



**Annual
Report
2022**

**balkan
green
foundation**

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TRANSFORMING
INNOVATIVE
CONCEPTS



INTO
POWERFUL
SOLUTIONS

BGF at a Glance



Balkan Green Foundation (BGF) is a regional organisation dedicated to advocating for inclusive and equitable advancement throughout the Western Balkans in sustainable development.

BGF plays a significant role as a strategic partner for local, regional, and global communities, organisations, and institutions to promote sustainable development, transform innovative concepts into powerful solutions, and foster the creation of partnerships on a regional and global scale.

Pursuing our Vision and Mission



BGF promotes sustainable development in the Western Balkans by actively advocating and endorsing policies and solutions that are informed by cutting-edge international perspectives.

Its focus lies in addressing pressing global challenges while simultaneously advancing national priorities for European Union integration in the domains of sustainable development, environmental conservation, energy development, and climate change.

Our Signature Programs



At the core of our organisational objectives lies the commitment to **Sustainable Development**. BGF employs a multifaceted approach to **deliver the Green Agenda**, characterized by effective advocacy, empowerment of local actors, and meticulous policy analysis.



BGF's endeavours are grounded in the belief that **Regional Cooperation** is paramount to achieving our shared goals. Whether at the local or international levels, we stand in support of our partners to collectively **work towards a decarbonised future** for the Western Balkans.



Our **Social Innovation** program presents a pivotal path for empowering young people, **promoting reconciliation, and fostering social entrepreneurship**. In line with our mission to promote sustainability and positive impact in the Western Balkans, BGF offers assistance to businesses and initiatives seeking to achieve these objectives.



**VISAR
AZEMI**

**Former Executive
Director** of Balkan
Green Foundation

Looking back on 2022, it's clear that the year was marked by significant challenges and important accomplishments. The global energy landscape was radically transformed by the energy crisis and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, with their impacts continuing to increase in scale in the Western Balkans. In this context, our work at the Balkan Green Foundation in promoting sustainable development has become more important than ever.

It is my pleasure to present the Balkan Green Foundation's Annual Report 2022, which highlights our achievements and progress towards our mission of creating a more sustainable future in the region. The report also reflects our timely response to the current crises.

Over the past year, we have continued to implement smart investments and capacity development activities at the municipal level in the region. Our team has also developed the Policy Evaluation Tool, which has been instrumental in helping policymakers evaluate rural development policies and ensure they align with sustainable development goals. These achievements have made significant strides in enabling the transition towards green economies.

In addition, we published an analysis of the energy crisis and its effects in the region, which has provided crucial insights for policymakers and stakeholders. Our Annual BGI Competition, under our social entrepreneurship program, showcased the best ideas in the region. We made significant advancements in promoting the Green Agenda in the region by participating in high-level international conferences and engaging in public dialogue on environmental issues. BGF has been engaged in providing recommendations in the Civil Society Forum 2022, ensuring that our values and agenda are heard and contributing to the wider international efforts in the field of sustainable development.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of our donors and partners. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to our shared mission of promoting sustainable development in the Western Balkans. Together, we can continue to make a difference in the region and create a brighter future for all.



**LEILA
BIČAKČIĆ**

Board Member
at Balkan Green
Foundation

Dear Friends,

The year behind us was one of the most difficult years Europe and the rest of the world have experienced in a long time: the Russian invasion of Ukraine brought several challenges to consider. Energy instability and economic crises which followed have had a real impact on people's lives. In many ways, 2022 will be remembered as a year of geopolitical changes and rising awareness that new deals are in order.

As COVID – 19 pandemic is slowing down, new questions arose: security of energy sources, permanent access to diversified energy sources, and energy transition about geopolitical tensions. Further, threats to the democrats' strengthening of authoritarian regimes are affecting our ability to plan long-term. Such unprecedented challenges are significantly impacting the Western Balkans, in our work, and our partners' work. BGF rightly understands the interconnection of the world and our increasing reliance on each other are both a challenge and an opportunity. It is necessary to continue our efforts but also to educate citizens, attract like-minded partners and initiate donors to join the cause in creating better opportunities in the future.

