Transforming Innovative Concepts into Powerful Solutions
Balkan Green Foundation (BGF) is a regional organisation that promotes inclusive and equitable progress within the Western Balkans in the sustainable development domain.

BGF is a key strategic partner for local, regional and global communities, organisations and institutions to promote sustainable development, transform innovative concepts into powerful solutions, and strengthen regional and global partnerships.
BGF strives for just and equitable sustainable development for the Balkan region.

BGF advocates and promotes sustainable development in the Western Balkans, driving development policies and solutions that draw on the latest international ideas to confront global challenges, and that advance national agendas for EU integration on sustainable economic development, environmental protection, energy development, and climate change.

VISION AND MISSION

Sustainable Development is the foundation for our organisational objectives. BGF works to deliver on the green agenda through advocacy, empowerment and policy analysis.

Regional Cooperation lies at the heart of all BGF’s endeavors. From local to international levels, we support our partners to work together for a decarbonised Western Balkans.

Social Innovation program encourages and supports young people to access new spaces for reconciliation and social entrepreneurship. BGF assists businesses to achieve sustainability and positive impacts in the Western Balkans.

BGF PROGRAMS
An energy crisis in Europe is accelerating the clean energy transition. Although the crisis is undoubtedly testing the preparedness of Western Balkan (WB) countries, it is also validating our work toward more affordable and secure energy. BGF, as a leading regional organisation, is actively supporting WB countries in navigating this new reality through advocacy, empowerment, research and policy analysis.

BGF is and will continue to be a key strategic partner – both for WB communities, civil society, for regional and global institutions and organisations – in introducing innovative solutions in the sustainable development domain. Together, we have managed to advance development policies, drawing on the latest global thinking while furthering the national agendas of WB countries for EU integration.

Our primary focus in 2021 was increasing green investments that bring tangible benefits to local communities. BGF supported local green entrepreneurial initiatives that offer innovative solutions to the region’s most fundamental problems. It also increased dialogue on sustainable development between leading actors from the government, academia, and businesses, encouraging them to mobilise resources for the energy transition. In support of evidence based policy-making, transparency and accountability, we have provided extensive research and analysis to shape the views of policymakers across the region.

This report is a testament to our determined efforts to foster inclusive and sustainable development across the Western Balkans. These achievements would not be possible without the continuous support of our partners and donors, to whom we extend our gratitude and express our readiness for further cooperation.

Dear Friends,

2021 was a difficult year for people around the world, including in the WB. Political challenges, the pandemic, tough economic times, and accelerating climate change have had a real impact on people’s lives. We all struggled – as individuals, as professionals, and as communities and societies. Like all organisations, BGF grappled with this new reality and endeavored to adjust its strategies in response to external events. They innovated, adapted, and redoubled their commitment to serving their communities despite all the disruption.

As pandemic-related measures and differences kept pushing us apart, BGF was demonstrating that we are now closer than ever—that everything that happens on one end of the planet can and does have an impact on the other end, from Afghan refugees arriving in Kosovo to climate change affecting weather and global energy prices impacting the region. BGF rightly understands the interconnectedness of the world and our increasing reliance on each other. And in response, it has leveraged openings created by the crises to contribute to real change – modeling what a new future can look like.

In this report, you will read about the difference BGF makes in the region, about its contribution in building a just, equitable, and sustainable future: working to deliver a green agenda through advocacy, empowerment, and policy analysis; partnering with actors throughout the region, and innovating in areas of social entrepreneurship that connect the region.

At Rockefeller Brothers Fund, we are genuinely proud to support BGF’s work. The world is and will continue to change quickly, and organisations like BGF that continue to innovate and adapt give us hope. We look forward to helping advance sustainable development in Kosovo and the region in partnership with BGF.

FOREWORD FROM BGF'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Visar Azemi

FOREWORD FROM OUR PARTNER

Mia Vukojević, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Towards the realisation of its vision and mission, BGF advanced sustainable development and regional cooperation through the full range of its activities.

**REALISING OUR VISION IN 2021**

**ADVOCACY**

Advocacy actions push forward sustainable development by mobilising resources and powerholders to tackle energy and environmental problems.

