

# Strengthening Biodiversity Governance in Kosovo

Bridging the Gap Between Legal Alignment  
and Effective Implementation



Sustainability Leadership Kosova

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## Executive Summary

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This policy brief has been developed within the framework of the project Empowering Green Agenda Implementation in Kosovo, implemented under the Green Agenda Multiplier Programme co-funded by The European Union. The project supports the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB), with a focus on strengthening biodiversity governance, improving data for decision-making, and enhancing inclusive public participation (European Commission, 2020).

These findings are grounded in a legal and policy baseline and gap analysis aligned with EU and global frameworks (see Annex 2) and validated through stakeholder consultations (see Annex 1). This combined approach enables a comprehensive assessment of both the formal policy framework and its practical implementation, ensuring that findings reflect both legal provisions and operational realities.

Kosovo has established a largely comprehensive legal and policy framework for environmental protection and biodiversity governance, including key framework laws on environmental protection, nature conservation, forestry, and climate change. However, evidence from EU progress assessments and national environmental reporting consistently indicates that the primary challenges lie not in legislative alignment, but in implementation capacity, enforcement, and institutional coordination (European Commission, 2023; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

Key systemic constraints include weak horizontal and vertical coordination across institutions, fragmented and non-interoperable environmental data systems, limited enforcement capacity, and insufficient technical and financial resources—particularly at the municipal level. These challenges are consistently reflected in EU enlargement assessments, which highlight the need for stronger administrative capacity, improved inter-institutional cooperation, and more effective monitoring and enforcement systems (European Commission, 2023).

Data governance represents a critical bottleneck. Environmental data is dispersed across institutions, lacks standardisation, and is not systematically integrated into decision-making or reporting processes. This limits the ability to assess environmental status, track trends, and design evidence-based policies. Strengthening data systems, interoperability, and accessibility is therefore essential for aligning with EU environmental monitoring and reporting requirements (European Environment Agency, 2022; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

Public participation frameworks are formally aligned with international standards, including the Aarhus Convention, which guarantees access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters (UNECE, 1998). However, EU progress reports indicate that implementation remains largely procedural, with limited early-stage engagement and constrained influence on policy outcomes (European Commission, 2023).

Municipalities play a central role in implementing environmental and biodiversity-related policies, particularly in spatial planning, land-use regulation, and permitting processes. However, local-level capacities remain limited in terms of technical expertise, financial resources, and access to data and guidance. This results in uneven application of environmental standards and weak integration of biodiversity considerations into local decision-making (European Commission, 2023; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

Strategic gaps also persist. The absence of an updated biodiversity strategy aligned with evolving EU and global frameworks—including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030—limits policy coherence, prioritisation, and the integration of climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration measures (European Commission, 2020).

Building on this analysis, and validated through stakeholder consultations, six priority reform areas have been identified: strengthening institutional coordination and governance, improving environmental data and monitoring systems, advancing climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration, reinforcing enforcement and compliance mechanisms, strengthening inclusive and participatory governance, and mobilising sustainable financing for biodiversity and climate action.

Overall, the findings highlight the need to shift from formal policy alignment toward effective implementation. Addressing systemic governance constraints—particularly in coordination, data management, enforcement, and municipal capacity—will be essential to translating existing legal commitments into measurable environmental outcomes and advancing biodiversity governance in Kosovo.

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## Cross-Cutting Systemic Constraints