This report brings an overview of projects and initiatives BGF introduced in the region and their impact on building a sustainable future. Our continued dedication to innovate is welcomed both in Kosovo and in the region, where in partnership with partners, communities, and other stakeholders, BGF is working for a better future. On this path, BGF's work must remain accountable, transparent, and responsive to the needs and priorities of the communities in the Western Balkans.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank the BGF team for their hard work and dedication in making changes possible. Now, more than ever, issues of the energy transition, implementation of the green agenda, and innovations in social entrepreneurship aimed toward bringing the Balkan region together are of utmost importance. We remain at your disposal for assistance and support in implementing the organisation's mission goals and look forward to future successes.

Growing Stronger: New Environmental and Social Progress Projects

BGF has been **awarded four (4) new projects** to address critical environmental and social issues in the Balkan region, including energy transformation, decarbonisation, social accountability, and social entrepreneurship.

BGF will collaborate with local and international partners in order to develop innovative solutions to enhance the region's sustainability.



ENERGY TRANSFORMATION AND DECARBONISATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The project's primary objective is to facilitate the transition to a sustainable and carbon-neutral future for the Western Balkan countries, particularly Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

It aims to create domestic and cross-border dialogues to promote a just transition in the target countries and encourage climate partnerships in the region.

'Energy Transformation and Decarbonisation in the Western Balkans' project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Balkan Green Foundation in cooperation with Germanwatch, Belgrade Open School, and Eko-Svest.



KOSOVO GREEN ACTION

The initiative fosters collaboration among stakeholders towards enhancing social accountability on climate and energy-related issues as outlined in the EU-endorsed Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

It aims to ensure social accountability and enable data-driven policymaking in line with the Green Agenda in the country. An interactive and data-driven digital platform will be established to facilitate stakeholders.

'Kosovo Green Action' has achieved the distinct honor of being the first project to secure the esteemed GPSA Grant within the borders of Kosovo.

'Kosovo Green Action' project is financially supported by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development through the provision of a Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) Grant and is implemented by Balkan Green Foundation in cooperation with Lëvizja FOL and Open Data Kosovo.



REGIONAL INCUBATOR FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS (RISE) - PHASE 2

Focuses on supporting social entrepreneurship ideas for young people through an ideation and incubation program, empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

The RISE project aims to build the capacity of six local incubators by co-constructing innovative pedagogical tools and materials on social entrepreneurship and interculturalism.

'Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs (RISE) - Phase 2' project is implemented by Balkan Green Foundation in cooperation with the Consortium consisting of GROUPE SOS Pulse, RYCO, SEEYN, and the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO), and supported by the Agence Française de Développement, Erasmus Plus Programme, and Regional Youth Cooperation Office.



ROAD OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The project also seeks to create a supportive social entrepreneurial environment, develop the entrepreneurial mindset of young people, and promote cross-sectorial cooperation.

It aims to address youth unemployment and empower young people in the field of social entrepreneurship by utilizing digital tools in youth work.

'Road of Social Enterprises' is implemented by Youth Alliance-Krushevo with partners: Balkan Green Foundation, IDEA Coalition for Solidarity Economy Development, Student Business Center, Enterprise Development Agency – EDA, Youth for Social Changes, and Active Youth of Florina.



Sustaining Progress: Preview of Project Achievements



GREEN CROSS

The cross-border project 'Green Cross - Towards Local Green Economies with Smart Investments' implemented in the Municipality of Klina in Kosovo and the Municipality of Has in Albania, aims to contribute to sustainable economic growth in the area by enabling the two municipalities to transition towards a green economy through integrated policy, smart public investments, and capacity development.

Highlights



Solar panels with a capacity of **70 KWP** in Klina and **28 KWP** in Has



Solar water heating panels with a capacity of **15 KWP** in Klina



More than **800 led light bulbs** in Klina and **650** led light bulbs in Has



5 efficient boilers for water heating in Klina



230 led lights in Has and **15** in Klina for street lighting



2 organised fairs for the promotion of the natural and cultural values of Klina and Has



2 action plans (2021-2025) for ecosystem services and smart investments



5 cross-border trainings on green economy and green entrepreneurship



1 study visit to the south of Albania



1 clean-up action in Has

'Green Cross - Towards Local Green Economies with Smart Investments' is a cross-border project supported by the European Union Delegation in Albania, implemented by Balkan Green Foundation and Municipality of Klina in Kosovo, and EDEN Center and Municipality of Has in Albania.



