

Unpacking the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

E-workshop 2: Decarbonization and Biodiversity
03 October 2024

We are starting soon ...

Unpacking the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

E-workshop 2: Decarbonization and Biodiversity
03 October 2024

*Welcome to the e-workshop hosted by SDC, SECO
and the Networks CDE and RésEAU*



Technical housekeeping



Your microphone is currently off

If you want to speak, click on the button at the bottom of the screen **to raise your hand**.
Thank you for opening the mic only upon invitation.



If you have comments or questions during presentations, please post them in the chat, or wait for the Q&A moment to unmute yourself.



If you can't hear or see: leave and rejoin the meeting, and close other programs



Parts of this event are being recorded and made available to the online knowledge platform RésEAU.



For more **technical support**, you can contact martin.laeng@skat.ch

Welcome and introduction

Dr. Daniel Maselli

Senior Policy Advisor @ the Water
Section

Focal Point of SDC's Water network
RésEAU

Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation SDC



Decarbonization

Why?

WB impacted by CC with projected temperature increase 1.7-4.0 °C

What to do?

GAWB by the European Commission stipulates 55% cut in GHG emissions by 2030

How to achieve that?

???

What can/should SDC contribute?

Topic of the LJ on GAWB -> 3 e-workshops & 3-day face-to-face meeting 12-14 Nov. 2024



Biodiversity

Why?

Protection and restoration of ecosystems in the WB is a prerequisite for nature to provide services allowing to secure healthy food, safe fresh water and clean air for mankind and all other beings

What to do?

GAWB - Address the root causes of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation: lack of political will to implement existing or develop new policies, need for appropriate financial allocation to allow taking appropriate measures, stop harmful economic activities (e.g., illegal deforestation and logging)

How to achieve that?

???

What can/should SDC contribute?

Topic of the LJ on GAWB -> 3 e-workshops & 3-day face-to-face meeting 12-14 Nov. 2024





Agenda

Welcome and introduction to the session	Daniel Maselli, SDC
Keynote: Climate proofing investments and the biodiversity portfolio in the Western Balkans Countries	Sonja Gebert, UNEP
Q&A on keynote	<i>Plenary interaction</i>
Short break	
“EBRD support for decarbonising heating and cooling in the Western Balkans”	Greg Gebrail, <i>EBRD</i>
“GAWB Pillar 5: biodiversity and nature protection”	Robertina Brajanoska, Macedonian Ecological Society
“Swiss Portfolio in Decarbonization (Pillar 1) & Biodiversity (Pillar 5)”	Maria Pons Güell, SECO / Carmen Thönnissen, SDC
<i>Reactions on inputs and reflections on Pillars 3/4</i>	<i>Breakout rooms</i>
<i>Collecting main discussion points</i>	<i>Plenary interaction / rapporteurs</i>
Conclusion and closing	Daniel Maselli, SDC

Keynote: Climate proofing investments and biodiversity

Sonja Gebert

Associate Programme Management Officer,
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Q&A

- Insert your questions into the chatbox
- or
- Raise your hand to directly address your question to the speaker



Take a stretch break! See you in 1 minute!



- Give your eyes a break from the screen
- Stretch out your arms and hands
- Stand up and stretch your back
- Or get a nice cup of coffee or tea :)

Thematic Input on Decarbonization (Pillar 1): Heating and cooling

Greg Gebrail, Associate Director,
Senior Energy Specialist,
European Bank for Reconstruction
and Development (EBRD)





European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

EBRD support for decarbonising heating and cooling in the Western Balkans

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Workshop
October 2024

Sector Challenges in the Western Balkans



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

- Heavy reliance on fossil fuels and high end-user consumption
- High investment needs to modernise network infrastructure, increase digitalisation and prepare systems for the use of renewable and waste heat-based solutions
- Competition from alternative forms of heating, often low cost and highly polluting

Selected DH fuel mix figures in WeB countries

	Natural gas	82%
	Renewable	3%
	Coal	50%
	Renewable	20%
	Natural gas	100%*
	Coal	94%*

* Up to date figures for N. Macedonia and Kosovo were difficult to obtain



Pristina Solar District Heating Project

Kosovo



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

EBRD Finance
GHG Reduced

€ 23.2 million
49,000
tonnes of CO₂ eq / yr

Supporting the City of Pristina in the construction of a **solar thermal plant** to provide additional heat energy capacity and extension of the district heating network