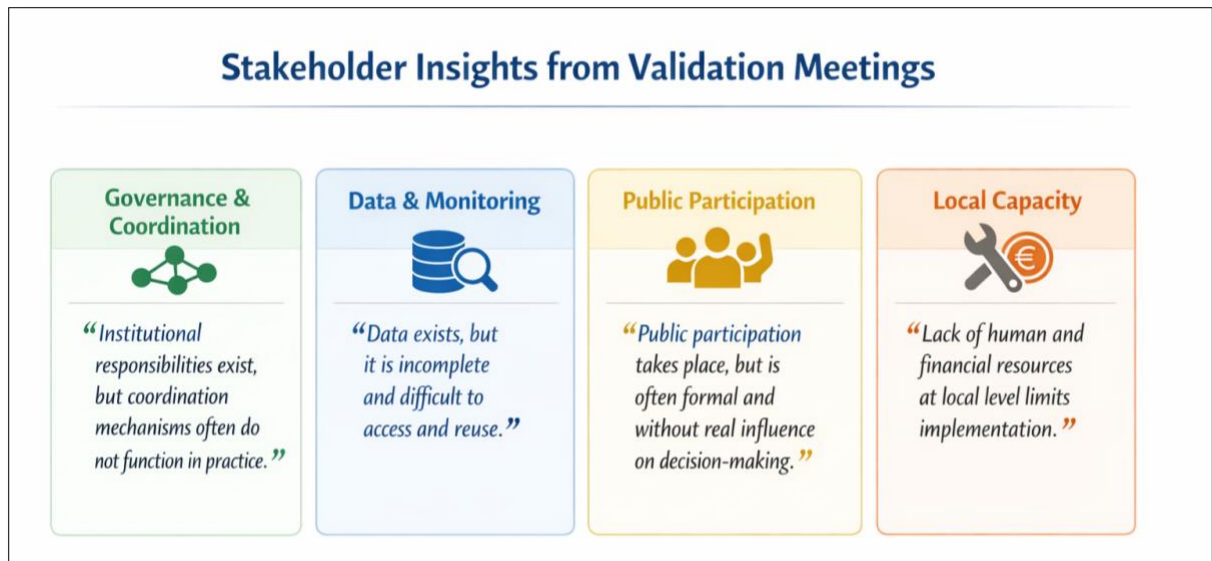
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Across the analysis and stakeholder validation process, several systemic constraints consistently emerged as underlying barriers to effective biodiversity governance in Kosovo. These include fragmented institutional coordination, limited interoperability of environmental data systems, weak enforcement and compliance mechanisms, insufficient capacity at the municipal level, and fragmented and unpredictable financing.

These constraints are not isolated; rather, they are structurally interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Weak institutional coordination limits effective data sharing and integrated planning across sectors. In turn, insufficient and fragmented data systems constrain environmental monitoring, evidence-based decision-making, and enforcement. At the same time, limited financial resources and institutional capacity—particularly at the local level—reduce the ability of authorities to operationalise existing legal and policy frameworks.

This interconnectedness reflects a broader systemic governance challenge rather than sector-specific weaknesses. Similar constraints have been consistently identified in EU enlargement assessments, particularly in relation to administrative capacity, inter-institutional coordination, and enforcement effectiveness within the environmental sector (European Commission, 2023). These findings indicate that the effectiveness of biodiversity governance in Kosovo depends not only on sectoral policy improvements but on strengthening the underlying governance architecture that supports implementation.

Addressing these cross-cutting constraints is therefore a prerequisite for achieving measurable progress in biodiversity protection and environmental management. Without targeted reforms in coordination, data governance, enforcement systems, and institutional capacity, existing legal and policy frameworks are unlikely to deliver effective outcomes or align with the implementation requirements of the EU environmental acquis and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (European Commission, 2020; 2023; European Environment Agency, 2022).