GREEN RURAL DEAL

BGF's 'Green Rural Deal – Sustainable and Smart Transition Strategies for Rural Municipalities' project aimed to develop local capacities for the transition to a zero-carbon economy in three target regions: Western Macedonia (Greece), Kamenica (Kosovo), and Priboj (Serbia).

In cooperation with German municipalities, the project supports and empowers municipalities in these rural regions through local capacity building, peer-to-peer learning, and the co-creation of practical initiatives.

Highlights



Development of a Policy Evaluation Tool for evaluating policy proposals against the Green Deal framework and ensuring the sustainability of rural initiatives, policies, and investments



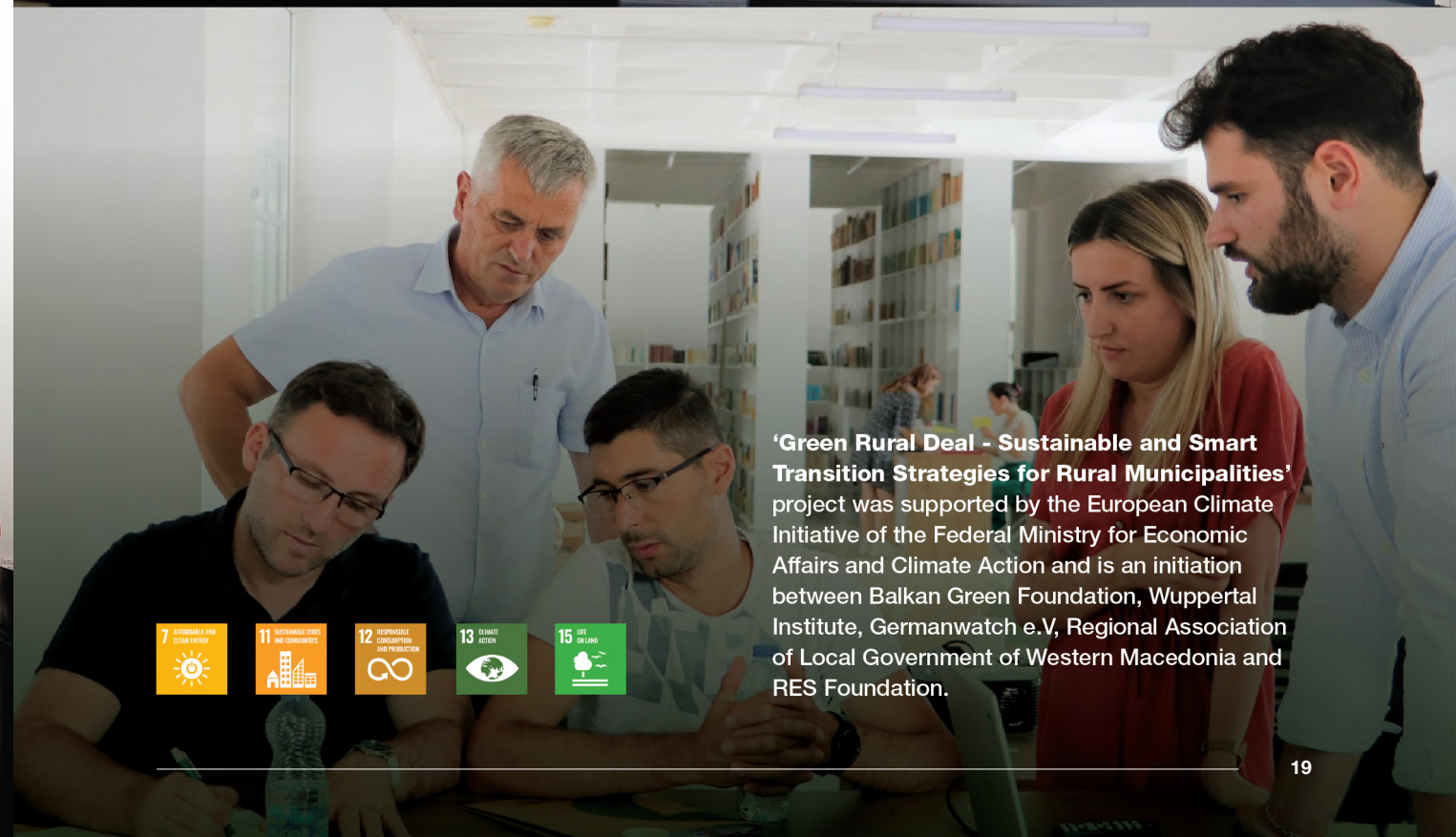
2 capacity-building workshops to develop concrete project ideas that support the transformation to a zero-carbon economy in the Municipality of Kamenica