- An innovative solution to increase the use of renewable energy for heat supply
- GCAP follow-on investment, addressing priority environmental challenges in Pristina
- First time deployment of this technology in Western Balkans
- Connect ~35,000 people to Pristina's district heating network



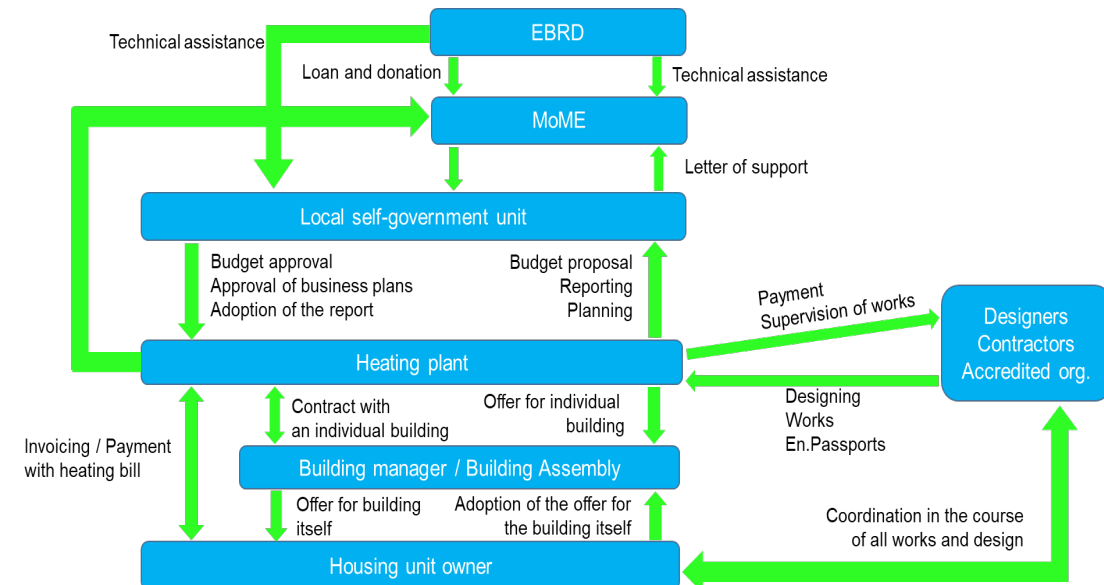
Public ESCO Project Serbia

EBRD Finance
GHG Reduced

€ 50 million
20,000
tonnes of CO₂ eq / yr

An innovative approach to financing energy efficiency improvements in multi-storey residential buildings across cities in Serbia delivered by municipal utility companies.

- Repayment over lifespan of loan via heating bills
- Significant improvement in thermal comfort and increased lifespan of existing building
- Will facilitate a transfer from flat-rate heat pricing to consumption-based billing for households
- Grant support from SECO and EU



ReDE Serbia Programme

Serbia



Project

- Programme of renewable and waste heat-based investments in 10 Serbian cities
- Heat sources include: air, data centre heat, drinking water supply, geothermal, river water and treated wastewater
- ~30 MW of heat pump capacity, 115 GWh p.a. of heat based on RE and waste heat



Financing Structure

- Sovereign loan to Republic of Serbia with a central project implementation unit in the Ministry of Mining and Energy
- Overall capex ~ EUR 37.5 M
 - EBRD loan: EUR 30 M
 - Donor support from Switzerland and EU: EUR 7.5 M



Contacts

For all further enquiries, please contact:

Greg Gebrail

Senior Energy Specialist

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Email: gebrailg@ebrd.com

Policy paper links:

[Financial sustainability](#)

[Metering and consumption based billing](#)

EBRD

One Exchange Square

London, EC2A 2JN, UK,

www.ebrd.com



Thematic Input on Biodiversity (Pillar 5)

Robertina Brajanoska,
Executive Director,
Macedonian Ecological
Society (MES)





GAWB

P5: biodiversity and nature protection

Robertina Brajanoska

Macedonian Ecological Society

GAWB P5 Action plan

Period 2021-2024

- **WB Biodiversity Strategic Plan** (based on assessment report)
- Nature protection and restoration plans including **Restoration opportunity assessment** report
- **WB Forest Landscape restoration** plan including financial plan
- Biodiversity benefits of **Nature based solutions** and their integration in climate and other plans
- **Report on climate change and biodiversity linkages**
- Biodiversity **monitoring and evaluation framework**