## Context and Purpose

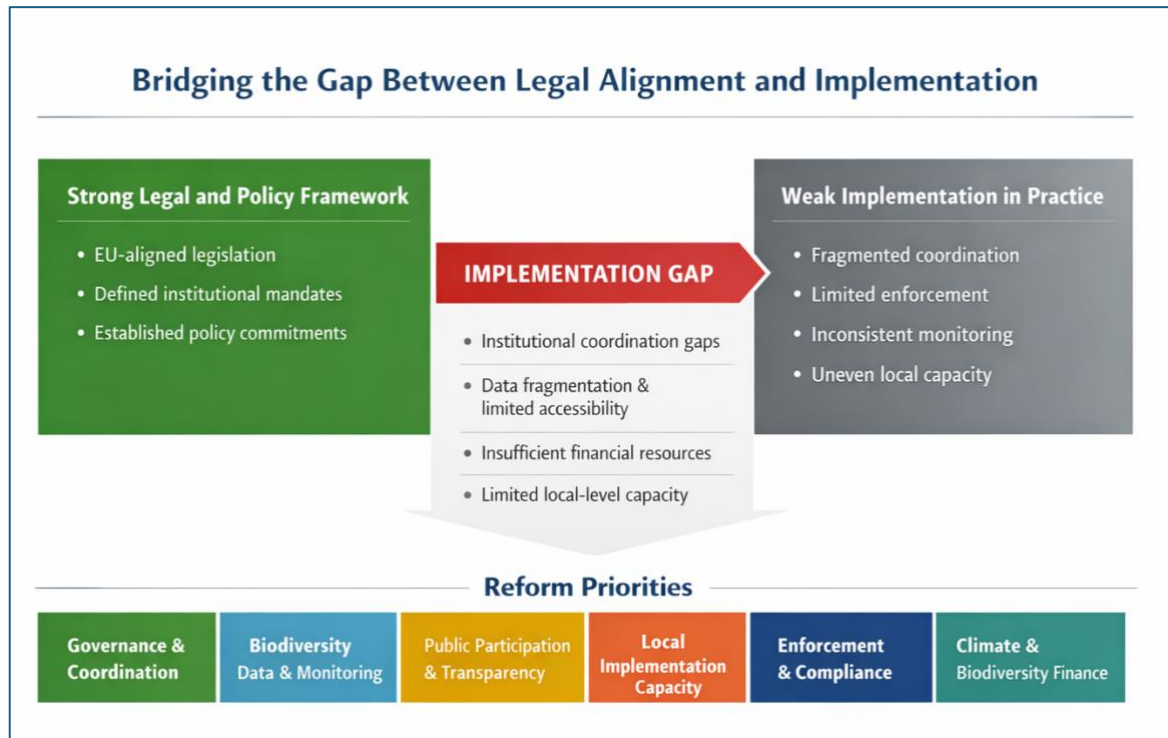
Kosovo is in the process of advancing its environmental governance framework in line with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB), which reflects key priorities of the European Union’s environmental and climate policy, including biodiversity protection, climate action, and sustainable resource management (European Commission, 2020). At the same time, Kosovo’s broader EU integration pathway requires progress in the environment and climate acquis, where increasing emphasis is placed on implementation capacity, institutional coordination, and enforcement effectiveness (European Commission, 2023).

Over the past decade, Kosovo has developed a substantial legal and policy framework covering environmental protection, nature conservation, forestry, and climate change. However, despite this progress, environmental outcomes continue to be constrained by persistent implementation challenges. These include fragmented institutional responsibilities, limited inter-institutional coordination, weak enforcement mechanisms, and insufficient technical and financial capacities—particularly at the municipal level (European Commission, 2023; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

In parallel, the growing complexity of biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, and land degradation requires more integrated, data-driven, and participatory approaches to environmental governance. Strengthening coherence between national policies, local implementation, and stakeholder engagement is therefore essential to ensure the effective delivery of environmental objectives.

Within this context, this policy brief is based on a structured analytical process combining a Legal and Policy Baseline and Gap Matrix with stakeholder validation. The baseline assessment reviewed Kosovo’s key environmental and biodiversity-related legal and policy instruments against relevant EU and international frameworks. The findings were subsequently validated and refined through two multi-stakeholder consultation meetings involving representatives from public institutions, civil society, and academia. This approach ensures that the analysis reflects both formal policy frameworks and practical implementation realities.

By linking policy analysis with practitioner insights, this brief seeks to support more effective implementation of biodiversity-related policies, strengthen governance systems, and contribute to Kosovo’s broader environmental and development objectives.



## Key Findings: Systemic Gaps in Biodiversity Governance

The analysis, supported by stakeholder validation, confirms that biodiversity governance challenges in Kosovo are primarily driven by systemic weaknesses in implementation rather than the absence of legal or policy frameworks. These gaps are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, particularly across institutional coordination, enforcement capacity, environmental data systems, and local-level implementation, collectively limiting the effectiveness of existing environmental legislation.

### 1. Outdated and Incomplete Biodiversity Policy Framework

Kosovo’s biodiversity policy framework remains anchored in the Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity (SAPB) 2011–2020, which has expired and has not yet been replaced. As a result, the current framework does not fully reflect evolving EU and global priorities, including those set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly in relation to ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions, and the integration of biodiversity into climate adaptation and land-use planning (European Commission, 2020a; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022). The absence of an updated strategic framework limits policy coherence, prioritisation, and the ability to align national objectives with EU targets and reporting requirements. It also constrains the integration of biodiversity considerations into broader sectoral policies, including agriculture, infrastructure, and spatial planning. As a result, Kosovo faces structural limitations in defining measurable targets and operationalising biodiversity-related commitments.