1 international networking conference where EUKI's role was discussed in recipient countries and exchanged views on addressing new community issues, including the energy crisis



Several meetings with project partners to strategies and set targets for sustainable transformation in the region



'Green Rural Deal - Sustainable and Smart Transition Strategies for Rural Municipalities' project was supported by the European Climate Initiative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and is an initiation between Balkan Green Foundation, Wuppertal Institute, Germanwatch e.V, Regional Association of Local Government of Western Macedonia and RES Foundation.



Balkan Green Ideas

The 'Balkan Green Ideas – BGI' program supports the development of local and sustainable small green ideas in the region. More specifically, it stimulates and encourages green innovation by engaging local communities to generate green businesses that utilise local resources and community-based markets.

Highlights



11th edition of the BGI Annual Regional Competition held in **Thessaloniki, Greece**



7 launch events to announce the 2022 Regional Competition



2 training held on "Negotiation Techniques and Persuasion and Influence Techniques"



2 competing categories – Concept and Advanced LOT



20 National Finalists' presentations showcasing innovative ideas in front of an independent jury



5 teams selected as competition winners



\$40,000 in prizes awarded



1 study visit organised in Durrës, Albania



The 11th edition of 'Balkan Green Ideas' program was supported by Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Erasmus Plus Programme, and implemented by Balkan Green Foundation and its 7 local national partner organisations: Partners Albania for Change and Development, Mozaik Foundation, Green Ideas Greece, LENS, Fund for Active Citizenship, ARNO, and Trag Foundation.

BALKAN GREEN ACADEMY

The 2nd edition of 'Balkan Green Academy' aimed to educate youngsters on three main pillars: policy, economics, and society by using a cross-sectorial and transdisciplinary approach encouraging knowledge building.

At the same time, it combined modules that explore the policy perspective and business's economic and social impact.

The academy educated future Balkan Green Ideas applicants about green initiatives and sustainable development.

Highlights



2nd

edition of Balkan Green Academy held in **Skopje, North Macedonia**



16

participants from the Western Balkans took part



8

experts (trainers and speakers) were engaged to provide education at the Academy, bringing insights from their practical experiences.



1

research publication on the 'Roadmap of Green Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in the Western Balkans'