- For the fourth year running, BGF co-organised Kosovo’s biggest sustainable development event – Kosovo Sustainable Development Week (KSDW)
- Presented in numerous national and international conferences/panel discussions, providing solutions for sustainable and environmentally friendly actions
- Organised 6 Green Talks to stimulate discussion on sustainable development in Kosovo, with five inspirational speakers from local government, business, academia and civil society, including Mrs. Vjosa Osmani – President of the Republic of Kosovo

**EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment initiatives offer guidance and support to different actors to become future change-makers.

- Successfully provided guidance and financial support to enable young people to implement their business ideas in line with social entrepreneurship principles
- Installed 70 kW of solar energy in Klina’s public buildings in cooperation with the Municipality of Klina
- Drafted Klina’s Municipal Green Plan – a comprehensive strategy for rapidly enhancing environmental standards, public well-being and sustainability at municipal level

**RESEARCH & POLICY ANALYSIS**

Research and policy work provides recommendations and practical advice on how different actors can successfully achieve sustainable development at local and regional levels.

- “Decarbonising the Heating Sector in Kosovo – Best Practices” provides recommendations and best practices on decarbonisation and the future of the heating sector
- “Comply or Close” discusses violations of WB air pollution laws by power plant operators, exposes the health risks that result from air pollution and offers recommendations on how to cut air pollution
- “Roadmap of Green Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Western Balkans” explains existing eco-systems and maps stakeholders involved in developing green entrepreneurship in the region
- “Balkans United for Clean Air” aims to raise regional awareness on the causes and consequences of air pollution, and promote improved air quality and a healthier environment in the Western Balkans
KOSOVO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WEEK (KSDW)

BGF in cooperation with its implementing partners organised the 4th edition of Kosovo Sustainable Development Week (KSDW). The main objective of KSDW 2021 was to advance the public profile and encourage policy dialogue about sustainable development and green economic growth. The event provided a hub for tackling a wide range of environmental and development issues.

KSDW is a joint event between Balkan Green Foundation, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, European Union Office in Kosovo/EU Special Representatives, GIZ and the Institute of Development Policy.

4th Edition 5 Panel Discussion 80 Speakers 5 Green Talks
20 Side Events 37 Recommendations 6 Media Appearances

KSDW is a joint event between Balkan Green Foundation, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, European Union Office in Kosovo/EU Special Representatives, GIZ and the Institute of Development Policy.
GREEN POLICY ACADEMY

As part of the project “Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation for Environmental Transformation Action”, BGF organised the “Green Policy Academy”. The event brought together representatives of the 8th Legislature of the Assembly of Kosovo and civil society organisations to explore developments and challenges within the energy and environment sectors.

The Academy led by BGF’s Executive Director, Visar Azemi, was divided into three discussion sessions, each covering major themes and featuring a different speaker, including: “The Prioritisation of Green Policies in Kosovo” led by European Parliament Member, Viola von Cramon; “The Future of Renewable Energy Resources” led by the Head of the Energy Regulatory Office, Ymer Fejzullahu; and “Importance of the Green Deal, Energy and Environmental Issues” led by the vice-chair of the Energy Community Secretariat, Dirk Buschle.

BGF PART OF COP26

The ‘COP26’ Climate Change summit brought parties together to accelerate action toward the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

BGF was represented by Ms. Rinora Gojani (Programmes and Operations Manager) who was involved in the COP26 side event “Voices from the regions: sharing first-hand experiences of coal phase-out in Europe and beyond”, together with international actors involved in post-coal transitions in various regions of the world.

Ms. Gojani emphasised the need to facilitate and support the development of new economic activities, tackle the negative impacts of mining, develop human and social capital, and improve people’s quality of life across the Western Balkans region.
PROJECT SNAPSHOTS

2021 OVERVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS

- Numerous meetings between project partners to strategise and set targets for sustainable transformation in the region and to create local policy and project assessment tools
- 1 workshop organised with local stakeholders from Municipality of Kamenica on advancing environmental development practices in rural areas
- 2 study visits in Lusatia (Germany) and Priboj (Serbia) to identify challenges and strategies for a sustainable smart transition and transformation

“Green Rural Deal – Sustainable and Smart Transition Strategies for Rural Municipalities” project is supported by European Climate Initiative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and is an initiation between Balkan Green Foundation, Wuppertal Institute, Germanwatch, Regional Association of Local Government of Western Macedonia and RES Foundation.

