

Note on governance, coordination, monitoring and reporting on the GAWB Action Plan implementation

Introduction

GAWB Action Plan was adopted at the EU-Western Balkans Brdo pri Kranju Summit in October 2021 to serve as a tool to guide the GAWB implementation until 2030. Primary responsibility for implementation of the GAWB Action Plan lies with public institutions in each WB economy. The complexity of measures and the involvement of various organisations and actors requires effective and agile coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the economy's level, accompanied by regional networks to support implementation of the Action Plan at the regional level.

Overall coordination of the GAWB processes at the regional level is the responsibility of RCC, while each pillar has its designated coordinating organisation (regional coordinators: Energy Community Secretariat EnCS, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat - TCPS, RCC, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE Secretariat - SWG RRD, and International Union of Nature Conservations – IUCN).

This note defines elements of regional governance, coordination, monitoring and reporting on the GAWB Action Plan implementation to serve as a guideline for coordinated efforts at the regional level.

Governance model

The governance mechanism for GAWB builds on the existing regional structures and platforms for coordination in areas related to the GAWB implementation.

As per the Action Plan, the Regional Working Group for Environment (RWG Env) accompanied by regional coordinators already in charge of components of the GAWB Action Plan (to include mandates, procedures and budgetary resources) serves as the backbone of this process. The RWG Env was established as an intergovernmental platform for permanent policy dialogue on the environment and climate action. In order to reflect a new mandate, the ToR of RWG Env is being revised and the working group's name changed to the Regional Working Group on Green Agenda for Western Balkans (RWG GAWB).

The Action Plan assigns the regional coordinators across roadmaps as follows:

1. **Climate Action:** EnCS (supporting role: RCC, IUCN)
2. **Energy:** EnCS (supporting role: RCC)
3. **Sustainable Transport:** TCPS
4. **Circular Economy:** RCC
5. **Depollution:** RCC, EnCS



6. **Sustainable Agriculture:** SWG RRD
7. **Protection of Nature and Biodiversity:** IUCN (supporting role: RCC, EnCS to the extent covered by its acquis)

The GAWB governance mechanism at the regional level consists of two layers: a) technical/operational and b) political.

Climate Action, Energy, Sustainable Transport, Depollution (partially) and Sustainable Agriculture policy objectives are coordinated within the existing governance structures (composed of technical, legal and political/ministerial layers) in which regional coordinators (EnCS, TCPS, SWG RRD) operate. Their involvement in the GAWB implementation will be aligned with their mandates, procedures and budgetary resources.

The protection of Nature and Biodiversity roadmap is coordinated by IUCN, with the support of RCC within the Biodiversity Task Force as part of RWG GAWB structures. Circular Economy and Depollution Roadmaps will be coordinated within the RWG for GAWB framework. While all pillars have their designated coordinators, they all have a cross-thematic nature and good cooperation among the coordinators will be required for their full and proper implementation.

The RCC cooperates with regional organisations to enhance synchronised approach to the implementation across pillars, and in addressing horizontal and cross-sectoral elements of the Action Plan, in line with the specific mandates of those organisations, including governance, participation of key stakeholders (civil society, local governments, and business community), monitoring and reporting, donor coordination and financing, communication, and awareness raising.

WB economies, which have not yet established coordination, are responsible for establishing it at the level of their administrations, and are encouraged to rely on structures already established, such as the EU4Green Project.

Key decisions, conclusions, and other outcomes of the RWG GAWB will be put forward in the annual ministerial conference/meeting. Annual ministerial conference/meeting could take place in an extended format to include ministers in charge of other pillars or areas of concern, and in close coordination with respective regional coordinators, as appropriate.

Inclusive governance at the regional level

The RCC and regional coordinators maintain a regular dialogue with the European Commission services, international financial institutions, and other development partners on GAWB-related topics. In close cooperation with other regional organisations, the RCC establishes different platforms to ensure inclusivity and broader participation in GAWB-related debates with all relevant stakeholders, such as the NGO Forum, Local Governance Forum, Donor Coordination Meetings (in close coordination with other regional organisations and other key stakeholders).

Monitoring and reporting

The monitoring mechanism, established by RCC, will enable regular tracking of the GAWB implementation progress and will timely identify deadlocks and delays. As such, it will provide a base for the design and implementation of occurring corrective actions and adjustments to the Action Plan on regular basis. Monitoring will be performed in annual cycles based on pre-defined qualitative and quantitative indicators as listed in the Action Plan, in close cooperation with WB economies, other regional organisations, the European Commission, EU4Green and other relevant projects.

RCC coordinates with EnCS, TCPS, SWG RRD, and IUCN to produce an Annual Green Agenda Implementation Report at the beginning of a year, taking into account the reporting timelines already established by regional coordinators. Special attention is to be paid to avoid double work and overlaps in reporting. Accuracy of the Annual Green Agenda Implementation Report will be validated in close consultation with WB economies.

An overview of GAWB Action Plan implementation governance structures is provided in the tables below.

