

Implementing A GREEN AGENDA for the Western Balkans

#EIP
#GreenAgenda
#WesternBalkans

5 MAIN PILLARS

- Decarbonisation and climate resilience
- Circular economy
- Depollution: air, water & soil
- Sustainable food systems & rural areas
- Biodiversity: protection & restoration of ecosystems

The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans is the blueprint for a 2050 future of climate neutrality and environmental sustainability. The five-pillar agenda is aligned with the ambitions of the European Green Deal and it relies on urgent regulatory reforms and significant investments.

The Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) promotes the implementation of the Agenda through four flagships that extend over one or more pillars. They are related to:

-  Environment and climate
-  Clean energy
-  Sustainable transport
-  Private sector development

The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans is shared between the region and the European Union, having been adopted with the **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans** and endorsed by the leaders of the region through the Sofia Declaration in November 2020.

Since 2021, the European Commission has committed **€1.25 billion** to support the implementation of the Green Agenda, including technical assistance and investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, transition from coal and investments in environmental management. Further investments and grants under the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) will support the green transition, together with the recently adopted Energy Support Package for the Western Balkans.



Environment and climate

- > The **EU4Green** programme is supporting the region across the pillars of the Green Agenda and focusing on improving awareness and communication on the Green Agenda, strategies to finance the green transition and fostering green skills.
- > Air pollution in the Western Balkans is one of the highest in Europe. The EU is assisting the region in aligning with EU standards related to **air quality, water and wastewater management**. This includes the modernisation of air and water monitoring systems, and supporting water and wastewater management investment projects in Podgorica, Skopje, Belgrade and Sarajevo. The EU supports Kosovo* through the **EU4Environment** programme in addressing environmental hazards emerging from air, water and waste pollution.
- > The Green Agenda commits the Western Balkans to move towards **circular economy** by improving waste management; increasing resource productivity; establishing innovative and more efficient ways of producing and consuming and introducing circularity in business models. The EU is supporting waste management programmes in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- > **IPARD** (IPA Rural Development) programmes in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia support agribusiness and farms in their green and digital transition, and implementation of more **sustainable models of food production**. In North Macedonia, the **EU4Prespa** project supports the implementation of the Green Agenda in the transboundary Prespa lake area, focussing on, among others, **greening of agriculture** and local business as well as **biodiversity**.

Clean energy

- > In December 2022, the Western Balkans adopted the 2030 climate and energy targets under the Energy Community Treaty.
- > **EIP Clean energy** transition flagships focus on investments in renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and supporting the transition from coal, contributing to the **decarbonisation** objectives of the Green Agenda and the 2030 climate and energy targets. The **WBIF** is supporting 17 flagship investment projects of solar and wind energy plants, rehabilitating existing hydropower plants and improving the electricity transmission network.
- > The **Regional Energy Efficiency Programme** drives the renovation wave by scaling up comprehensive energy efficiency measures in public, residential and private buildings.
- > To help the transition from coal in the region, the EU has been supporting the platform for **Coal Regions in Transition in the Western Balkans**.





Sustainable transport

- > The Western Balkans are implementing the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. The implementation of this strategy and modernisation of existing infrastructure is supported through the **Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme** to support smart and sustainable mobility solutions through decarbonisation and digitalisation.
- > The EU is also supporting the development of Tirana's first electric bus rapid transport system to combat high levels of air pollution and traffic congestion.

Private sector development

- > Small and medium enterprises are key players in the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient economy.
- > The EIP focuses on supporting SMEs and directs **significant investments towards innovation and green growth**. This includes dedicated private sector blending schemes within WBIF, including SMEs Go Green, Climate Programme, Green Finance for Inclusion and Green for Growth, promoting green lending.