GREEN RURAL DEAL

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

The project supports and empowers municipalities in these rural regions, in cooperation with German municipalities, through local capacity building, peer-to-peer learning, and the co-creation of practical initiatives.
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

The “Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation for Transformative Environmental Action” project aimed to intensify its work with energy and environment stakeholders, work closely with Kosovan Members of Parliament to promote the Green Deal and advocate for cleaner, more sustainable policies in the country.

HIGHLIGHTS

2 breakfast meetings on “Deforestation and Energy Efficiency in Kosovo”

Green Policy Academy
nourishing progressive thinking on developments and challenges within the energy and environment sector

1 roundtable on “Decarbonisation of the Heating Sector in Kosovo”

5 Green Talks on the challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in Kosovo

“Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation for Transformative Environmental Action” project was supported by Heinrich Böll Foundation and Rockefeller Brothers Fund.
The cross-border project “Green Cross – Towards Local Green Economies with Smart Investments”, jointly implemented between the Municipality of Klinë in Kosovo and Municipality of Has in Albania, aims to contribute to sustainable economic growth in the area by enabling the municipalities to transition towards a green economy through integrated policy, smart public investments, and capacity development.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Green Smart Investment Action Plan** drafted for Municipalities of Klinë and Has
- **1 regional conference on “Green Economy and Sustainable Development”**
- **4 capacity development training** on sustainability themes such as environmental protection, green economy, biodiversity, and sustainable green practices
- **Installation of 70 kW solar capacity** in Klinë’s public buildings
- **800 LED lamps** with dimming systems for outdoor installations together with **15 outdoor LED lamps** purchased for installation in 2022
- **Raised awareness** about energy efficiency, a healthier and greener environment through social network channels and media appearances

“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 Klinë in Kosovo, and EDEN Center and Municipality of Has in Albania.
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

• 10th edition of the BGI Annual Regional Competition held in Belgrade, Serbia
• 7 launch events to announce the 2021 Regional Competition
• 72 mentoring sessions to help young people develop and articulate their sustainable green ideas
• 2 competing categories
• 21 National Finalists’ presentations showcasing innovative ideas in front of an independent jury
• 5 teams selected as competition winners
• $35,000 in prizes awarded

Attending BGI was the next significant experience in impactful green ideas. Its content has combined the theory nicely with pragmatism. Not only did I enjoy the methodology but also the extent of it. We, as entrepreneurs, are enthusiastic people that love challenges and dare towards the unknown for a better tomorrow. I got inspired to delve more into the green eco-system of business, preserve the environment, give true meaning and the right place and attribute to nature. We are not above the ecosystem. We are part of it!

BALKAN GREEN IDEAS (BGI) program is supported by Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Erasmus Plus, Balkan Trust for Democracy and USAID, implemented by Balkan Green Foundation and its 7 local national partner organisations: LENS (Kosovo), Partners Albania for Change and Development (Albania), Mozaik Foundation (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Green Ideas Greece (Greece), Fund for Active Citizenship (Montenegro), ARNO (North Macedonia) and Trag Foundation (Serbia).

Winning the prize money and using it to purchase expensive machines, offered us a good start on further developing our business idea in Greece. To our team, the acknowledgment and awarding of our hard work would have been the most important and joyful part of the competition.

Comparing in BGI, represented the first time that our idea was pitched in an international environment. Albeit, we “only” won the national competition, the biggest impact on our green idea was the amount of experience exchange and inspiration. In addition, networking with great people from the Balkans provided many opportunities for further growth of our projects. So, BGI was a win-win experience!