Tamara Klarić

Participant from Serbia

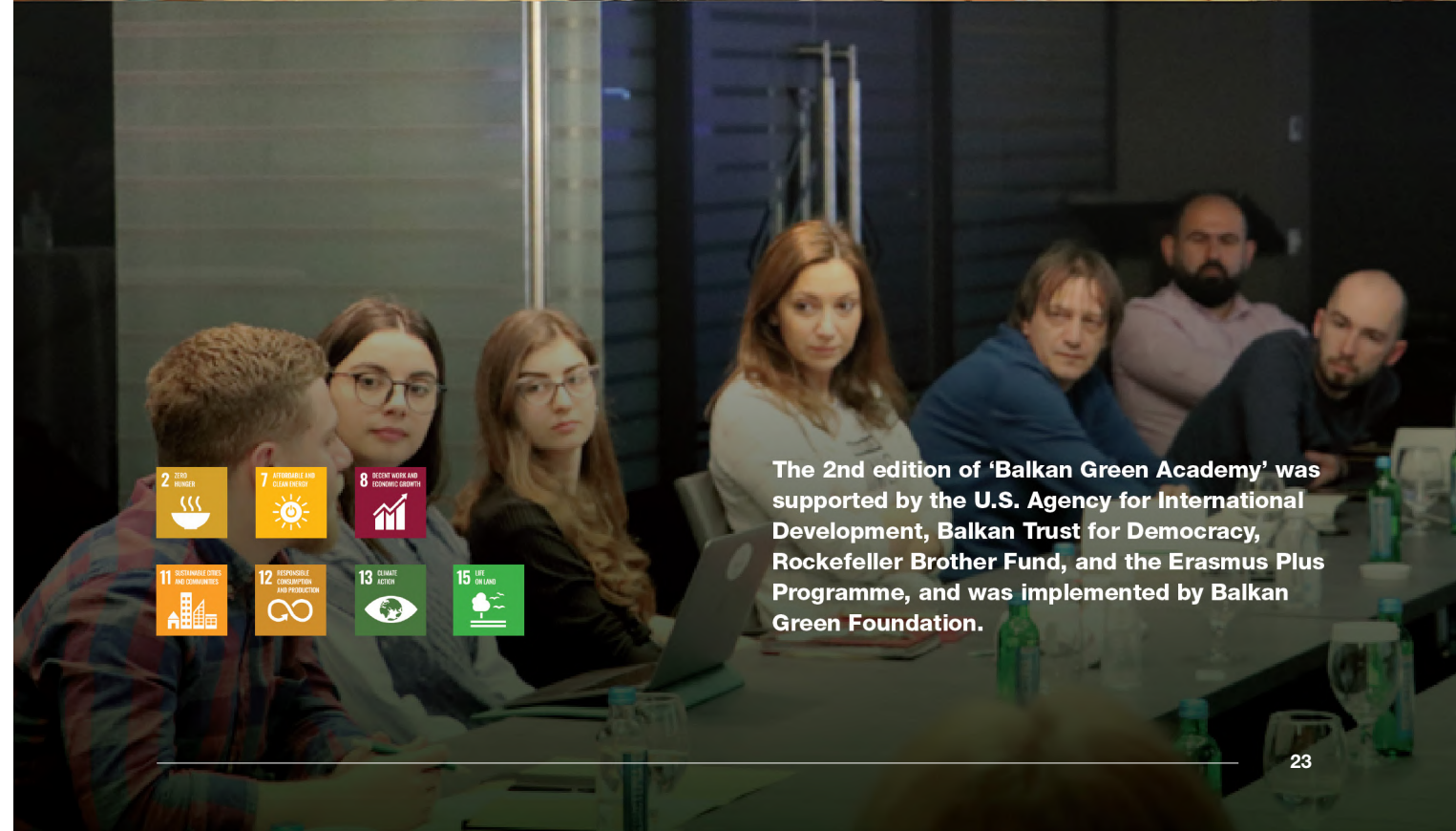
“Attending the Balkan Green Academy in Skopje was a valuable and enriching experience for me. I have gained valuable knowledge and insight from guest speakers who are experts in their field and met with people from our entire region, who are true visionaries and "game changers" in their communities. This experience has motivated and inspired me to pursue my business idea and expand its impact.”



Marko Djurisić

Participant from Montenegro

“What we have learned in the Academy is of big importance, but its essence will come to light when we unite this separated region of ours and start working together, by helping each other and sharing experiences.”



The 2nd edition of 'Balkan Green Academy' was supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Balkan Trust for Democracy, Rockefeller Brother Fund, and the Erasmus Plus Programme, and was implemented by Balkan Green Foundation.

GREEN DEBATE TOURNAMENT

BGF's 'Green Debate Tournament' aimed to improve young people's critical and creative thinking skills by teaching the British Parliamentary debating format.

The project included training activities and a debate tournament focused on environmental issues to increase awareness and encourage the youth to become environmentally conscious.

Furthermore, installing solar panels in the winning school – Gymnasium 'Bedri Pejani' in Peja, served as a model for effective green investment.