## 2. Fragmented Institutional Responsibilities and Weak Coordination

Responsibilities for biodiversity governance are distributed across multiple institutions, including those responsible for environment, forestry, spatial planning, and water management. While this reflects the cross-sectoral nature of biodiversity, coordination mechanisms remain weak, and institutional mandates are not always clearly defined or effectively operationalised.

Stakeholder validation highlighted that coordination between ministries, agencies, and municipalities is often ad hoc and project-based rather than institutionalised. This fragmentation limits integrated ecosystem management, reduces policy coherence, and leads to inconsistencies in implementation across sectors and governance levels (European Commission, 2023; OECD, 2021).

As a result, biodiversity considerations are not systematically integrated into decision-making processes, particularly in land-use planning and infrastructure development, where trade-offs between environmental and economic priorities are not always adequately managed. This weakens the capacity to implement ecosystem-based approaches and long-term planning.

## 3. Weak Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms

Enforcement of environmental and biodiversity-related legislation remains inconsistent and, in many cases, insufficient to ensure compliance. EU assessments have identified shortcomings in the implementation of key directives, including the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive, reflecting broader challenges in enforcement capacity and regulatory oversight (European Commission, 2023).

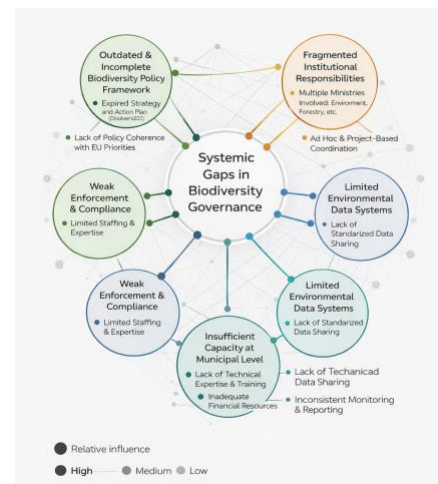
Inspection systems are constrained by limited staffing, insufficient technical expertise, and weak coordination between central and local authorities. In addition, sanctioning mechanisms are not consistently applied, reducing the deterrent effect of regulatory frameworks.

These weaknesses contribute to continued environmental degradation, including illegal logging, unregulated land use, and non-compliant development practices, particularly in forested and peri-urban areas where enforcement capacity is limited (Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022; Sustainability Leadership Kosova, 2025). Over time, this undermines institutional credibility and reinforces patterns of non-compliance.

## 4. Limited Environmental Data, Monitoring, and Information Systems

Effective biodiversity governance depends on reliable, accessible, and integrated environmental data. In Kosovo, data systems remain fragmented, with information dispersed across institutions and lacking standardisation and interoperability. Existing systems, including the Forest Information System and the National Forest Inventory, are not fully operationalised or systematically integrated into decision-making processes (European Environment Agency, 2022).

This limits the ability to monitor environmental trends, assess policy effectiveness, and meet EU reporting obligations. In practice, environmental data is not



consistently translated into actionable insights, constraining evidence-based policymaking and weakening both enforcement and strategic planning.

Stakeholders emphasised that the absence of a unified environmental information system reduces transparency and limits the effectiveness of monitoring and compliance mechanisms (European Environment Agency, 2022; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

## **5. Insufficient Capacity at the Municipal Level**

Municipalities play a central role in implementing environmental and biodiversity-related policies, particularly through spatial planning, permitting, and land-use regulation. However, local-level institutions face persistent constraints in technical expertise, financial resources, and access to environmental data and guidance (European Commission, 2023).

These capacity gaps result in inconsistent application of environmental standards across municipalities and limit the integration of biodiversity considerations into local planning processes. This is particularly evident in rapidly developing urban and peri-urban areas, where biodiversity considerations are often insufficiently embedded in spatial planning decisions.

This creates a structural disconnect between national-level policy commitments and local-level implementation, undermining overall policy effectiveness and limiting the scalability of biodiversity interventions.

## **6. Limited and Fragmented Financing for Biodiversity and Climate Action**

Biodiversity governance in Kosovo is further constrained by limited and fragmented financing mechanisms. Investment in biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration remains insufficient and is often dependent on external donor funding rather than integrated into national and municipal budgeting processes (OECD, 2021).

