



Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans

Support to Economic Diversification in Rural Areas
of Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)

2nd Balkan Rural Parliament
15.06.2021, Ohrid/ online



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Basic Facts

Volume:	up to 3 Mio. EUR + 1 Mio. EUR (“Returning to New Opportunities” Programme)
Duration:	09/2021 - 08/2024
Commissioning Party:	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Political Partner:	Standing Working Group Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD), <i>tbd</i>
Implementing Partners:	SWG RRD, Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) as main partners, <i>tbd</i>
WB Economies:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia

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OBJECTIVE:
Strengthening economic development in rural areas

3 Areas of Intervention


- 1 Evidence-based policy advice to support the EU accession process**
- 2 Strengthening capacities for rural development**
- 3 Improvement of employment perspectives in selected rural regions**

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Areas of Intervention	Focus
1 Evidence-based policy advice to support the EU accession process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence-based policy results are profound, strengthening of national dissemination and implementation• Use impulses for demand-oriented policy advice in the framework of the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans• Support regional platforms for policy and political dialogue, f.e. Agricultural Policy Forum, Annual Ministerial Meetings, High level gatherings and declarations etc.• Support demand-oriented, evidence-based policy analysis and policy-making through Regional Expert Advisory Working Groups (REAWG)• Support SWG RRD to fulfill its role and mandate in the coordination and implementation of the Green Agenda for the WB in close cooperation with RCC• Main partners: SWG RRD <i>tbd</i>, member ministries

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Areas of Intervention	Focus, main activities, main partner(s), instruments
<p>2</p> <p>Strengthening capacities for rural development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEADER/ CLLD has potential to enhance a bottom-up engagement of rural stakeholders but needs strong regional and national coordination, capacity building of networks and access to funding opportunities • Strengthening capacities of the BRDN in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy advocacy, communication and facilitation of networking • establishment of thematic hubs for shared learning and cooperation with their members • in feeding back results and implementation experiences into established policy and political dialogues and platforms • Strengthening capacities of the National Rural Development Networks (NRDN): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in consolidating their role towards a functional model of bottom-up and participatory perspective in the national rural agenda for policy advocacy • in the thematic hubs established by the BRDN and linked to the policy level • Support the liaising with EU-wide networks and the exchange and transformation of experiences • Support the implementation of structures and delivery mechanisms for CLLD approaches and the LEADER measure (incl. LAGs) during the IPARD III period • Support to projects of LAGs in selected regions to realize an enabling framework for diversification <p>• Main partners: BRDN, NRDN, tbd</p>

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Areas of Intervention	Focus
<p>3</p> <p>Improvement of employment perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High migration pressure continues due to missing opportunities/ attractiveness of rural areas • Potentials for employment creation are to be specified for each region • High potential of economic diversification through tourism development and short value chains • Support an integrated approach to employment promotion in selected rural regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Employment and Labour Market Analysis • Supply for labour: Implement qualification measures (access to formal opportunities, informal measures) • Demand for labour: support existing MSMEs in expanding their business • Matching: Facilitate job placement in cooperation with private sector • Framework conditions: facilitate access to existing funding, support to LAGs for providing business enabling framework • Using role model approach, e.g. successful returnees and businesswomen • Focused measures for vulnerable target groups (disabled persons, young, women) • People2People events and capacity building measures <p>• Main partners: SWG RRD, tbd, German Information Centre for Migration, Training and Careers institutes, private sector, NGOs</p>

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Frame conditions

- **EU Green Agenda and Economic and Investment Plan for the WB countries**
 - Accelerating EU approximation
 - Focus on regional approaches and cooperation
 - RCC in charge for the overall coordination
 - Pillar IV: Sustainable agro-food systems & Tourism relevant for SEDRA II
- **Integration of EU CAP *acquis* requirements 2021 – 2027**
 - EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy, Bio-Diversity, Organic, et al
 - IPARD III (4 countries), IPARD-like
 - Programming of Agro-Environment, CLLD/ LEADER, Economic Diversification & TA
 - window of opportunity:
 - > relative small transaction costs for a green transition of the WB agriculture

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Rural Networks

- **Rural Networks – member based organisations as driver of a rural revival**
 - Rural Networks as civil society organisations
 - assuring accountability of decision makers
 - to be accountable towards their members
 - influencing policies to well match members needs
 - advocate interests of rural actors
 - build capacities and provide services
 - bring knowledge and innovation to rural regions
 - Civil Society & Public Sector:
 - Cooperation is the key - once a civil voice becomes a governmental one – it's silenced
 - > though civil society can't be a governmental legacy
- **Cooperation of Rural Networks in the Western Balkans and in the EU**
 - Cooperation is the DNA of networking – in the region and of the region with the EU
 - Informal space to translate priorities (such as the Green Deal) to rural realities
 - Development of joint European Perspectives for sustainable rural areas worth living in.

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