The installation demonstrated the positive impact of environmentally friendly investments and highlighted the importance of investing in sustainable practices.

'Green Debate Tournament' project was supported by United Nations Mission in Kosovo and implemented by Balkan Green Foundation.

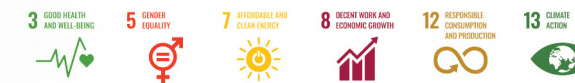


ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY BUILDING ON DATA IN KOSOVO

In the framework of the 'Environmental Capacity Building on Data in Kosovo' project, BGF connects the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency with the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency.

Besides contributing as a local administrator, BGF also contributes to research. The project aims to build environmental capacity in Kosovo and advance the EU accession process in the environmental area.

'Environmental Capacity Building on Data Use in Kosovo' project is supported by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency'



BALKANS UNITED FOR CLEAN AIR

BGF has worked with 7 regional partners to realise the second edition of the 'Balkans United for Clean Air' campaign to raise public awareness, advocate for air pollution reductions and quality-of-life improvements, and call on Western Balkans governments to work together towards these ends.

The second edition of the 'Balkans United for Clean Air' campaign was supported by the European Fund for the Balkans.



ACHIEVING OUR ENVISIONED GOALS

In pursuit of its vision and mission, BGF devoted efforts to **advancing the sustainable sphere** and **regional collaboration** through diverse initiatives.

KOSOVO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WEEK (KSDW)

For the fifth consecutive year, BGF collaborated as a co-organiser of the Kosovo Sustainable Development Week (KSDW), Kosovo's prominent sustainable event.

KSDW's aim continued to centre on facilitating constructive dialogue among stakeholders to identify gaps and find solutions that assist the

Western Balkans toward a faster advancement of the Green Agenda in the region.

KSDW remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles and values that support economic sustainability, social progress, and environmental preservation.






5th
edition
of KSDW




9
main Panel
Discussions




47
Speakers



16
Side
Events



68
Recommendations



Various
Media
Appearances

‘Kosovo Sustainable Development Week’ is a joint event implemented by Balkan Green Foundation, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Environmental Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, Ministry of Regional Development, the European Union Special Representative in Kosovo, GIZ and the Institute of Development Policy.’

GREEN TALK

The principal aim of the Green Talk platform was to stimulate a discourse on environmental matters, including the challenges and opportunities that are presented in the domain of environmentalism in Kosovo.

For three years, the objective of the Green Talk platform has been to establish a forum for

showcasing commendable eco-friendly endeavours and highlighting recommendations for navigating from transition to sustainable energy.

The third edition of the ‘Green Talk’ platform was implemented by Balkan Green Foundation and supported by Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

Speech:
Edona Demaj (Eco Kos):
Raising Social Awareness on
Waste Management



We do not see waste as trash, but we see waste as a potential for development.

JUST TRANSITION FORUM

BGF and its co-implementing partners organised the 2nd Energy Community Just Transition forum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The forum underlined the importance of ambitious and credible energy and climate targets for 2030, underpinned by National Energy and Climate Plans.

Within the Just Transition Forum, BGF with representative Leila Bičakčić – Board Member, facilitated a panel discussing air pollution.

This session elaborated on the implementation of the Large Combustion Plants Directive, on issues related to transport emissions, district heating and proposals of the European Commission on the enlargement of the Energy Community’s environmental acquis to air quality-related legislation.

The **‘Just Transition Forum’** was an initiative of the Energy Community Secretariat in cooperation with the Balkan Green Foundation, CEE Bankwatch Network and Climate Action Network Europe.

150

stakeholders around the globe gathered to join the forum

32

speakers discussed and embraced a just energy transition by designing climate and energy policies

3

high-level panels on how to deliver ambitious 2030 climate and energy targets for the Energy Community



CIVIL SOCIETY AND THINK TANK FORUM

BGF attended the Berlin Process Civil Society and Think Tank Forum 2022. BGF was in charge of recommendations for the climate change sector in the region. The recommendations included concrete actions towards decarbonisation in sectors such as heating, transport and industry, removal of legal barriers to the development of renewable energy sources, and joint awareness campaigns to intensify regional cooperation.