	Roadmap	Region organisations in charge	Regional organisations – supporting / responsible for specific actions	Working Groups/ Platforms
1	Climate Action	EnCS	RCC, IUCN	Structure within EnC RWG GAWB
2	Energy	EnCS	RCC	RWG GAWB Structure within EnC
3	Transport	TCPS	RCC	RWG GAWB Governance structure within TCPS
4	Circular Economy	RCC	-	RWG GAWB
5	Depollution	RCC	EnCS	RWG GAWB Structure within EnC
6	Sustainable Agriculture	SWG RRD Secretariat	-	RWG GAWB SWG RRD
7	Nature protection and biodiversity	IUCN	RCC	BTF, RWG GAWB

Activity	Responsible Organisation
Coordination across pillars	RCC, other regional organisations
Donor Coordination and Green Agenda financing	RCC, other regional organisations, EU4Green Project
Local Self-governance Forum	RCC, other regional organisations, EU4Green Project
NGO Forum	RCC, other regional organisations, EU4Green Project
Engagement with the business community	RCC, WB6 CIF, other regional organisations, EU4Green Project

Annex I Terms of Reference of Regional Working Group on the Green Agenda for Western Balkans

By endorsing the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkan (GAWB)** at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, Bulgaria in 2020, the region has committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 by aligning with the key elements of the European Green Deal. The GAWB identifies five main pillars for the region to focus on in this transition, namely: **1) Decarbonisation (climate, energy, mobility) 2) Circular economy, 3) Depollution, 4) Sustainable agriculture and food production, and 5) Biodiversity.**

The GAWB Action Plan until 2030, endorsed at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia in 2021, **defines and sequences actions across pillars, and provides a framework to coordinate, support and monitor the implementation.** The horizontal elements of the Action Plan include governance, participation of key stakeholders (civil society, local governments, and business community), monitoring and reporting, donor coordination and financing, communication, and awareness raising.

As per the Action Plan, the **Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env)**, **accompanied by regional coordinators¹** in charge of the Action Plan pillars, represents the **backbone of the GAWB governance structures at the regional level.**

The RWG Env was established in 2015 as an intergovernmental **platform for permanent policy dialogue on environment and climate action**, under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council within the South East Europe 2020 Strategy Framework.

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to transform the RWG Env into the RWG GAWB and to define the operating framework of the RWG GAWB to fulfil its mandate given by the GAWB Action Plan, as follows:

Objectives of the RWG GAWB are to:

1. Serve as a mechanism to coordinate key horizontal elements of the GAWB Action Plan at the regional level with regional organisations in charge of specific pillars of the GAWB Action Plan and economies.
2. Serve as a regional coordinator for Circular Economy and Depollution Roadmaps for which the RCC is assigned as regional coordinator by the Action Plan.

¹ Energy Community Secretariat, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, Standing Working Group on Regional Rural Development, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/ Biodiversity Taskforce

Roles and responsibilities of RWG GAWB are to:

3. Coordinate implementation of horizontal and cross-pillar actions of the Action Plan with regional organisations and economies, in line with the division of tasks and specific mandates of the RWG GAWB and other coordinators
4. Maintain and enhance regional cooperation on the GAWB and its Action Plan implementation by promoting a coherent and coordinated approach to the implementation of Circular Economy and Depollution Roadmaps of the GAWB Action Plan across economies from the region
5. Enhance streamlining of the circular economy into the Common Regional Market topics and processes
6. Monitor and report on the implementation of the GAWB Action Plan by integrating implementation reports of regional partners and the RCC on an annual basis, and implementation guidelines for the upcoming year
7. Coordinate the process of mid-term revision of the Action Plan
8. Maintain dialogue with the European Commissions to ensure policy guidelines, implementation support, and synergies with other EU regional initiatives and projects
9. Improve information and knowledge exchange between Western Balkan economies to enable well-informed, evidence-based policy-making to fit into regional policy and political processes related to the GAWB
10. Enhance regional dialogue on GAWB with key stakeholders – civil society, businesses, local communities, economies’ parliaments, international financial institutions, other development partners and initiatives by:
 - Mainstreaming Green Agenda topics into existing regional platforms, mechanisms, and instruments
 - Launching new platforms where needed, such as the annual NGO Forum, Local Governance Forum, and Donor Coordination on financing the Green Agenda
11. Discuss other issues of interest for cooperation with different stakeholders for the purpose of coordination, exchange of experience, and preparing recommendations and opinions on improving the work of the governance mechanism

Structure and composition

12. RWG GAWB is composed of civil servants representing ministries in charge of climate change and the environment from Western Balkan economies. RWG GAWB meetings can take an extended format to include other relevant ministries in charge of specific topics
13. RWG GAWB members coordinate GAWB-related matters within their administrations. Economies without established structures for governing GAWB may consider relying on the governance structure including pillar coordinators appointed within the EU4Green Project
14. Key decisions, conclusions, and other outcomes of the RWG GAWB will be put forward in the annual ministerial conferences. A ministerial conference can take place in an extended format to include ministers in charge of other pillars or areas of concern, and in close coordination with respective regional coordinators
15. The Energy Community Secretariat (EnCS), Transport Community Permanent Secretariat (TCPS), Standing Working Group on Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD), and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including an NGO representative selected by the NGO Forum are invited to participate at the RWG GAWB meetings and contribute to discussions. The European Commission takes part in RWG GAWB meetings.
16. RWG GAWB may invite other partners, organisations, stakeholders, and experts to attend the meetings and participate in the process, as appropriate.

Mode of operation

17. RWG GAWB operates under the auspices of the RCC, which serves as the RWG Secretariat.
18. The RCC facilitates the work of RWG GAWB, including preparation of the annual work programme and report on implementation, organisation of the meeting, and any other activities related to the RWG GAWB functioning.
19. RWG GAWB convenes meetings at least twice a year.



20. The RCC shall communicate the date and propose the draft meeting agenda, as well as all related documents, to each member of RWG GAWB no later than 20 calendar days prior to each meeting.
21. The RCC may convene an additional meeting if it is proposed by one of the RWG GAWB members, at least 15 days before the date of the proposed meeting.
22. RWG GAWB convenes hybrid consultative meetings when needed, allowing members 15 calendar days to react.
23. Decisions on the recommendations by RWG GAWB are taken by consensus of economies. Absence of objection by an RWG GAWB member is considered approval.
24. These Terms of Reference may be amended at any time, based on the consensus of RWG GAWB members.