Continuous improvement by 2030

- Strengthened **regional cooperation mechanisms** and strategic planning
- Implementation of commitments under the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**
- Synergy and joint efforts for implementation of the three **UN Rio conventions**
- **WB Biodiversity information hub** – improve knowledge exchange and availability of information
- Development of **green infrastructure and ecosystem connectivity**





Challenges

- Great **biodiversity values** - species (including endemism) and pristine habitats
- Provide valuable benefits and many **ecosystem services**
- Diversity of landscapes with high potential to deliver **ecosystem services**
- **Protected areas** have been designated for many years; valuable transboundary areas exist (such as Shara-Korab-Koritnik, Prespa region etc.)
- Steps towards identification of future **Natura 2000 sites** and identification of ecological corridors
- Initiated activities for **restoration** (forest landscape plan, riparian habitats, reforestation, etc)
- Regular and standardized **biodiversity monitoring** for small number of species; collected data for endemic species in WB
- Some steps for integration of **climate**
- ...
- **Inadequate protection of biodiversity**, leading to the loss of threatened species and habitats
- **Protected areas**: the network is falls short of global and EU Biodiversity targets, which call for 30% of land to be protected and 10% under strict protection
- **Management effectiveness** of PAs is lacking
- **Connectivity** of PAs is weak and eco corridors are not recognized
- **Legislative Gaps**: Transposition of EU Bird and Habitat directives is incomplete
- **Development Pressure**: impact to biodiversity from urban and infrastructure development
- **Sectoral Policy**: Biodiversity considerations are often overlooked in broader sectoral policy development
- **Illegal practices** are occurring affecting biodiversity
- **Institutional arrangement** are inadequate and often under-resourced. Political changes jeopardize the implementation of biodiversity goals
- **Cooperation and knowledge exchange** is inadequate
- **Data collection**: non-standardized leading to inconsistency
- **Awareness and knowledge**: law awareness and understanding of biodiversity benefits and their integration into climate and other plans
- **Funding Shortages** dedicated to biodiversity conservation



The way forward

- Conduct comprehensive **baseline studies and assessments** of biodiversity (including standardized data collection)
- Expand the **network of protected areas** and **enhance the management** effectiveness of existing sites
- Consider of **Emerald network** areas during the identification and prior to designation of **Natura 2000** sites
- Implement **green infrastructure** and improve **habitat connectivity** through spatial planning and sectoral plans
- **Strengthen transboundary cooperation** and coordinated management of the transboundary clusters of protected areas and corridors
- **Ecosystem services and PES schemes** are helpful/effective tool for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation; these should be integrated into sectoral policies and management plans
- **Legislative compliance:** finalize the transposition of EU Bird and Habitat directives into relevant legislation and enhance enforcement efforts to mainstream biodiversity
- Alignment of NBSAPs with post 2020 global and EU biodiversity targets, while considering other Rio conventions.



The way forward

- Implement **landscape level planning and conservation** to minimize pressures on biodiversity caused by rapid development.
- Ensure **compliance with environmental standards and permit** procedures related to the impact of infrastructure projects on biodiversity. This include EIA and SEA along with robust monitoring of the implementation of proposed measures.
- Enhance **restoration efforts** by adopting holistic, systemic and long-term approach to ecosystem recovery
- Improve oversight and **control of illegal practices** at site level, including raising awareness and knowledge to the judiciary system regarding the importance of environmental protection
- Facilitate **knowledge exchange** on enhancing biodiversity, utilizing best practice examples such as Nature Conservation program
- **Empower youth** as a crucial target group in nature conservation efforts fostering their involvement and leadership in biodiversity initiatives
- Allocate **sufficient and sustained financial resources** for biodiversity conservation. This may include various mechanisms such as agri-environmental schemes, environmental taxes, and other funding sources.

Thank you for your attention!



