

SWG Strategy Outlook 2021-2025

SWG Head Office/Secretariat

Introduction

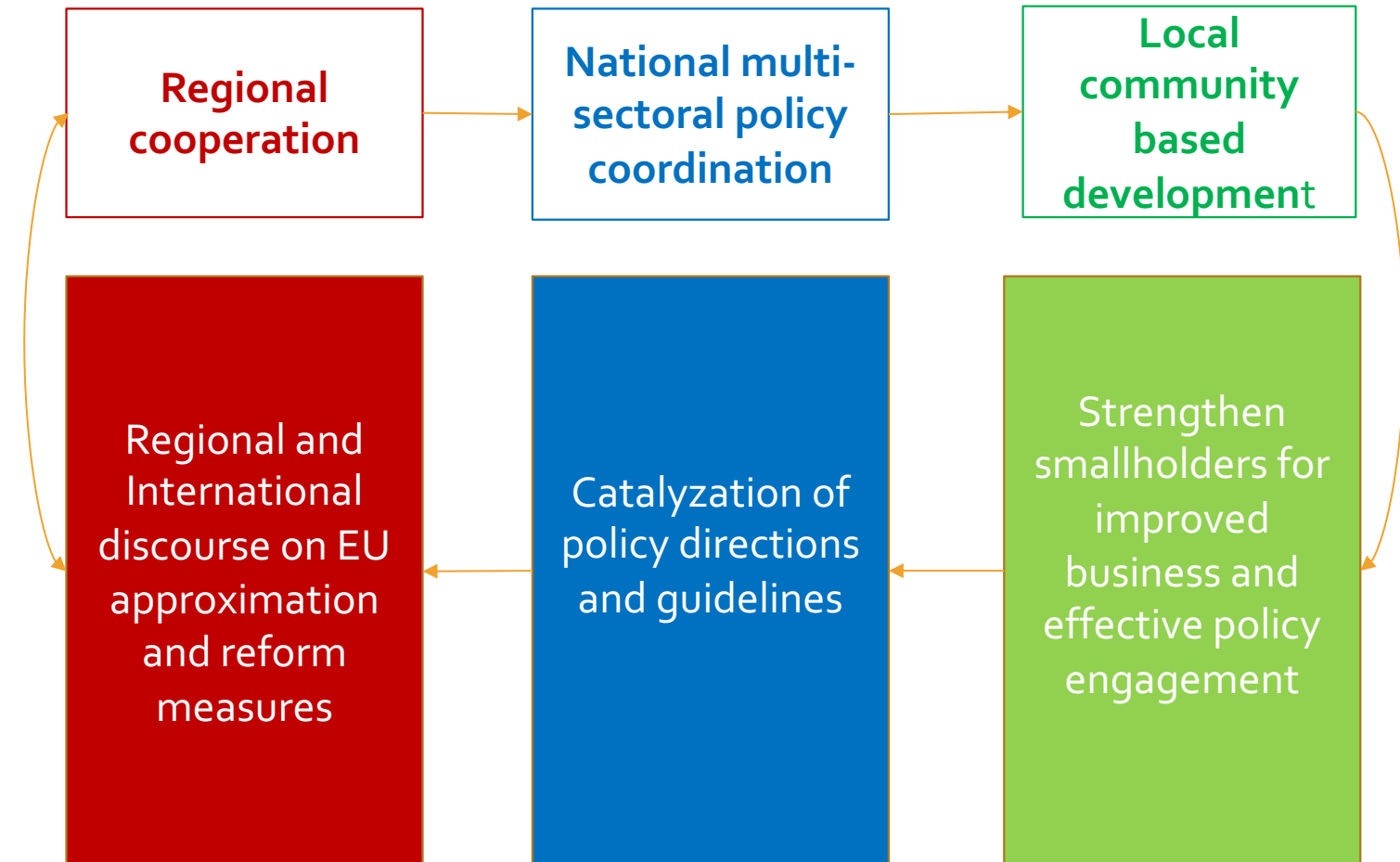
- The SWG Strategy represents the main areas of work to realize our goals and serves as a tool for compelling the core functions to achieve results;
- Defines the principles of operation and the priority areas of interventions to be achieved in the forthcoming five years, developed in consultation with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

SWG outlook



Future outlook

In the next five years SWG will work on:

- **Objective 1:** supporting regional cooperation and the accession process;
- **Objective 2:** enabling inclusive and effective regional policies analysis and knowledge transfer;
- **Objective 3:** improving competitiveness in rural areas by facilitating approaches towards IPARD implementation;

Objective 1

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Objective 1: supporting regional cooperation and accession process

- Facilitate regional policy/political dialogues and platforms on topics of need among the SEE countries (APF, MM);
- Develop declarations and political statements to foster cooperation practices;
- Increase political commitment to multi-stakeholder approach governing and efficient EU approximation processes;
- Active contributor to the International and Regional Agendas for sustainable development and cooperation (Agenda 2030 and SDGs, Western Balkan Strategy for Enlargement and Sofia Declaration).

Objective 2

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Objective 2: enabling inclusive and regional policy and knowledge transfer

- Improve evidence-based decision making (development of assessments and reports – LEADER, agro-biodiversity, agro-environmental measures);
- Develop of reliable agricultural data and indicators;
- Conduct studies on relevant emerging issues;
- Implement knowledge transfer and capacity building measures to policy and program development in line with EU approximation process.

Objective 3

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Objective 3: improving competitiveness in rural areas by facilitating approaches towards IPARD implementation:

- Facilitate and coordinate regional stakeholder groups and encourage their commitment to local community development;
- Develop inclusive and efficient value chains;
- Mobilizing investment support (IPARD. Like) 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;
- Increase involvement of women and youth in entrepreneurial initiatives and start ups.

Cross-cutting

It is rooted in the SWG's operational framework that social and economic development are dependent on sustainable use and protection of natural resources, and practices resulting in inefficient use of natural and manufactured resources put the attainment of sustainable development in jeopardy.

The following cross-cutting issues are to be implemented for improved rural development in the SEE region:

- a) Sustainable use of natural resources;
- b) Biodiversity;
- c) Circular economy (solid waste management).

Cross-cutting

Activities for the cross-cutting issues:

- 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 (REAWG on NSM and Environment);
- 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).

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 partners to seek effective solutions on evolving regional matters and challenges; and*
- *with local stakeholders from the cross-border regions to support rural socio-economic development.*

Implementation

- 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.
- 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 Delegates will determine if the Strategy is following the right path and needed target measures of the SEE countries or if modifications are needed. If changes to be applied, a new draft Strategy is to be proposed on the next SWG Assembly.

Thank you