The absence of a structured and predictable financing framework limits the scale, continuity, and sustainability of conservation and restoration efforts. As a result, interventions remain largely project-based, reducing their long-term impact and Kosovo's ability to align with Green Agenda and EU investment priorities (OECD, 2021; UNFCCC, 2022).

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# **Reform Priorities for Strengthening Biodiversity Governance**

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The following reform priorities are derived from the Legal and Policy Gap Matrix and validated through stakeholder consultations. They address systemic constraints identified across governance, data, enforcement, and financing systems, and are aligned with the implementation requirements of the EU environmental acquis and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (European Commission, 2020b; 2023).

## **1. Strengthening Institutional Coordination and Governance**

Fragmented institutional responsibilities continue to limit the effective implementation of biodiversity policies. While mandates are distributed across multiple institutions, coordination remains weak, often informal, and insufficiently embedded within governance structures.

EU and GAWB frameworks emphasise the importance of clearly defined institutional roles and formal coordination mechanisms to support integrated environmental management and policy coherence (European Commission, 2020b; 2023).

**Priority actions:**

- Establish a formal inter-institutional coordination mechanism (e.g. a permanent inter-ministerial working group or coordination body), led by the Ministry of Environment, linking environment, forestry, spatial planning, and water management authorities
- Clarify and operationalise institutional mandates to reduce overlaps and strengthen accountability across ministries, agencies, and inspectorates
- Strengthen vertical coordination between central government and municipalities through formal reporting structures, technical guidance, and oversight mechanisms, particularly in land-use planning and permitting processes

## **2. Updating the Biodiversity Policy and Strategic Framework**

Kosovo's biodiversity policy framework remains outdated, limiting alignment with EU and global priorities, including ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions, and biodiversity integration into climate adaptation.

An updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is essential to define clear national targets, prioritise interventions, and ensure alignment with EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (European Commission, 2020a; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022).

**Priority actions:**

- Develop and adopt an updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with clearly defined targets, indicators, and timelines
- Integrate biodiversity objectives into national development planning and key sectoral policies, including agriculture, infrastructure, and spatial planning
- Ensure alignment of national targets with EU and global biodiversity frameworks, including restoration and conservation commitments

## **3. Strengthening Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms**

Weak enforcement remains a critical barrier to effective biodiversity governance. Inspection systems are under-resourced, coordination between enforcement bodies is limited, and sanctioning mechanisms are inconsistently applied.

EU requirements emphasise effective inspection, compliance monitoring, and enforcement systems as core components of environmental governance (European Commission, 2023).

**Priority actions:**

- Strengthen inspection systems through increased staffing, targeted technical training, and the introduction of risk-based inspection planning, prioritising high-risk sectors such as forestry, construction, and land-use change
- Improve coordination between inspectorates, municipalities, and other enforcement bodies through shared protocols, joint inspections, and integrated information systems

- Strengthen sanctioning mechanisms and follow-up procedures to ensure consistent application, improved case tracking, and increased deterrence of non-compliant activities

#### **4. Improving Environmental Data, Monitoring, and Information Systems**

Fragmented and non-interoperable data systems continue to constrain evidence-based decision-making, environmental monitoring, and compliance reporting. Existing systems are not fully aligned with EU data standards and are not systematically integrated into policy processes.

Strengthening environmental data governance is essential for compliance with EU monitoring frameworks, including INSPIRE and biodiversity reporting requirements (European Environment Agency, 2022).

##### **Priority actions:**

- Develop and operationalise an integrated environmental information system aligned with INSPIRE-compliant spatial data infrastructure, ensuring interoperability across institutions
- Establish standardised methodologies and protocols for biodiversity monitoring, including forest condition, land-use change, and ecosystem health indicators
- Ensure data accessibility and usability for decision-makers at central and municipal levels through interoperable digital platforms and shared data services

#### **5. Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Governance**

Although Kosovo has established a legal framework for public participation aligned with the Aarhus Convention, implementation remains limited in practice, with stakeholder engagement often occurring late in decision-making processes and with limited influence on outcomes (UNECE, 1998; European Commission, 2023).

Strengthening participatory governance is essential for improving transparency, accountability, and the quality of environmental decision-making.