Swiss Portfolio's contributions to Decarbonization & Biodiversity

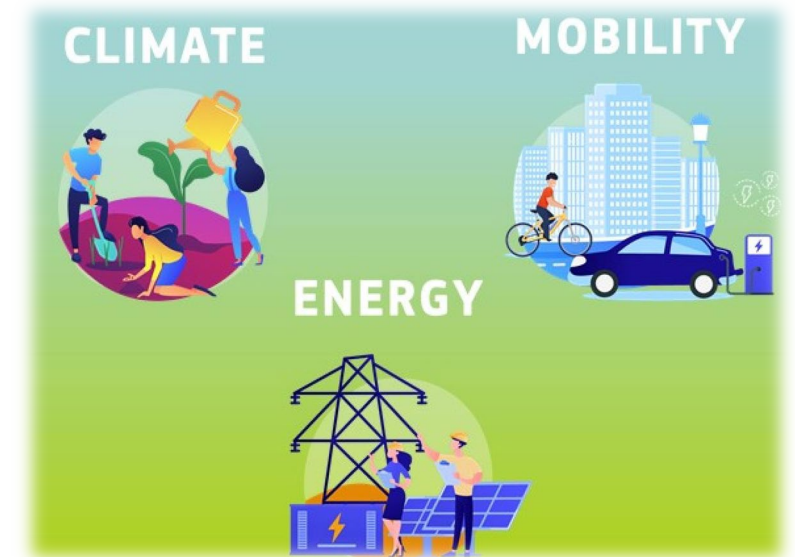
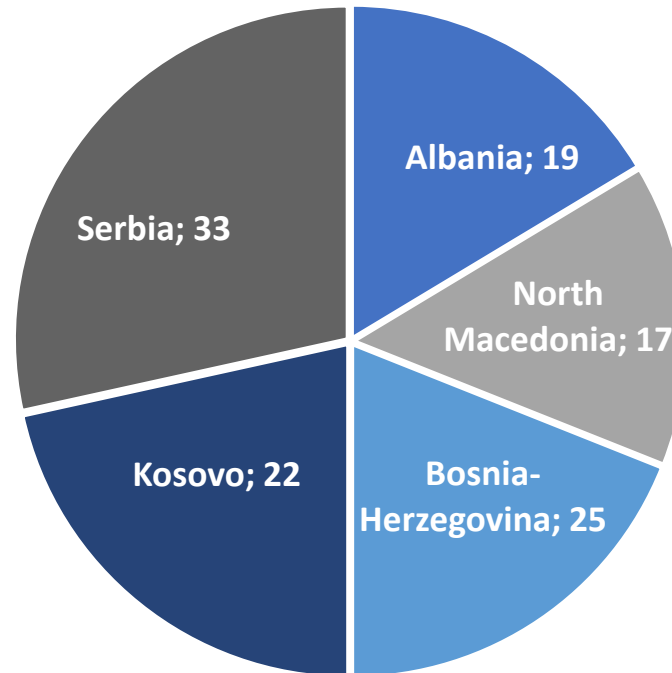
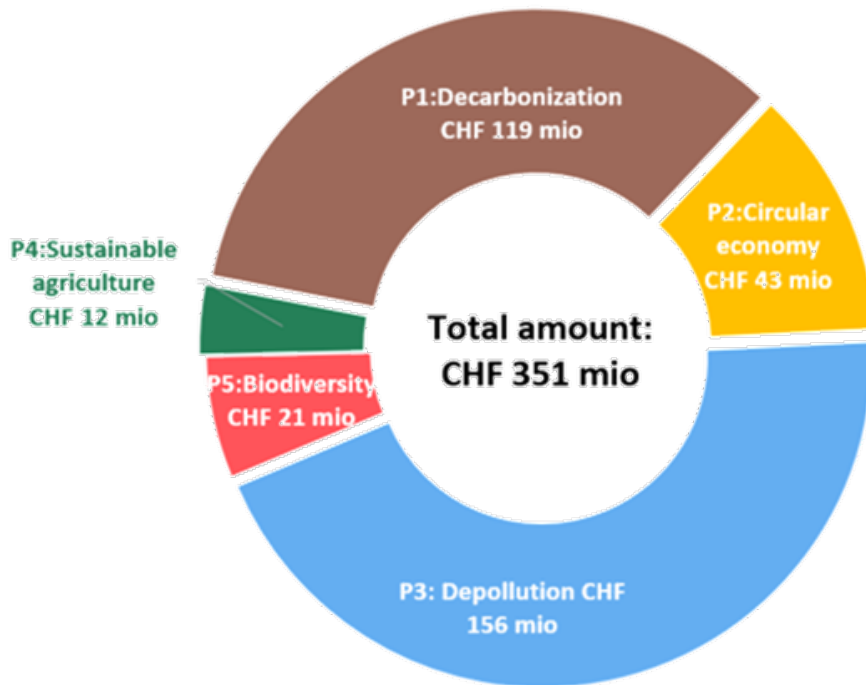
- **Maria Güell i Pons**, Programme Manager Infrastructure Financing, Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development SECO
- **Dr. Carmen Thönnissen**, Regional Advisor Water and Environment for the SDC Programmes in the Western Balkans



