

SWG and Regional Agenda in SEE countries

SWG Head Office/Secretariat

Introduction

SWG RRD:

- serves the region as a structure for regional cooperation promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development;
- provides necessary assistance for improvement of regional and national capacities, within the framework of developing rural areas and sustaining economic growth in the WB countries;
- combines horizontal and vertical integration of all players, balancing environmental quality, social cohesion and economic competitiveness;
- brings together all relevant departments and stakeholders to address the challenge of complimenting policy development with its implementation, use and output on the ground.

SWG Aim

Vision

Innovative and sustainable agriculture and rural development through cohesive regional co-operation for improvement of rural livelihoods in the SEE countries

Mission

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

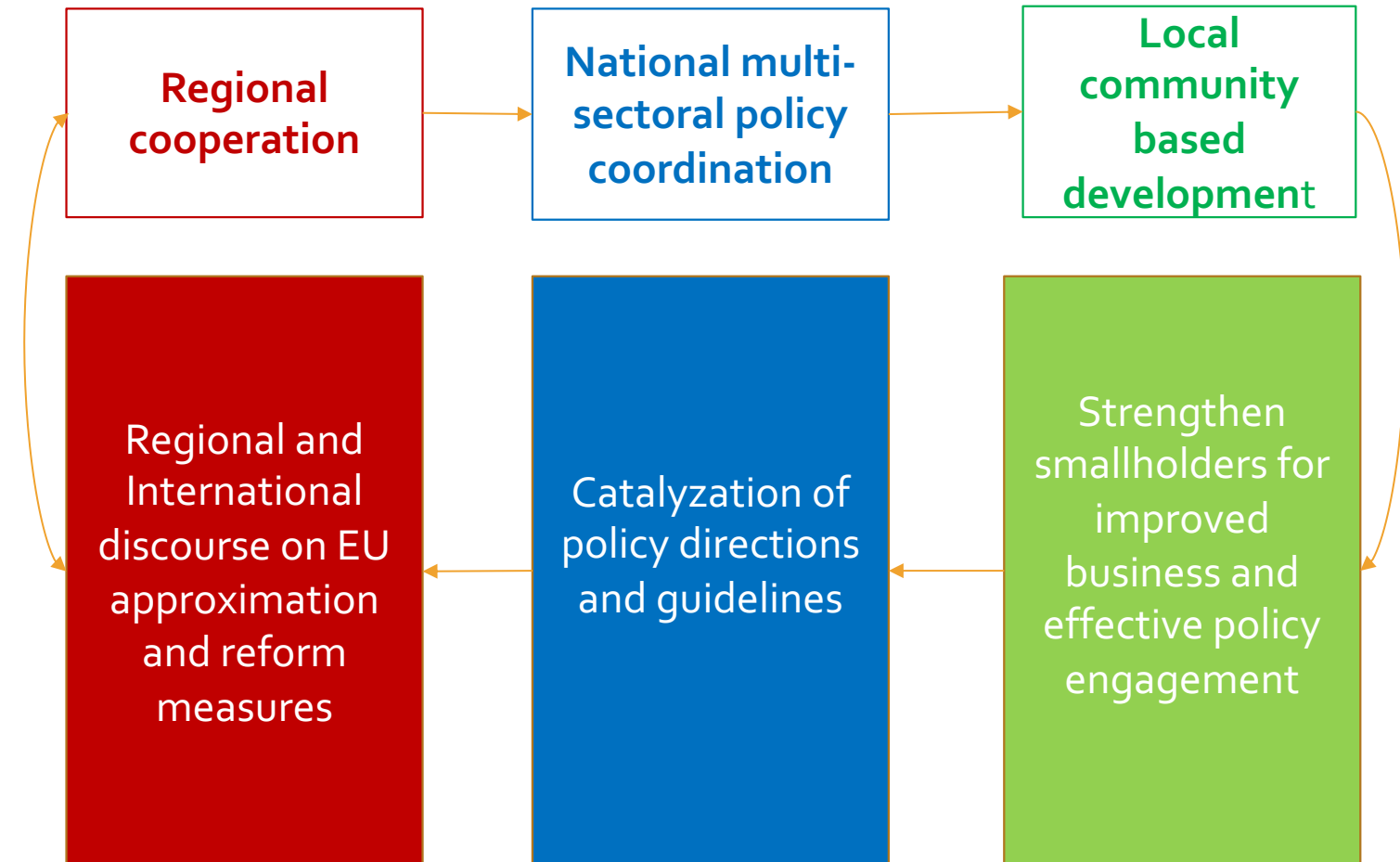
Members

- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, **Albania**
- ❑ Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ❑ Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, **Macedonia**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, **Montenegro**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, **Serbia**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, **Kosovo***

Observers

- ❑ Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, **Austria**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture and Food, **Bulgaria**
- ❑ Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, **Germany**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, **Hungary**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, **Italy**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, **Slovenia**
- ❑ Ministry of Agriculture, **Croatia**
- ❑ Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture Water Management and Forestry, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, **Serbia**

SWG outlook



Regional cooperation

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

Multi-sectoral policy coordination

- Improve evidence-based decision making (development of assessments and reports, such as:
 - *Analysis of the agricultural and rural development policies in Western Balkan;*
 - *Agro-biodiversity in SEE: Assessment and Policy Recommendations;*
 - *Agri-environmental policy in SEE;*
 - *Areas with Natural Constrains in South East Europe: Assessment and Policy Recommendations;*
 - *Management of Forest, Water and Soil within the Framework of Environmental and Rural Development Policies in SEE;*
 - *Models for Solid Waste Management in cross-border rural and riverbanks and reservoirs' coastline of South Eastern Europe*
- Support the process on setting up and running IPARD tools and measures;

Multi-sectoral policy coordination

- Strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue to improve policy coordination and avoid overlapping (REAWG on NSM and Environment);
- Develop of reliable agricultural data and indicators;
- Enhancing governments' capacities to policy and program development and implementation in-line with EU approximation process (IPARD, LEADER and etc.);
- Strengthen and coordinate cooperation networks with academia and CSO for effective policy making.

Local community based development

Area Based Development (ABD) Approach for:

- enabling a breakthrough in sustainable economic growth by targeting defined geographical areas in cross-border regions which are characterized by a set of common, complex development problems;
- facilitating suitable growth in rural areas in decline;
- building community capacity and stimulating innovation, entrepreneurship and capacity for change by encouraging the preservation, development and discovery of untapped potential (environmental, resource and cultural) within communities and territories.

ABDA and smallholders

The ABD Approach has enabled:

- Regional offices in **7 rural cross- border regions**;
- Establishment and facilitation of **regional stakeholder groups** (cbc LAGs) and encouraged their commitment to local community development;
- Development of and integration of smallholders in **4 inclusive and efficient value chains**;
- Improvement of access to productive **resources, markets, and services**;
- Mobilization of investment support for **business models** in value chain to increase productivity and value added to agriculture and non-farm activities;
- Implementation of test approaches (**grant schemes**) for future national support measures (IPARD);

ABDA and smallholders

- Promotion of **local partnerships** via people-2-people tools;
- Strengthening of **local capacities** on business relations, entrepreneurship, producer groups and clustering;
- Enabling relevant stakeholders to harness funding opportunities for improving **competitiveness and start ups** (project preparation, business plan and etc.);
- Creation of **new employment** and generation of income;
- Involvement of **women and youth** in entrepreneurial initiatives and start ups.

Results and impacts

- Facilitation and organization of **10 regional policy dialogues**;
- Increased participation of **local stakeholders**;
- Performed over **10 extensive studies; evidence-based policy papers and assessment reports**;
- Organization of **7 active Regional Expert Advisory Working Groups**;
- Active **network of 300 experts**, network of relevant Universities and Academia as well as Public institutions and CSO;
- Functional **7 Regional Stakeholder Groups (LAGs)**;
- Implemented **3 Grant Schemes** in rural areas;
- 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 **3500 business contacts** created;
- **62 jobs** created;
- **47 businesses and start-ups** supported in rural areas.

Thank you