International communities and EU countries were urged to create climate partnerships and support the region’s energy transition through technical assistance and knowledge transfer.

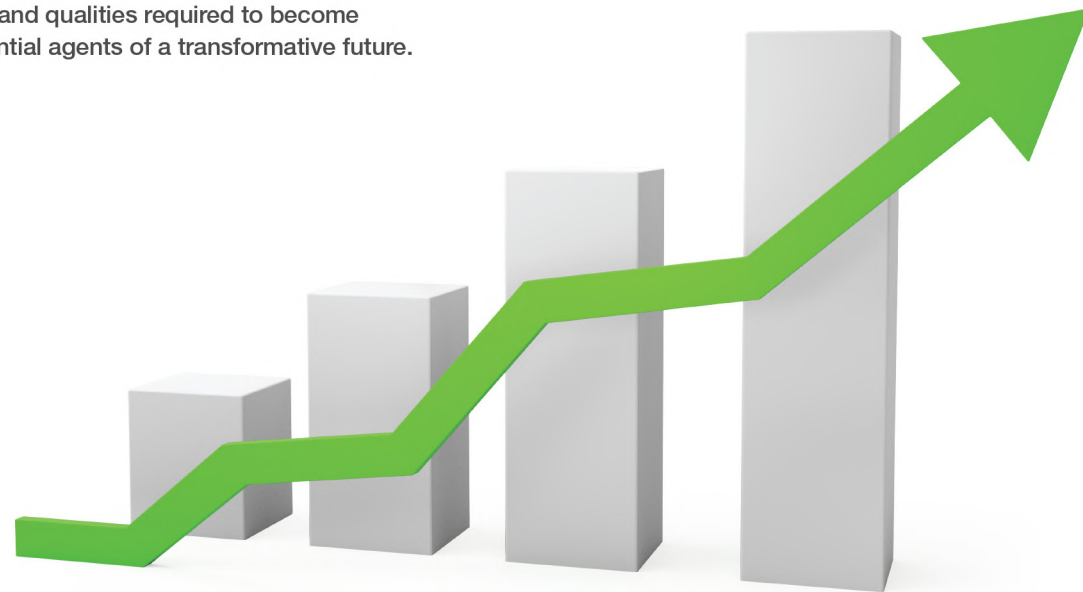
Civil societies and Think Tanks were called upon to implement multidimensional projects, collect climate change data and hold stakeholders accountable.

The **‘Civil Society and Think Tank Forum 2022’** was organised by Aspen Institute Germany and the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V with the support of Auswärtiges Amt.



Empowerment Initiatives

Empowerment endeavors provide both **guidance and support to individuals**, allowing them to cultivate the necessary skills and qualities required to become influential agents of a transformative future.



Mentoring Guidance



4

successful projects guided youngsters in implementing their green business ideas and provided knowledge on green debates.



107

beneficiaries of the organised mentoring sessions



60

women participants



47

men participants



Financial Support



A total of

7

ventures, each with a social and environmental orientation, were granted funds amounting to a substantial sum of

\$45,000

This infusion of financial support allowed these ventures to effectively refine and shape their innovative concepts into viable business models.



Additionally, for those businesses that were already established, the funds offered an opportunity for growth and expansion.



Research and Policy Analysis

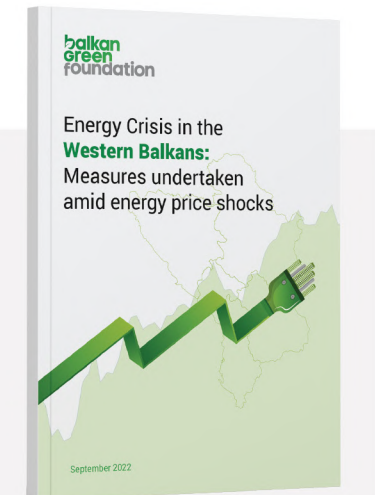
Balkan Green Foundation has published **three (2) research analyses** on energy and entrepreneurship to guide and encourage cooperation among stakeholders for sustainable development at local and regional levels, paving the way for a greener future.



