

Green Agenda: Supporting the Western Balkans in Adapting to Climate Change

The challenge

The Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) are already severely affected by climate change due to an increase in extreme weather and slow onset events. Floods, drought, extreme heat, landslides, and wildfire hazards become more frequent and more intense, posing substantial and growing risks for people and the economy. In fact, the Western Balkans are considered a hotspot in Europe in terms of climate and other natural hazards.

Hence, there is an urgent need for the region to systematically adapt its economies and infrastructure to changing climatic conditions. Addressing climate risks proactively will reduce vulnerabilities and climate-related loss and damage.

This has been recognized by the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB), which was endorsed by the Western Balkan countries in 2020 as a regional agenda to address climate change and environmental protection. Its Action Plan calls for the preparation and implementation of climate adaptation strategies and puts particular emphasis on climate adaptation in agriculture, nature-based solutions and climate-resilient transport networks and infrastructure.

Our approach

As part of the Regional Climate Partnership between Germany and the Western Balkans, the objective of the project is to support WB countries in adapting to climate change in accordance with the GAWB. The project follows a multi-level approach and shall strengthen the capacities for planning and implementing climate adaptation strategies and measures at regional, national and, in some cases, local stakeholders.



More specifically, the project aims to:

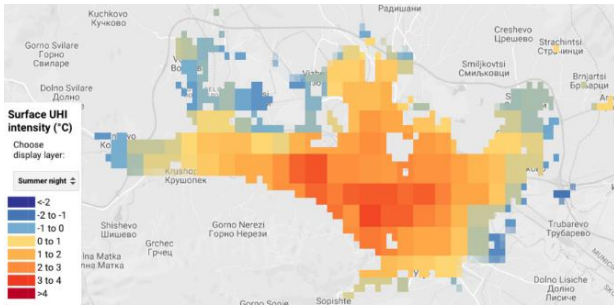
- Develop strategies / tools for improved and evidence-based adaptation planning and decision-making,
- Implement scalable demonstration projects for adaptation action in agriculture and urban transport, with due consideration for gender equality and nature-based solutions,
- Promote regional knowledge sharing and policy dialogue on climate adaptation.

Following the priorities of the GAWB, the project puts particular emphasis on developing regional adaptation strategies (component 1) and promoting the mainstreaming of climate adaptation in agriculture (component 2) and urban transport (component 3).

Key implementation partners on the regional level are the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in Southeast Europe (SWG RRD) and the Transport Community.

Project key figures

Project name	Green Agenda: Supporting the Western Balkans in Adapting to Climate Change
Project area	Western Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia)
Target groups	Regional, national, and local decision-makers responsible for climate, agriculture and transport planning.
Regional partners	Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in Southeast Europe (SWG RRD) and Transport Community
Key areas	Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, Sustainable Agriculture, Urban Transport and Mobility Disaster Risk Management.
Budget	5.000.000 EUR
Duration	2024-2026



Components and Expected Results

Regional Adaptation Strategies and Knowledge Exchange (component 1)

Evidence-based adaptation strategies and plans form the basis for systematic management of climate risks. As part of the Regional Climate Partnership, the project supports the regional policy dialogue on adaptation and the development of a Regional Adaptation Strategy, which will foster regional cooperation to address the transboundary impacts of climate change. This will also support countries in developing and updating National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in accordance with obligations under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and regarding EU accession. Moreover, the project contributes to the development of a regional knowledge platform on climate adaptation facilitating data exchange and peer learning.

Adaptation in Agriculture (component 2)

The agricultural sector is particularly vulnerable to changing climatic conditions. Based on thorough climate risk assessments, the project supports developing and implementing strategies and measures for climate-smart agriculture. In cooperation with SWG RRD and the national ministries of agriculture, the project develops national strategies and action plans for addressing climate adaptation in agriculture. The action plans will help to systematically mainstream climate adaptation systematically in agricultural policies, regulations, and advisory services. In addition, the project implements concrete demonstration measures that will serve as scalable best practice examples for climate adaptation in agriculture.



Skopje Heat Islands, source: Skopje.gov.mk

Agriculture by Ramana Dumpala

Adaptation in Urban Transport (component 3)

The increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events lead to growing climate-related damages in the transport sector. Infrastructure is being destroyed and connectivity interrupted, resulting in high economic costs. In cooperation with selected municipalities, the project implements demonstration activities that showcase how urban transport infrastructure can become climate resilient while promoting sustainable mobility concepts including cycling, walking and public transport. In collaboration with the Transport Community, innovations, and concepts for climate resilience in urban transport and mobility are disseminated and promoted at the regional level including formats such as Green Mobility Summits.

The project is directly contributing to the following Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.



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Project: Green Agenda: Supporting the Western Balkans in
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GIZ Office in North Macedonia
Antonie Grubishikj Nr. 5 1000 Skopje
Phone +389 (0) 2 3103 570
www.giz.de

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