##### **Priority actions:**

- Ensure early and meaningful stakeholder engagement in policy development, spatial planning, and permitting processes, including structured consultation mechanisms
- Improve access to environmental information through digital platforms, open data portals, and proactive disclosure of environmental decisions and assessments
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms for civil society engagement, including feedback loops and formal integration of stakeholder inputs into decision-making processes

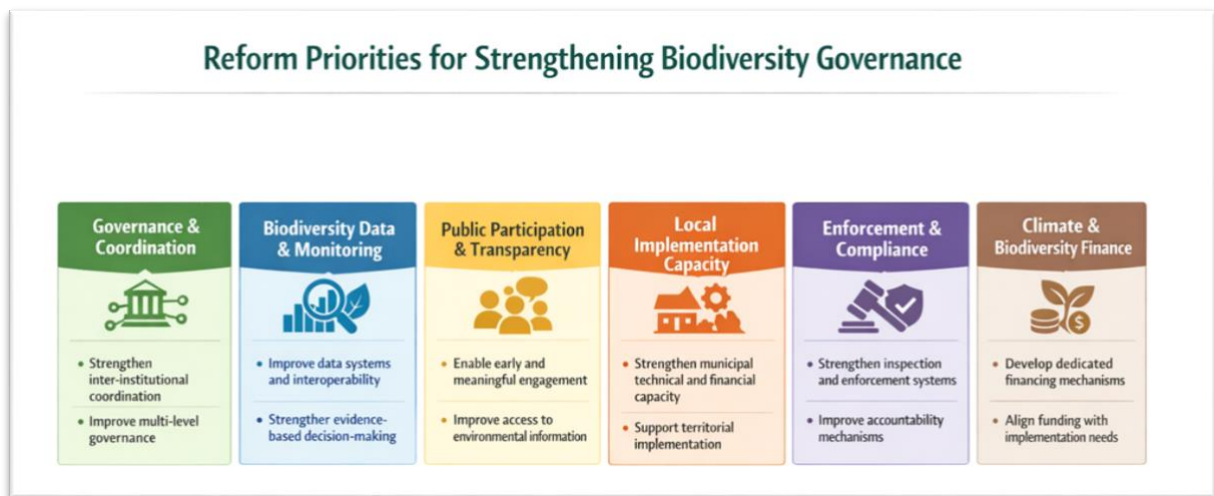
#### **6. Mobilising Sustainable Financing for Biodiversity and Climate Action**

Financing for biodiversity and climate action remains fragmented, short-term, and largely project-based, limiting the sustainability and scalability of interventions. Biodiversity is not yet systematically integrated into national budgeting and planning processes.

EU and global frameworks emphasise the need for diversified, predictable, and long-term financing mechanisms to support implementation (OECD, 2021; UNFCCC, 2022).

### Priority actions:

- Increase national budget allocations for biodiversity and climate action and integrate environmental priorities into medium-term expenditure frameworks and sectoral budgeting processes
- Strengthen access to EU and international funding mechanisms (e.g. IPA III, LIFE Programme, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility), including improved project preparation capacity
- Develop innovative financing mechanisms, including public–private partnerships, blended finance models, and nature-based investment approaches (e.g. restoration-linked funding, ecosystem service financing)



## Alignment with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and EU Frameworks

This policy brief is closely aligned with the objectives of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB), particularly the Biodiversity Pillar, which provides a comprehensive framework for protecting and restoring ecosystems, strengthening biodiversity governance, and aligning regional efforts with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (European Commission, 2020a; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022).

The Biodiversity Pillar emphasises the development and implementation of updated biodiversity strategies, nature restoration plans, strengthened monitoring and data systems, forest landscape restoration, and enhanced ecological connectivity across the region (European Commission, 2020b). These priorities are reinforced by global and regional evidence highlighting the accelerating loss of biodiversity and the need for integrated, system-level responses to ecosystem degradation (IPBES, 2019; European Environment Agency, 2022).

While Kosovo has established a largely comprehensive legal and institutional framework for biodiversity protection, the findings of this policy brief demonstrate that the key constraints lie not in the absence of policies, but in their effective implementation. Similar challenges have been identified across the Western Balkans, particularly in relation to administrative capacity,

coordination, and enforcement effectiveness (European Environment Agency, 2022; OECD, 2021).