ENERGY CRISIS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: MEASURES UNDERTAKEN AMID ENERGY PRICE SHOCKS

Balkan Green Foundation (BGF) with the support of Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), published the research 'Energy crisis in the Western Balkans: Measures undertaken amid energy price shocks'.

This research analyses the factors that influenced the creation of the energy crisis, the impact on the countries of the Western Balkans, the measures taken by the governments against the crisis, and the main recommendations for overcoming the crisis.



ROADMAP OF GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The roadmap has been designed to provide a concrete overview of the existing ecosystems and map the relevant stakeholders in the countries that are fostering the development of green entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans.

This publication was part of the project Balkan Green Academy 2.0 funded by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of The German Marshall Fund of the United States and USAID - US Agency for International Development.



Engaging the Public

BGF has demonstrated a **proactive and innovative approach in disseminating information** and engaging with the general public regarding its agenda.

This has been achieved through an array of strategies including multiple press releases, media appearances and other initiatives.



Regional Insights Toolkit

The **'Balkan Energy Prospect'** tool by BGF promotes public understanding of energy flow, economy, and environment. If WB countries integrate energy infrastructure in line with the Energy Community Treaty, it could increase cross-border collaboration and support the transition to lower carbon economies.

This platform provides valuable information about six Western Balkans countries' energy technologies, potential synergies, and energy diversification capacities in the region.

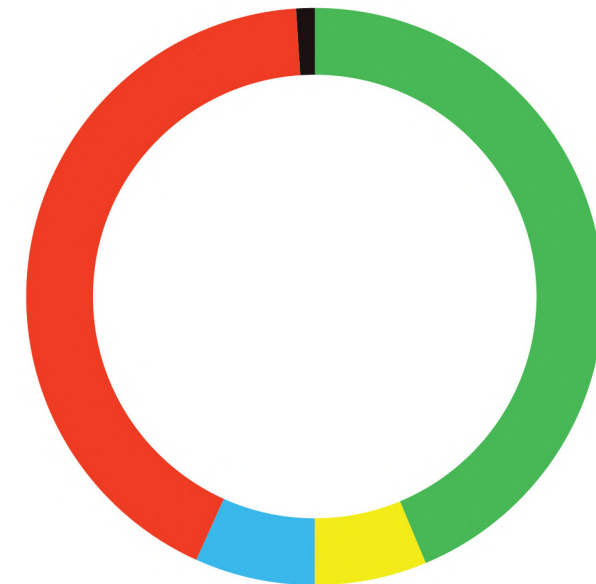
For additional information visit:
<https://wb6energyprospect.com/>

The **'Policy Evaluation Toolkit'** serves as a framework to evaluate policy proposals and benchmark them against the Green Deal sustainability framework.

It is a comprehensive platform that considers all policy areas where opportunities to transform exist such as infrastructure decisions (such as building codes, territorial plans and more), tourism, sustainable agriculture, clean energy and more, with digitalization being a key enabler of all.

For additional information visit:
<https://tool2.balkangreenfoundation.org/>

Annual Budget Turnover



Activity Expenses:

€ 204,786.00

Administrative and office expenses:

€ 29,868.00

Grants:

€ 40,000.00

Personnel and Experts:

€ 158,439.00

Other:

€ 1,884.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED:

€ 434,977.00

MEET OUR STAFF

Year
2022



Visar Azemi
Former
Executive Director



Rinora Gojani
Programmes and
Operations Manager



Doruntina Murati
Finance
Manager



Shpend Mustafa
Project
Coordinator



Aurel Morina
Project
Coordinator



Lirika Raça
Project
Officer



Besfort Kosova
Project
Manager



Fjolla Qorri
Researcher



Alban Bytyçi
IT Officer



Egzona Aruqaj
Communication
Officer

Donors



on the basis of a decision by the German Bundestag



Get Involved

You too could become part of our movement

There are different ways you could contribute and become part of our pursuit for sustainable development:

Be mindful of our everyday behaviors and eliminate habits that harm the environment



Become a volunteer



Integrate elements of social entrepreneurship into your business model!



Cooperate for joint movements for various sustainable development initiatives



Stay Tuned to our Endeavours



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