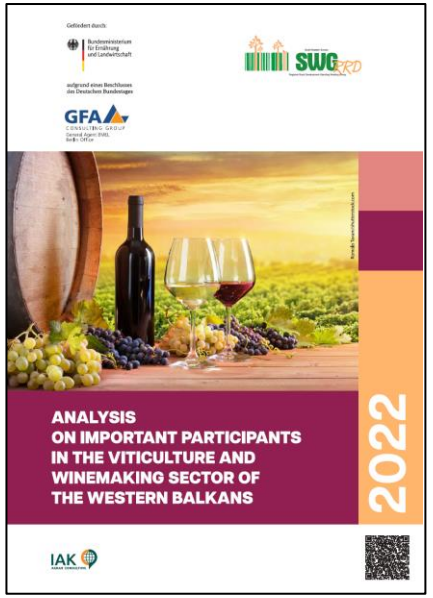
- **Plans and needs for the future**
  - Aim: Full EU harmonization in all WB countries/territories.

Action 44: REAWG on Wine





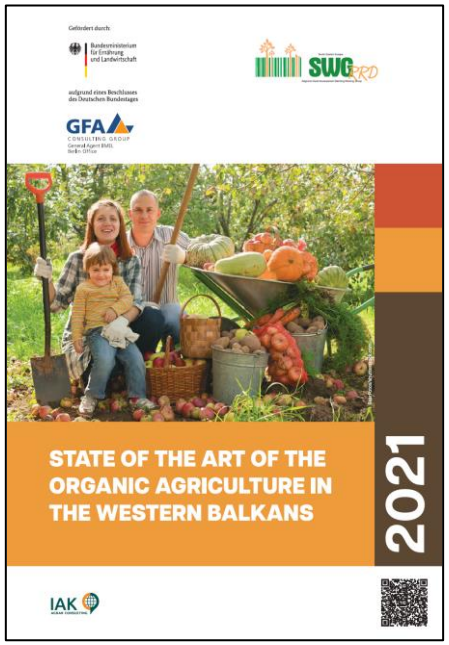


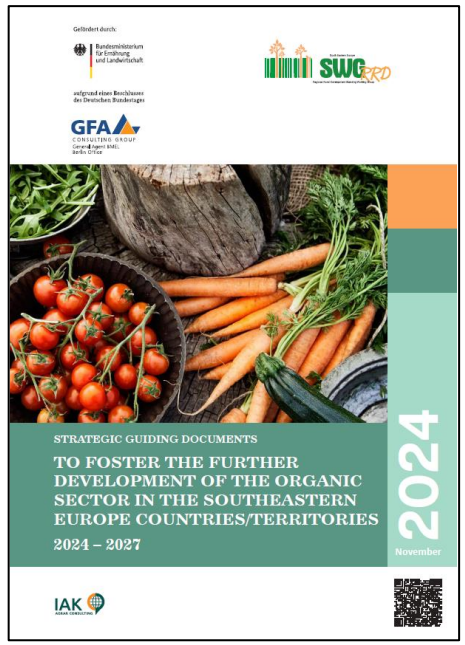


Action 46: REAWG Organic Agriculture

➢ Achievements up to date

- **Action plan** for transposition, implementation and enforcement of the EU Regulation 2018/848 with implementing and delegated regulations prepared for the Western Balkan counties/territories
- **Law on Organic Production** and essential secondary regulations drafted and submitted to the competent institutions in each of the Western Balkan counties/territories
- Prepared **Strategic Guiding Document** in the form of an Organic Action Plan for each SEE country/territory
- Provided **training sessions** in each of the SEE countries/territories to implement the new organic production rules outlined in Regulation (EU) 2018/848.





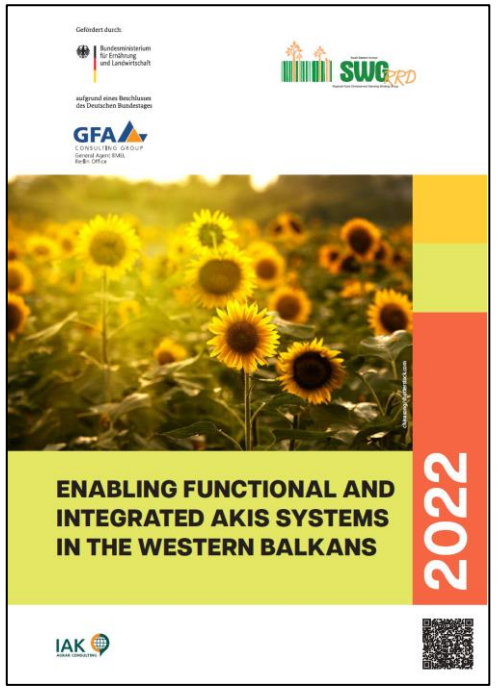
➢ Ongoing process

- Support the **implementation of the Organic Action Plan** and establish an efficient **monitoring system for organic market development** in all the SEE countries and territories.
- Assist in implementing the new Law on Organic Production and **secondary legislation**.