Swiss portfolio relevant to pillar #1 – «decarbonisation»

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans
Learning Journey – E-webinar #2 – 03.10.2024
Maria Güell i Pons

Overview Swiss Contribution 2021-2024



Project examples (1/3)

District Heating



CONSTRUCTION DH
PLANTS
REHABILITATION
NETWORKS
INCREASE CAPACITY

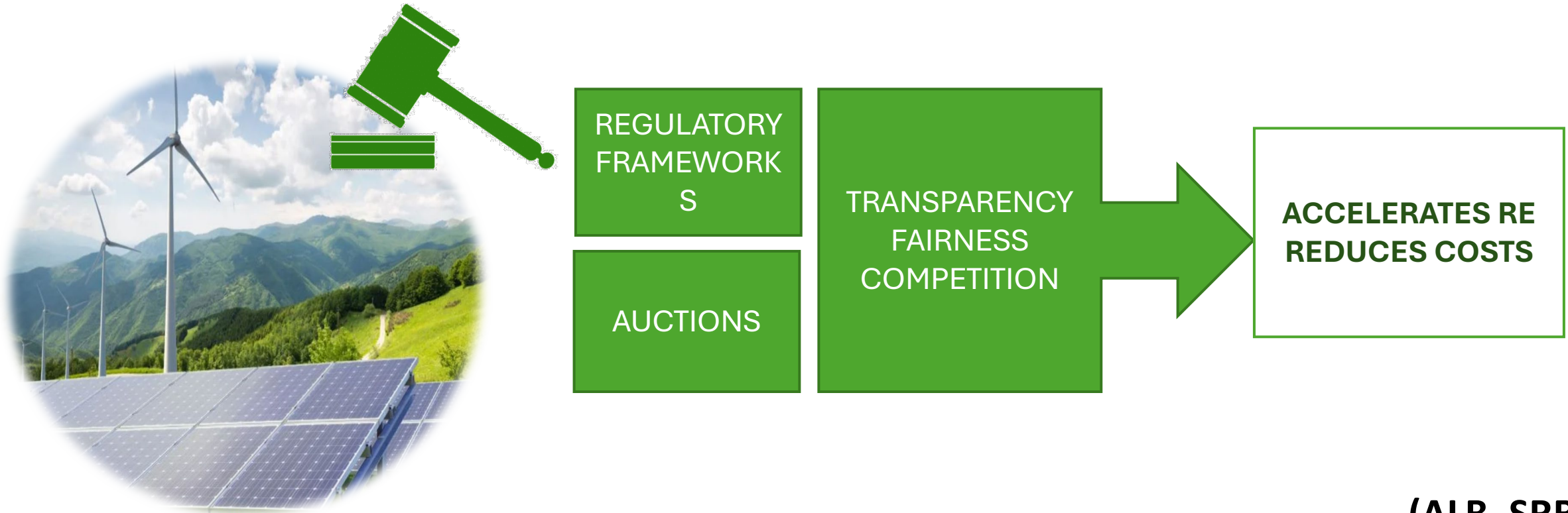
RELIABLE
HEATING SYSTEM
AIR QUALITY

Biomass DH (SRB), DH Gjakova (KOS)



Project examples (2/3)

Renewable Energy Auctions



(ALB, SRB)



Project examples (3/3)

Municipal Energy Efficiency and Management Project

EUROPEAN
ENERGY
AWARD



(SRB)



Swiss portfolio relevant to pillar #5 – «Biodiversity»

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans
Learning Journey – E-webinar #2 – 03.10.2024

Dr. Carmen Thönnissen

GAWB P5 Nature Protection and Biodiversity

Action Plan main outputs:

2021-2024:

baseline studies, assessments and transposition of EU nature acquis, and the post 2020 global BD framework

- WB **Biodiversity Strategic Plan**
- WB **Landscape restoration Plan**
- WB **Biodiversity Information Hub**

2024-2030:

mobilization of financial and human resources to promote the effective **implementation of GAWB commitments** and ensure **regular monitoring and reporting**

Status of Implementation:

- WB Biodiversity Report (work in progress)
- **All economies have developed biodiversity strategies and set targets for nature protection.**
- restoration planning is not in place, as it is not integrated systematically into nature conservation strategies and legislation.
- The use of Nature-Based Solutions is being explored to increase ecosystem and community resilience.

