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# Rural communities tackling climate change

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*Session 11:15-12:15*

*Moving forward in addressing the climate change at local level*



*Farm to Fork Academy for Green Western Balkans – Our Shared European future*



# Farm to Fork Academy for Green Western Balkans – Our shared European Future

**PERIOD:** 4 year project (2023 –2027)

**AREA:** 6 Western Balkans + Croatia

**PROJECT BUDGET:** 1,442,183.16 Euro

**PARTNERS:** Family of National Rural Development Networks in the six WB countries  
and Croatia and their regional platform Balkan Rural Development Networks



## COMPONENT OF THE PROJECT:

- Farm to Fork Academy: awareness & capacity building
- Innovative & Sustainable solutions: F2F subgrating
- Bottom-up Advocacy & Policy Agenda

# Why?

- Agriculture and rural development sector is the **main economic activity**
- WB region is **rich in biodiversity**
- Balkan region, is among the **global hotspots of climate change** with above-average warming and highly vulnerable populations
- Extreme weather events, such as heat waves, frost, or heavy rainfall will be a **growing challenge** for farmers in the Balkan region
- Region requires a paradigm shift in its economic model, based on a sustainable approach to development, where **agriculture and rural development plays an important role** to properly and timely address the growing environmental and climate challenges

# Assessment of the CSOs capacities in the WB region

73% of CSOs reported that their organization was engaged with local farming communities to raise awareness about sustainable agricultural practices

73% believed that their organization has a positive impact toward rural and farming communities

77% of respondents were aware of the current challenges related to sustainable farming and food production in their respective country

25% of respondents perceived current policies and regulations in their countries in supporting sustainable farming and food production as effective

24% reported that their organization has not implemented at least one project applying innovative green and inclusive actions

On average **37%** respondents reported lower levels of knowledge regarding

- Farm to Fork Strategy (40%)
- Not familiar with the EU Green Deal (35%);
- Not familiar with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (36%)

# Challenges and opportunities for CSOs engagement with green agenda

## Challenges

- Western Balkan region is among the global hotspots of climate change
- There is a high risk of Poverty and social exclusion
- Education of the labor force in rural areas is much lower than in urban areas
- There is an intensive depopulation of rural areas due to the high migration
- Irrespective of their important role in addressing societal challenges, yet CSOs in WB have limited impact in contributing to long-term social, political and economic transformation of the region
- Their numerical expansion has not resulted in consolidation of a vibrant and genuine civil society
- The CSOs and Farmers are aware of their limited capacities and knowledge on issues related to sustainable food system and rural livelihoods necessary for green and just transition

## Opportunities

- CSOs and CSO Networks are aware of the important role in addressing societal challenges
- CSOs monitor and hold the respective governments accountable by pushing for accelerated reforms and the implementation of EU CAP policies
- Even though reforms are Government-led, CSOs build trust in the reforms and generate the so needed public support in the EU integration process
- Mutual collaboration and networking