BGI represented a great platform to meet fellow entrepreneurs from the region, providing greener solutions through their business activities and operating in harmony with our ecosystem. The competition gave me a chance to learn and admire unique ideas and diverse implementation methodologies, and how each business was trying to solve an environmental challenge or promote coexistence with nature.

Xhenson Cela
Participant from Albania

Anita Veliu
Winner from Kosovo

Kanaris Tsigkanos
Winner from Greece

Tamara Klarić
Participant from Serbia

Xhenson Cela
Participant from Albania

Anita Veliu
Winner from Kosovo

Kanaris Tsigkanos
Winner from Greece

Tamara Klarić
Participant from Serbia

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REGIONAL INCUBATOR FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS (RISE)

The "Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs (RISE)" project supports young change-makers to develop impactful ideas into sustainable social businesses. It is also designed to help address the regional legacy of conflict and division by opening new spaces of reconciliation between Western Balkans youth through the cooperative pursuit of social entrepreneurship.

The Incubation Phase of RISE Journey 1.0 was completed in February 2021, and its successful outcomes paved the way for RISE Journey 2.0 to be initiated in August 2021, offering further support for the development of young people's sustainability initiatives.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**RISE Journey 1.0 (Incubation Phase)**

- 2 national participating teams selected as the winners of the Ideation Phase
- €5,000 in prize money awarded
- 6 months of mentoring sessions organised to prepare selected teams to build product prototypes

**RISE Journey 2.0 (Ideation Phase)**

- 1 info-session to promote the call for applications published in August
- 7 national participating teams selected to begin their RISE journey
- 2 months of mentoring sessions delivered to begin developing participating teams' social business ideas

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**2 sets of Design Thinking workshops**

to identify problems and develop young people's social entrepreneurship ideas and prototypes

**Participation in the RISE Regional Forum**

in Belgrade, Serbia

**35 DEGREES** – Winner of RISE 2.0 Ideation Phase

The acquired knowledge during training sessions and the experience exchanges with other young entrepreneurs, let us understand how different but practical each other's ideas and journeys can be, making us think and treat our project idea from a different perspective. Albeit, we came as individual groups, as united we achieved complete success, thanks to RISE!

**ECO SOLUTION** – Winner of RISE 2.0 Ideation Phase

Learning how to identify, develop and implement our project idea was the most substantial benefit obtained from our participation in the RISE project. Throughout the "Incubation Phase", our team has the opportunity to apply this acquired knowledge and fulfill the objectives that need to be addressed to further develop our business. Now, we will consider the measurement of results we want to achieve and set new goals regularly for improvement.

"Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs (RISE)" project is supported by Agence Française de Développement and Regional Youth Cooperation Office, is developed and monitored by the Consortium: RYCO, GROUPE SOS Pulse, SEEYN, the Institut français and the Franco - German Youth Office.
IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT, CHANGING OUR FUTURE

BGF’s “Improving our Environment, Changing our Future” project raised young people’s awareness on the environment and climate change and encouraged their adoption of sustainable practices. Through educational workshops, participants were encouraged to brainstorm project ideas that would help make their communities more sustainable.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 educational workshops on “Sustainability”, “Climate Change” and “Environmental Protection”
- 4 school visits to meet and deliver gifts to the 22 participants from 4 elementary schools in Municipality of Prizren
- 1 participating school selected as the winner of a €2,000 grant to implement the winning project idea “Designing the Sustainable School”
- Installation of 1 kW solar capacity on the roof of the winning school “Emin Duraku” – Prizren

Together with my team, I participated in various activities organised by BGF that taught me about how to preserve our environment and act environmentally friendly. For me, the best part of the project would be the excursion to Blinaja’s National Park where we got to know a part of the natural wealth that Kosovo has, that we must protect with all our being. In addition, while with the other students, we prepared a presentation on how we can make our school eco-friendlier, which resulted in a winning idea. Thanks to our work, today on the roof of our school we have solar panels. I am proud that I have contributed a little to the development of a greener Kosovo.”

Lum Shishko
Student of “Emin Duraku” – Prizren

“Improving our Environment, Changing our Future” project was supported by UNMIK – United Nation Mission in Kosovo.
**ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY BUILDING ON DATA IN KOSOVO**

In the framework of the "Environmental Capacity Building on Data in Kosovo" project, BGF serves as a connecting link between the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency team and project partners at 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.

