

Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)

The regional project 'Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)' involves the countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. SEDRA II is jointly implemented by the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in South Eastern Europe (SWG RRD) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Context

The Southeast European countries are characterised by great disparities between the urban and rural areas. Even though rural areas are home to almost half of the total population of these countries, the living environment for the rural population is increasingly unfavourable due to the continuous population ageing, youth emigration and high unemployment.

With agriculture still being the main economic activity in the rural regions, however, the small agricultural holdings still face challenges to ensure quantity as well as to meet the food quality standards and food safety requirements, making their products less competitive on the national and international market.

On the other hand, the rich and highly diverse natural and cultural heritage of the rural areas offers a big potential for diversification of the rural economy, as local resources for economic diversification have so far been insufficiently used for regional value creation.

With the EU Green Deal as a new growth strategy towards an environmental and digital transformation, the six countries face multiple strategic reorientations and transformative challenges which have been adopted with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. This can be an opportunity to create a setting for building sustainable rural economies and improve the livelihood of rural population in marginalised regions through diversification of the economic activities.

Objective

The overall objective of the SEDRA II is strengthening the potentials for increasing employment and incomes in the rural areas in the Southeast European countries in line with the EU approximation process and the Sofia Declaration.

Project name	Support to Economic Diversification of Rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Southeast Europe (SEE): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia
Lead Executing Agency	Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in South Eastern Europe (SWG RRD)
Duration	01.09.2021 – 28.02.2025

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Approach

SEDRA II builds on achieved results of predecessor projects and has a holistic approach at three complementary levels:

Regional cooperation and policy advice

SEDRA II supports regional and national capacities through facilitating theme-specific policy dialogues and providing technical expertise on issues related to rural economic diversification in SEE countries in their EU approximation process. Support is provided for: further strengthening of the regional platforms for political and policy dialogue and mechanisms for more intensive and broader cooperation, strengthening the regional stakeholders' competencies and expertise related to the EU CAP and Green Agenda, as well as further alignment of the national agriculture and rural development policies of SEE countries to the EU CAP.





Community Led Local Development

The project strengthens the capacities of existing regional and national cooperation structures for rural development to promote sustainable access to funding opportunities for cross-sectoral initiatives of local development partnerships. Support is provided for joint learning and exchange, capacity-building of key actors in policy advocacy, strengthening of the key actor's capacities to build functioning bottom-up model for participatory rural development and implementation of community-led local development (CLLD) approaches and LEADER in SEE.

Employment promotion in rural cross-border areas

The project aims to implement an integrated approach to rural employment promotion in the seven rural cross-border areas. The integrated approach strengthens the potential for economic diversification through sustainable tourism promotion and the valorisation of short value chains in the field of tourism, agriculture, and related sectors for an inclusive growth and regional value creation. In this process, a special emphasis is placed on sustainable and inclusive qualification and training measures for the micro, small and medium enterprises and rural population.

SWG RRD

Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe is an international intergovernmental organisation, consisting of governmental institutions responsible for agriculture and rural development in respective countries and territories. SWG RRD acts as an independent agency for coordination and implementation of joint projects and conducting project activities. It is a facilitator in the process of strengthening regional institutions necessary to support long-term agricultural and rural development.

GIZ

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is a federal service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, offering its services worldwide in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security, thus fostering successful interaction between development policy and other policy fields and areas of activity. GIZ's main commissioning party is the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas
in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)

Antonie Grubisikj 5
1000 Skopje, North Macedonia

T +389 2 3103 560
F +389 2 3103 587
E karin.rau@giz.de

Design/layout Marija Vanevska

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of BMZ
Skopje, 2021