➢ Plans and needs for the future

- Strengthen organic market development and institutional capacity in the organic sector.
- **Establish regular coordination and communication** with the European Commission (with the Organic Department in DG Agri).

Action 47: REAWG Agriculture Knowledge Innovation System (AKIS)



➢ Achievements up to date

- **Assessment of the current situation** in the countries/territories (Countries at different levels of implementing the AKIS approach (from elementary to well advanced),
- **AKIS Strategic roadmaps** and **Action plans prepared** for all countries/territories.

➢ Ongoing process

- **Compilation** and **summary** the existing policies into knowledge reservoir,
- Legislative involvement of AKIS approach into national legislations,
- Establishment of AKIS as a system.

➢ Plans and needs for the future

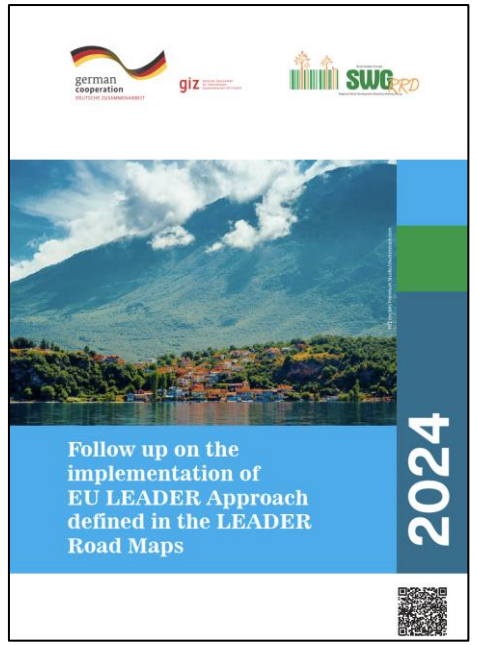
- Exert political pressure and raise further awareness to speed the formalization process of AKIS and its components,
- Continue creating the AKIS Knowledge Reservoir,
- **Incorporation of the Regional AKIS REAWG into the EU SCAR AKIS Network.**