The systemic gaps identified in this analysis particularly those related to institutional coordination, enforcement capacity, environmental data systems, and municipal-level implementation directly affect Kosovo’s ability to deliver on the core actions outlined under the Biodiversity Pillar. These include the development of updated biodiversity strategies aligned with EU and global targets, the implementation of nature restoration measures, the operationalisation of biodiversity monitoring and evaluation systems, and the integration of biodiversity considerations into sectoral policies such as spatial planning, agriculture, and infrastructure development (European Commission, 2020a; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022; European Environment Agency, 2022).

In particular, the absence of an updated biodiversity strategy limits Kosovo’s ability to align with regional and EU targets, while fragmented data systems constrain the development of a functional biodiversity monitoring and evaluation framework. Similarly, weak enforcement and limited local capacity undermine the implementation of conservation and restoration measures, including those related to protected areas and forest ecosystems (European Environment Agency, 2022; Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, 2022).

By identifying these systemic constraints, this policy brief contributes to bridging the gap between policy commitments under the GAWB and their practical implementation at national and local levels. Addressing these challenges is essential not only for improving biodiversity outcomes in Kosovo, but also for ensuring meaningful progress towards regional cooperation, EU alignment, and long-term climate and ecological resilience (IPBES, 2019; OECD, 2021).

This alignment is particularly important in the context of Kosovo’s EU integration pathway, where progress is increasingly assessed not only in terms of legislative approximation, but in the effectiveness of implementation, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms (European Commission, 2023).

The table below illustrates the correspondence between the identified reform priorities and key components of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and the EU environmental framework, including biodiversity protection, climate action, circular economy principles, and pollution reduction.

<b>Reform Priority</b>	<b>Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (Biodiversity Pillar)</b>	<b>EU Frameworks (Chapter 27)</b>	<b>Current Gap in Kosovo</b>
<b>1. Strengthening Institutional Coordination and Governance</b>	Development and implementation of Biodiversity Strategic Plans (BSPs) with clear targets, indicators, and cross-sectoral integration	Administrative capacity and institutional coordination required for transposition and implementation of the environmental acquis	Fragmented institutional mandates, weak inter-ministerial coordination, and lack of integrated decision-making across sectors (environment, forestry, spatial planning)
<b>2. Improving Environmental Data, Monitoring, and</b>	Establishment of Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF)	Environmental monitoring and reporting obligations (EEA, INSPIRE Directive, Habitats	Fragmented data systems, limited interoperability, and lack of a unified environmental

<b>Information Systems</b>	and Biodiversity Information Systems for regional reporting and data sharing	and Birds Directives)	information system to support evidence-based policymaking
<b>3. Strengthening Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms</b>	Implementation and enforcement of biodiversity protection measures, including protected areas management and compliance with restoration obligations	Enforcement of environmental acquis, including EIA Directive, Habitats Directive, and inspection systems	Weak enforcement capacity, limited inspection resources, and inconsistent application of environmental legislation
<b>4. Advancing Climate Adaptation and Ecosystem Restoration</b>	Development and implementation of Nature Restoration Plans and Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) programmes, including nature-based solutions	EU Nature Restoration Regulation, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, and climate adaptation frameworks	Limited implementation of ecosystem restoration measures, weak integration of biodiversity into climate adaptation and spatial planning
<b>5. Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Governance</b>	Stakeholder engagement and regional cooperation mechanisms supporting biodiversity planning and implementation	Aarhus Convention (access to information, public participation, access to justice)	Limited structured stakeholder engagement and weak participation mechanisms in environmental decision-making processes
<b>6. Mobilising Sustainable Financing for Biodiversity and Climate Action</b>	Mobilisation of financial resources for biodiversity protection, restoration, and implementation of GAWB actions	EU financing instruments (IPA III, LIFE Programme, Green Deal funding mechanisms)	Limited dedicated financing mechanisms, weak integration of biodiversity into public investment planning, and reliance on donor-driven funding

This mapping highlights that strengthening implementation systems—rather than expanding the legislative framework—represents the most critical pathway for advancing alignment with both the Green Agenda and the EU environmental acquis.