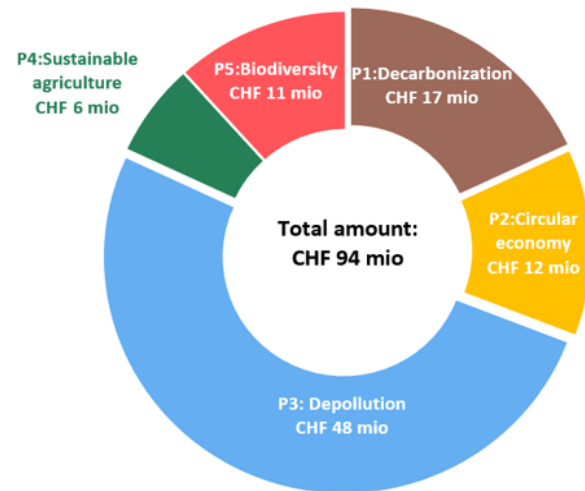




The Swiss 'P5 Portfolio' in the WB

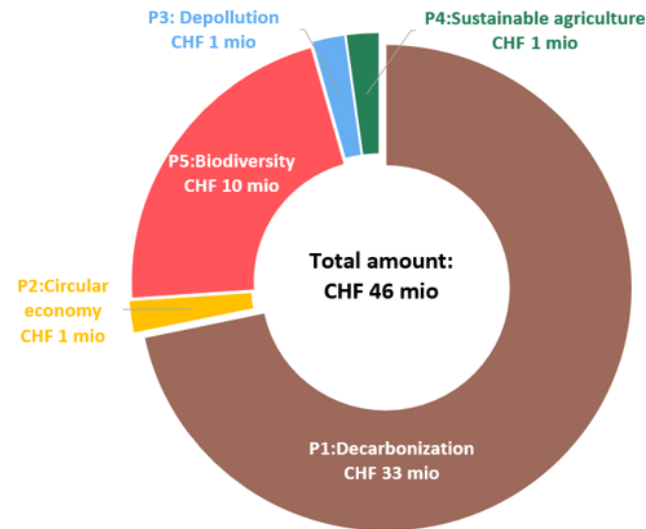
NORTH MACEDONIA

Cumulative Swiss contribution 2012-2024



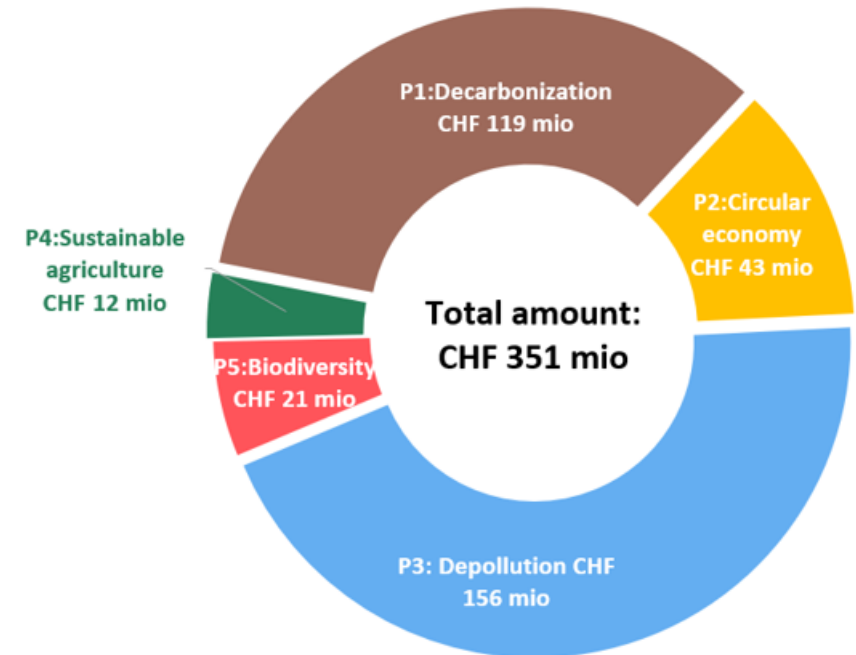
SERBIA

Cumulative Swiss contribution 2012-2024



SWISS PORTFOLIO WBC

Cumulative Swiss contribution 2012-2024



Focus of the Swiss P5 Portfolio

- 1) **Nature Conservation Programme in North Macedonia** (2012-2024), SDC 11 Mio CHF, Farmahem- Helvetas
- 2) **Green Agenda, in Serbia** (2022 – 2026), SDC 4.5 Mio CHF – UNDP (EU, Swiss, Sweden)
 - Framework - legislation; piloting innovations along the 4 pillars; scaling up successful pilots
 - most important impact is mobilization of all relevant ministries and partners for implementation of the GA and mobilization of the private sector via challenge calls.
 - **BD is 1 of 4 pillars** supported by SDC:
 - 1st batch support 9 pilot projects (total value of 0.7 mio E, of which 0.4 from SDC)
- 3) **PRO Local Governance for People and Nature, in Serbia**, (2023-2026), SDC 9.6 mio E – UNOPS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP
 - Strengthening capacities for participatory development of local environmental and climate related policies
 - Implementing local environmental protection projects
 - Youth empowerment and participation in green agenda



Nature Conservation Programme (NCP) in North Macedonia (2012 – 2023)

- ❖ **<16,000 wild species:** North Macedonia is a European biodiversity hotspot
- ❖ nature conservation and economic prosperity are mutually reinforcing each other

Bregalnica: land uses, habitats and their associated biodiversity was deteriorating, whilst vulnerability to landscape fires, floods and soil erosion was growing

Challenge: support rural livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management

- ✓ *Landscape approach*
- ✓ *Ecological Gap Analysis*
- ✓ *Public awareness raising*
- ✓ *Educational Centre for Nature Conservation*
- ✓ *Small competitive grants scheme*
- ✓ *Learning exchanges and integration of biodiversity topics into the curriculum*





Nature Conservation Programme (NCP) in North Macedonia (2012 – 2023)

- **practical applications of conservation measures**
- **facilitation of economic benefits for the local population**
- **Contribution to establishment of framework conditions**
- Support to institutions at all levels to implement priorities of the National Strategy for Nature Conservation - introducing **ecosystem services** and **regional forest planning and development**, as well as new concepts for **integrated management of natural resources**.