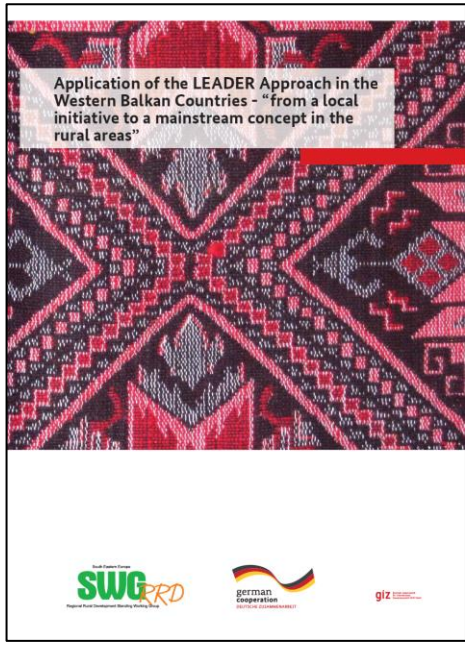
Action 49: REAWG on LEADER

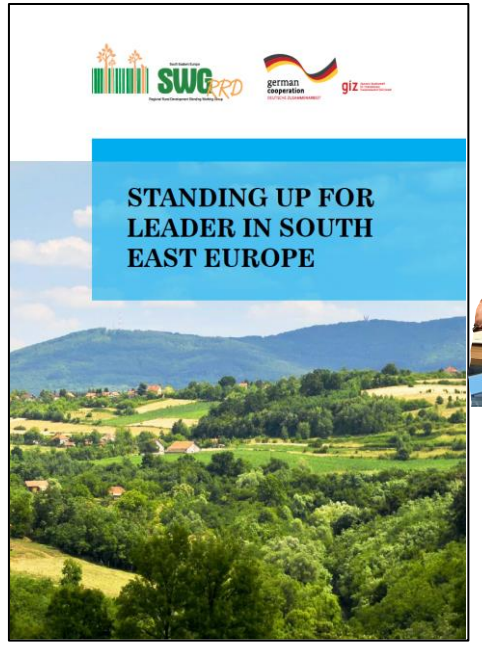
➢ **Achievements up to date:**

- Regional Assessment: **Application of the LEADER approach in the Western Balkans** - "from a local initiative to a mainstream concept in the rural areas" – conducted,
- Publication: **Pathways to LEADER** "A guide to getting up LEADER approach up and running in the Western Balkans, Turkey and beyond" – conducted,
- **National Road Maps** for LEADER approach "Standing up for LEADER in Southeast Europe – conducted,
- Continuous exchange and support of dialogue and networking of the National Rural Networks, Balkan Rural Development Network, policy makers, governmental and academic representatives for rural development and LEADER approach,
- Updated **six National Road Maps on LEADER** with regards to:
  - **Legal and institutional framework**;
  - **Rural development networking;**
  - **Local Action Groups and development initiatives**
- **Regional summary assesment** conducted providing regional conclusions and recommendations on future steps for accelerating LEADER implementation in the region.

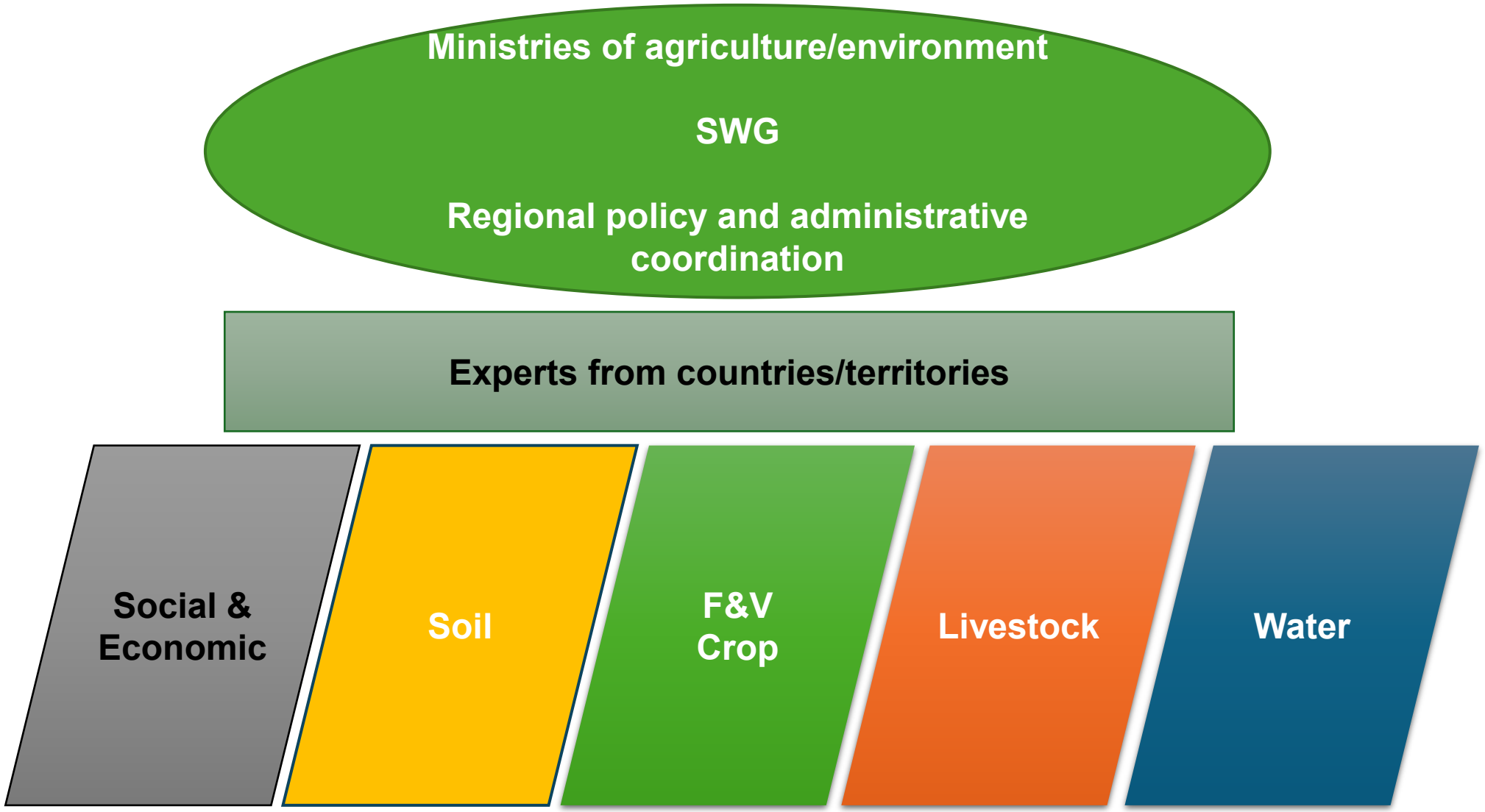
***Note**: The Regional Expert Advisory Working Group on LEADER concluded its work at the end of 2024.*







