The region, with the assistance of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and other regional organisations, has produced an action plan for the implementation of the Agenda, endorsed by the Western Balkans leaders at the summit in Brdo in October 2021.

About €730 million were committed to support the implementation of the Green Agenda in bilateral and regional projects since 2021, 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 Balkan Investment Framework will support the green transition, together with the recent energy support package.

Implementing
A GREEN AGENDA for the Western Balkans

5 MAIN AREAS
- 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 (GAWB) remains the top priority of the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP). The five-pillar agenda relies on regulatory reforms in the region to align it with the ambitions of the European Green Deal, as well as relevant investments.

Four out of the six EIP priorities are core pillars of the GAWB, notably:

- Clean energy
- Sustainable transport
- Private sector development
- Environment and climate
Under the Energy Community Treaty, by the end of 2022, the Western Balkans will be required to commit to decarbonisation targets by 2030. They will then develop Integrated Energy and Climate Plans. 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.

The EU is supporting the Western Balkans in increasing renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, low carbon transition, as well as performant electricity transmission lines for increased use of renewable energy sources, in line with the region’s potential.

The Western Balkans are implementing the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. This includes EU support for rehabilitation and construction of new resilient and smart transport infrastructure, especially rail and public transports, as well as green multimodal transport solutions.

In an effort to foster climate resilience, the EU has been supporting the region in flood risk management.

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 the business models.

The region is working on a joint statement on prevention of plastic pollution, including marine litter, which is a significant transboundary challenge.

In Albania, the EU supports through the EU4Circular economy, a €30 million project, the establishment of a regulatory framework for Circular Economy and circular business models as well as infrastructures for waste management.

Air pollution in the Western Balkans is one the highest in Europe. The EU is assisting the region in aligning with EU standards related to air quality, water and waste water management. This includes the modernisation of air and water monitoring systems and further investment in waste-water management.

The EU supports Kosovo* through EU4Environment in addressing environmental hazards emerging from the air, water and waste pollution.

* 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
The EU is contributing up to €500 million to IPARD (IPA Rural Development) programmes in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. This will 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.

Besides providing food, fresh water and clean air, protection from floods and storms, nature mitigates natural disasters, pest and diseases, contributes to regulating the climate, combating land degradation and enhancing food security.

The region, through EU support, is working on defining a post-2020 biodiversity framework and developing a long-term strategy for halting biodiversity loss, protecting and restoration of ecosystems and exceptional biological diversity.