

Rural development

SNV's integrated approach

When the candidate and potential candidate countries of the Balkans finally join the European Union (EU), they will integrate a vast political project where dynamic rural societies are seen as contributing to the socio-economic life of Europe. This perspective means that the countries of the Western Balkans have everything to gain by starting to prepare their rural societies early and thoroughly to benefit from the EU's socio-economic interactions. SNV has built a Rural Development capacity building practice in the region that focuses on four related pillars of rural socio-economic development: Agriculture, Forestry, Tourism, and Drinking Water. Deploying our advisory services at national, regional and local levels, we are focusing our energies on the EU's LEADER approach in Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Agriculture

SNV's agriculture practice in the Western Balkans focuses on fruits & vegetables, medicinal & aromatic plants, and producer organisations. As part of SNV's global strategy to focus on fostering production, income and employment (PIE), our advisory services seek to develop access to markets for farm products in such a way as to generate employment and income in rural areas. The red line that runs through our advisory practice is a constant emphasis on poverty alleviation, gender equity, and inclusion of marginalised peoples. We have an internal knowledge network of agriculture and rural development experts that can provide tailored solutions to rural development challenges.

Forestry

As one of our flagship activities in the Balkans, forestry has been a sector which has received close attention by SNV over the past 15 years. Traditionally known within SNV Balkans as Communal Forest Management (CFM), our forestry practice has sought to introduce an integrated and holistic approach to the management of this valuable natural resource. Our forestry practice has received the strong endorsement of several partners in the past few years, including SIDA and the World Bank, and we see the potential for wise management of this renewable resource growing in the Balkans. As in other sectors, we have a regional forestry knowledge network that is at the forefront of thinking in this field.

Tourism

SNV knows that there are two sides to the tourism coin, so our Sustainable Tourism practice has focused on tourism development that will not be wrong-footed by wider trends in this sector. With a proactive tourism knowledge network focusing on advising sustainable, environmentally compatible, and diversified tourism development in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, we provide development solutions through two main service offerings: the Tourism Action Plan (TAP) process and its implementation, and Destination Management.

Water

Our team in Bosnia & Hercegovina has pioneered SNV's water advisory practice in the region, with a particular emphasis on access to drinking water as part of SNV's global focus on access to basic services (BASE). The key has been to safeguard both upstream water sources and sanitise downstream water effluents in such a way that rural communities have continuous access to safe drinking water. Without safe drinking water, communities can be struck by debilitating water-borne diseases that can have deleterious effects on people's productivity at work. Thus, SNV Balkans not only provides planning advice to municipalities and public service bodies in the context of the UE's regional approach, but also explores innovative financing solutions for the provision of drinking water.