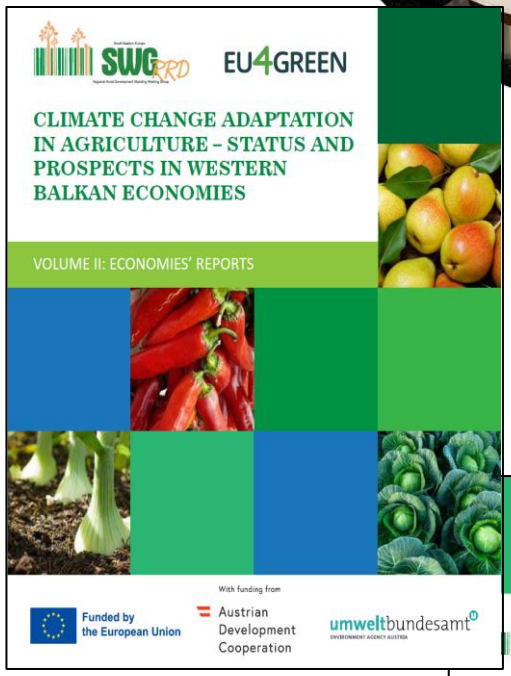
Action 50: Regional Task Force CCAA Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture



Action 50: Regional Task Force Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture

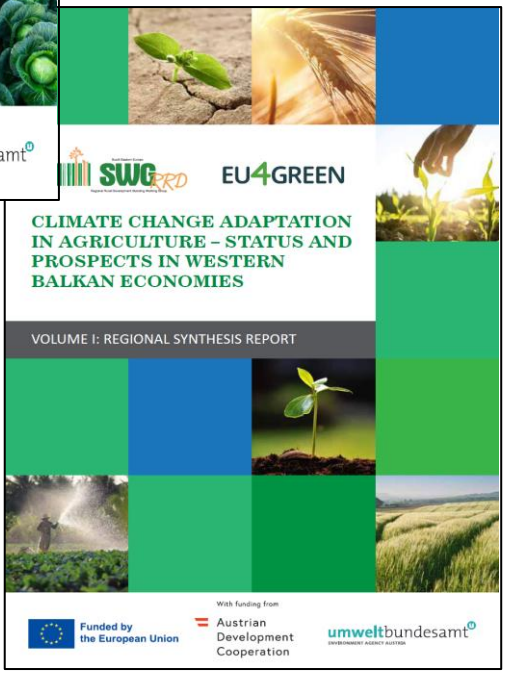
➢ Achievements up to date

- **Study on Climate Change Adaptation** in agriculture status and prospects in the Western Balkans (national report),
- **Cross country study** on climate change adaptation in agriculture status and prospects in the Western Balkans,
- Prepared **Methodology for Strategic overview** papers with proposed policy measures for CCAA and action plans in the WB countries/territories on climate change adaptation in agriculture,



➢ Ongoing process

- **Training / education** for the representatives of the ministries of agriculture/environment in charge of climate change adaptation in agriculture
- Process of **preparation of Strategic overview papers** and **action plans** for Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture (2025-2026).