**SMARTER STOVES PARTNERSHIP**

Within the "Smarter Stoves Partnership" project, BGF collected data on residential heating devices in Kosovo in support of research on "Accelerating the change-out of obsolete household heating devices in the Western Balkans". The project aimed to establish a regional platform for the replacement of inefficient stoves by mobilising decision-makers, international financial institutions and development partners.

"Smarter Stoves Partnership" project was a cooperation of Balkan Green Foundation and RES Foundation.

**BALKANS UNITED FOR CLEAN AIR**

BGF is working with 7 regional partners to realise 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.

"Balkans United for Clean Air" campaign is supported by European Fund for the Balkans.
The discussion highlighted the adverse effects of the virus on tourism and the need for a strategy to ensure that businesses across the tourism ecosystem can survive. BGF representative Ms. Rinora Gojani made the case for a recovery strategy whose resilience is grounded in sustainable development.

The event focused on discussing three topics: “The preservation of the environment”, “Making choices on the wellbeing of current and future generation” and “Kosovo’s position within the EU Green Deal”. BGF representative Ms. Rinora Gojani stressed the role of NGOs and public awareness in driving forward green policies, and suggested steps for the Government of Kosovo to fulfill Green Deal criteria in support of successful EU integration.

The debate aimed to raise awareness among the public and relevant institutions on the importance of implementing laws to protect Kosovo’s environment. BGF representative Mr. Besfort Kosova (Project Manager and Researcher) analysed Kosovo’s experience with sustainable economic growth policies in comparison to other WB countries, and called for progress to be accelerated.
Panelists shared their experiences and ideas regarding sustainable entrepreneurship in Kosovo. BGF representative Mr. Shpend Mustafa (Project Coordinator) discussed the importance of institutional support for young start-ups in Kosovo and shared details of BGF’s work to foster the sustainable development ecosystem in Kosovo and beyond.

The event held in Vienna, Austria was dedicated to exploring transition in the energy sector. During the panel “Aspects of the Just Transition”, BGF’s Rinora Gojani, Programmes and Operations Manager emphasised the importance of engaging younger generations in energy transition debates and decisions, and flagged the dangers of reliance on fossil fuels.

Visar Azemi, BGF’s Executive Director highlighted the need to promote the widespread, efficient use of renewable energy in the WB, and made the case for integrating energy markets within the region, as well as with neighboring EU countries.

Hydropower stakeholders came together at this event with the aim of establishing an all-inclusive policy framework and research agenda on a sustainable and environmentally-friendly hydropower sector for the future. BGF’s Project Manager, Besfort Kosova, explained the situation in the region, and the challenges facing the WB energy sector – not least the adverse impacts attributable to unsustainable small hydropower plants.

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Throughout 2021, BGF has been proactive and innovative in informing and engaging the public on its agenda via numerous press releases, media appearances, broadcast events and other initiatives.
“Balkan Energy Prospect” is among the tools created by BGF to promote public understanding of the flow of energy and its interaction with the economy and the environment. If WB countries cooperate in integrating their energy infrastructure in line with Energy Community Treaty commitments, this could increase cross-border collaboration while supporting the transition towards lower carbon economies.

With the establishment of cooperation and integrated energy infrastructure, countries will increase cross-border collaboration, develop regional projects, and lower their carbon economy.

As such, this platform provides valuable information about six (6) WB countries in terms of their energy technologies, potential synergies for a future integrated energy market, and capacities for energy diversification within the WB region.

For additional information visit: www.wb6energyprospect.com

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ALBANIA  
BIH  
KOSOVO  
NORTH MACEDONIA  
MONTENEGRO  
SERBIA
BALKAN GREEN FOUNDATION (BGF)
Statement of Earnings and Expenditures
For the year ended December 31, 2021

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 (IN EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Personnel and Experts</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED: 418,078
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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@balkangfBalkans  Balkan Green Foundation - BGF

balkangreenfoundation.org