



Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE region

Regional Cooperation in South Eastern Europe

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Importance of Regional Cooperation for South Eastern Europe

SWG
RRD

Regional Cooperation has political, socio-economic and security dimension:

- It contributes to the political stability in the region;
- Serves as a channel for resolution and settlement, good-neighbourliness and good political relations;
- Through regional initiatives ensures ownership of the region;
- Is essential factor for increasing prosperity and economic growth;
- Acts as an instrumental in addressing the security challenges facing the region;
- Serves as a cornerstone of the EU's policy framework for the Western Balkans — the stabilization and association process;
- Is a priority policy for EU membership;



How to improve regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe

SWG RRD

*Ownership of Regional Cooperation through:

- Fostering stability, security, mutual respect and open dialogue in the region = *(Product of economic, political and social development)*;
- Variation, interests and constellation of different national actors and stakeholders, and the need for empowerment;
- Identity, tradition, social trust, leadership and participation of society and its segments;
- Establishment of regional initiatives for strengthening regional cooperation;
- Regional dimension and its contribution towards common interests, or even a common uniqueness. Inter-linkage of formal and informal regional networks = *(Networks of networks of different actors)*;
- Mediation of the relations among the EU and of other international organizations and institutions in initiating and prioritizing projects.



Establishment of initiative for Regional Cooperation in South Eastern Europe = *Regional Ownership*

SWG
RRD



The “**SWG**” - **Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe** was founded on the basis of a common wish to establish regional organization for sustainable agriculture and rural development in SEE;



Vision of the SWG is to have innovative and sustainable agriculture and rural development through regional cooperation for improvement of rural livelihoods in the SEE countries.



Mission is to increase horizontal cooperation among respective countries and territories of South Eastern Europe, coordinating regional initiatives related to agriculture and rural development and support the process of social and economic development of rural areas in SEE region.



The **general objective** of SWG is to facilitate close cooperation between the Ministries of Agriculture and other stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development and to support EU integration in SEE.

Role of SWG in strengthening regional cooperation

SWG *RRD*



The SWG has **four 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

In line with the four specific objectives, the SWG has **four core functions**:

- Conducting and facilitating **policy analysis** and **policy dialogue**
- **Capacity building** of Member Institutions and other stakeholders
- Identify and develop **tools for agriculture and rural development**
- **Networking** to share experiences and information among Member Institutions
- Identification and implementation of **regional projects** (as an operational function)

Activities for strengthening regional cooperation in the SEE region

SWG RRD



Political and Policy Dialogue

Annual Working Meetings of the Ministers of Agriculture from SEE

Agriculture Policy Forums

Technical Discussions

Experts` Missions

Capacity Building and Education

Capacity Building for Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Analysis and Implementation

Trainings, Seminars on Agriculture, Rural Development Topics

Young Professional Program for Managing and Leading Regional Rural Development

Creation of Western Balkan Rural Extension Network through Curriculum Reform

Networking and Exchange of Information

Support to Creation of Rural Development Networks

Organization of Conferences, Professional Gatherings

Organization Rural Events

People-to-People Actions for Promotion of Cultural and Rural Heritage

Activities for strengthening regional cooperation in the SEE region

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Support to agribusiness and trade

- Networking of Professional Associations and Markets from SEE countries

Organization of Business-to-Business Meetings with Stakeholders

- Discussions on the CEFTA Agreement

Agro & Food Trade Fair Participation

Area Based Development Approach

Study on the Situation in the Cross-Border Region Drina – Tara

Fund Raising – Donor Conference

Assessments of the Situation and Potentials of the Cross-Border Regions in SEE

Cross-Border Project Implementation

Communication

Web page: info available about events, trainings, seminars, workshops

Joint Statements and Positions

Promotional Material, Technical Material Related to Agriculture and Rural Development

Press Releases and Media Campaigns on Activities



Enhancing regional cooperation through different stakeholders (NGOs, donors, associations and etc.)



- Promote cross-border and intra-sectoral cooperation between NGOs/donors and local municipalities in addressing sustainable development agenda at regional and national levels;
- Raise awareness about bringing regional cooperation through various mainstream common subjects/issues;
- Collaborate with governments in addressing sustainable development priorities for Western Balkan countries and address them through a cooperative approach;
- Co-operate with other NGOs, donors, and other concerned organizations to address cross-border sustainable development issues, in particular those related to regional development;
- Exchange good practices and know-how about regional sustainable development initiatives and involve experts from western Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe;
- Lead to a better understanding and wider application of regional cooperation for sustainable development principles.

SWG Projects of Regional Relevance for SEE

SWG RRD



- 1. SWG - GTZ Open Regional Fund for SEE**
“Strengthening the regional cooperation in the EU integration process and increase of economic competitiveness in the rural areas;”
- 2. SWG – GTZ Study Expert Fund**
“Strengthening of the regional cooperation/networking in the forestry and water management sector and sustainable development in the river basins of the South-Eastern Europe countries”
- 3. SWG - FAO**
“Establishment of Rural Development Networks in SEE countries”;
- 5. SWG - InWEnt Capacity Building (GIZ)**
“Young Professionals- Managing and Leading Regional Rural Development”;
- 6. SWG - TEMPUS IV Project**
“Western Balkan Rural Extension Network through Curriculum Reform”
- 7. SWG- EC – JRC (Joint Research Center)**
“Area based development – ABD Drina – Tara river (SRB-MNE-BiH) and Shopska Land (BG-MK-SRB)”



Thank you for your attention!

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