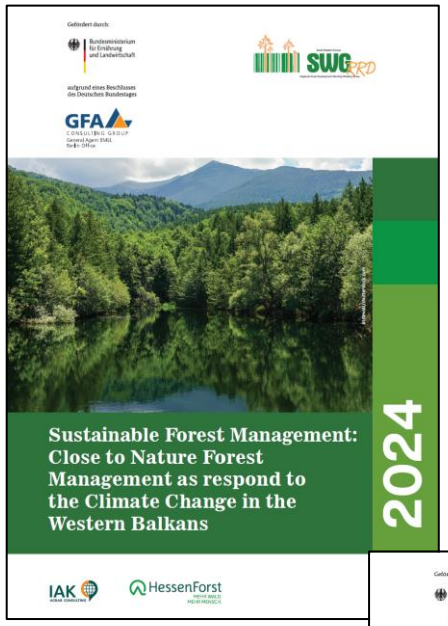


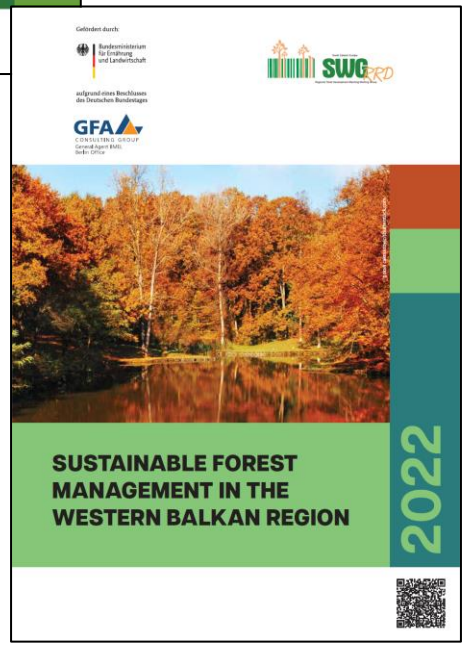
➢ Plans and needs for the future

- **Implementation of the Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation** in Agriculture and development of policy sets and appropriate measures.

Action 53: REAWG on Sustainable Forest Management

- **Achievements up to date:**
  - Regional Assessment: "**Sustainable Forest Management in the Western Balkan region**" – conducted.
  - Creating a concept of **Forest Management Guidelines** on
  - Trainings and demonstration plots of one forest management types/ tree species of the WB countries/territories – realized.
  - Policy analysis and **policy recommendation regarding Sustainable Forest Management** under the climate change challenges in the WB countries/territories – proposed.
- **Ongoing process:**
  - Forest adaptation/mitigation policy assesment regarding **climate change and recomendation with action plan meassures** for improvement for the WBs;
  - Introduction of Forest Biodiversity into Forest Management Planning and monitoring system in WB region - **forest biodiversity guidelines** and methodology as part future Forest Management Planning praxis.
- **Plans and needs for the future:**
  - **Strengthening the policy framework** for sustainable forest; management in the Western Balkans regarding implementation of the GAWB and the EU Forest Strategy for 2030,
  - **Capacity building** for the members of the REAWG on SFM,
  - **Forest policy reform related to the climate change challenges.**





3. Cross-cutting topics relevant to GAWB

REAWG Agricultural Policy Monitoring

➢Achievements up to date

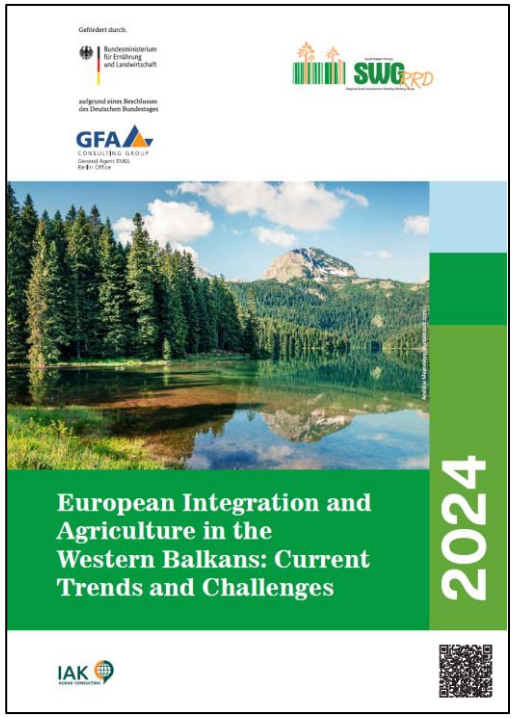
- National reports with APM Database (including data for 2023),
- Cross country synthesis report.