- **Support of selection and declaration of two new protected areas and establishment of management bodies**
- identification of 3 Natura 2000 sites and preparation of the relevant documents in line with EU directives.
- increasing the **public awareness on local and national level** about the natural values of Bregalnica region

ISSUE SHEET 2



BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT AS A BASE FOR DECISION-MAKING

Planning and managing the conservation of biodiversity requires a sound knowledge of all the existing animal, plant and fungal species within a given area – their status, their habitats, and the possible threats that they face. Accordingly, the Nature Conservation Programme (NCP) placed emphasis on the rigorous scientific collection of data in the field, and the analysis of this data to create a sound documentation base. This Issue Sheet describes the biodiversity assessment process and should be read in conjunction with other Issue Sheets, especially numbers 1 and 3. The key partner in all this work was the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), a national NGO with a highly experienced team of specialist scientific staff.

"The NCP succeeded in designing interactive and efficient management of biological databases, establishing a common methodology in biodiversity research and setting new standards which were followed in most of the subsequent conservation projects throughout the country. The usefulness of the ESM was proven when it was taken as base for elaborating a national level version for the National Spatial Plan (2021-2040)." Prof. Dr. Slavko Hristovski

Discussion and reflection (25')

You will be randomly assigned to a breakout room

Note: the discussion will not be recorded

Reporting back

Main points from the breakout room
discussions

Conclusion

Dr. Daniel Maselli

Senior Policy Advisor @ the Water
Section

Focal Point of SDC's Water network
RésEAU

Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation SDC



Up next of the series...

Unpacking the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

E-workshop 3: “Circular economy”

31.10.2024, 14.00-16.00 CET

Thank you for your participation!

For **follow-up questions** about this webinar, please contact carmen.thoennissen@eda.admin.ch

Don't forget to join Swiss International Cooperations' knowledge networks:

- **Climate, DRR and Environment network:** <https://www.sdc-cde.ch/>
- **Water Network (RésEAU):** <https://www.sdc-water.ch/en>