➢Ongoing process

- Preparation of National and Regional synthesis report including data for 2024
- Development of methodology for monitoring of the EU Integration process: Negotiation Chapter 11, Chapter 12 and Chapter 13.

➢ Plans and needs for the future:

- Continuation of the monitoring on development of Agricultural policy in SEE and EU accession.



REAWG Rural Youth

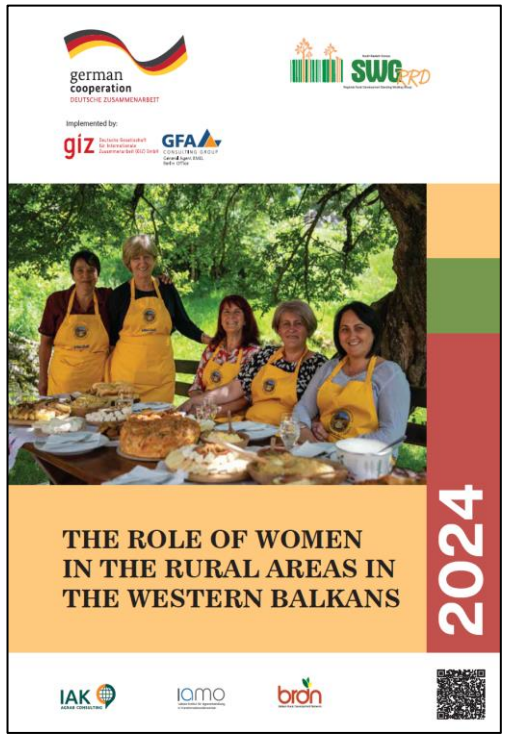
Situation and Needs of Rural Youth in the Western Balkans

- Completed survey with **2158 questionnaires**,
- **Completed national reports**,
- **Regional Sythesis Report** with policy recommendations completed,
- Disseminate the results of the study.

REAWG Rural Women

The role of women in agriculture and rural development in the WB

- Completed survey with **2466 questionnaires**;
- **Completed national reports**;
- Final study report **completed.**
- Disseminate the results of the study.



Regional work to be completed in 2025

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Action 44:	Quality standards - Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Wine	Quality standards Meat and Dairy	Plant health (phytosanitary)	Animal health and welfare (veterinary)	Manure and plant waste management
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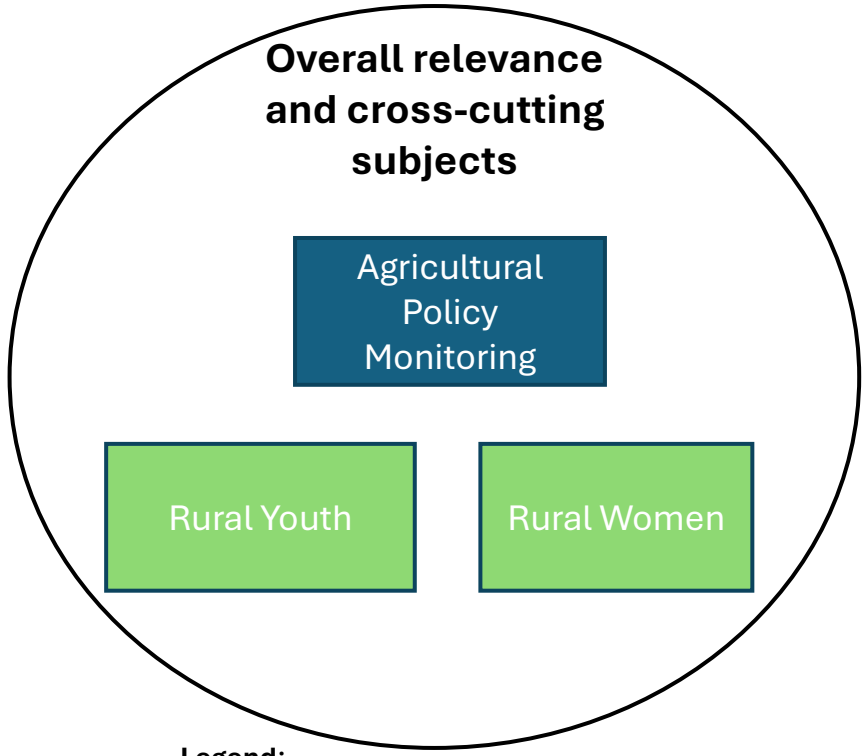

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- To be completed in 2025.

Appreciation for the support up to now!

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Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy

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