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## Conclusions and Way Forward

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The findings of this policy brief confirm that biodiversity governance challenges in Kosovo are primarily driven by systemic weaknesses in implementation rather than the absence of legal or policy frameworks. While significant progress has been made in aligning national legislation with EU and international standards, the effectiveness of this framework remains constrained by persistent challenges related to institutional coordination, data governance, enforcement capacity, and municipal-level implementation.

Addressing these constraints requires a shift from legislative development toward strengthening the systems that enable implementation. This includes improving coordination across institutions, establishing integrated and interoperable data systems, reinforcing enforcement and compliance structures, and strengthening technical and financial capacities—particularly at the local level, where policy implementation is most directly realised.

Reform efforts should be sequenced and integrated. Strengthening coordination mechanisms and environmental data systems provides a critical foundation for improving monitoring, enforcement, and policy coherence. Building on this, targeted investments in enforcement capacity, spatial planning integration, and ecosystem restoration can support more effective and measurable outcomes. In parallel, the development of sustainable financing mechanisms will be essential to ensure the long-term viability and scalability of biodiversity and climate action.

Municipalities will play a central role in translating national policies into practice. Supporting local institutions through capacity building, access to data, and clear implementation guidance will be critical to ensuring consistent application of environmental standards and integrating biodiversity considerations into land-use planning and development decisions.

The alignment of these reforms with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and the EU environmental acquis provides a clear pathway for advancing biodiversity governance in Kosovo. However, progress will depend on the ability to operationalise these commitments through effective institutional systems, adequate resourcing, and sustained political and administrative engagement.

Without targeted action to address these systemic constraints, further legislative alignment is unlikely to translate into improved environmental outcomes. Conversely, prioritising implementation-focused reforms presents a clear opportunity to bridge the gap between policy and practice, strengthen governance systems, and deliver measurable progress in biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and sustainable land management.

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## Acknowledgments

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This policy brief was developed through a structured analytical and consultative process, combining a Legal and Policy Baseline and Gap Matrix with multi-stakeholder validation.

Sustainability Leadership Kosovo would like to express their sincere appreciation to all participants who contributed to the validation meetings held in February and March 2026. Their insights, technical expertise, and practical experience were instrumental in grounding the analysis in implementation realities and identifying priority reform areas.

The process benefited from the active engagement of representatives from public institutions, municipalities, civil society organisations, academia, and independent experts, including:

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<b>Prof. Muhamet Zogaj</b>	University of Prishtina, Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary	Academic
<b>Prof. Mrika Kotorri</b>	Rochester Institute of Technology	Academic
<b>Sokol Salahu</b>	Municipality of Prishtina, Directorate for Public Spaces and Parks Management	Municipal
<b>Donika Cetta</b>	Municipality of Prishtina, Directorate for Public Spaces and Parks Management	Municipal
<b>Liridona Blakaj Gashi</b>	Municipality of Prishtina, Directorate for Public Spaces and Parks Management	Municipal
<b>Dardana Rashiti</b>	Sustainability Leadership Kosovo (SLK)	CSO
<b>Indira Kartallozi</b>	Sustainability Leadership Kosovo (SLK), Facilitator	CSO
<b>Mirlinda Gërguri</b>	The Ideas Partnership	CSO
<b>Erjona Kadriolli</b>	Vizioni Rinor i Shalës	CSO
<b>Alketa Bislimi</b>	7Arte Mitrovicë	CSO
<b>Lirije Haliti</b>	Kosovo Women4Women	CSO
<b>Iliriana Gashi</b>	Kosovo Women4Women	CSO
<b>Erisa Gashi</b>	Four Paws, The Bear Sanctuary	CSO
<b>Elza Ramadani</b>	Animal Rights Foundation	CSO
<b>Egzona Shala Kadriu</b>	EcoZ	CSO
<b>Sam Kalb</b>	EcoZ	CSO
<b>Zelushe Kelmendi</b>	Youth Centre Obiliq	CSO
<b>Albanata Hyseni</b>	Youth Centre Obiliq	CSO
<b>Fabian Tehena</b>	Independent Expert, Nature Based Solutions	Independent

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## ANEXXES

### Annex 1: Legal and Policy Baseline for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Governance in Kosovo (Full Analysis)



## Legal and Policy Baseline and Gap Analysis on Biodiversity, Climate, and Environmental Governance in Kosovo

### *EU Alignment and Implementation Readiness Assessment*

#### Executive Summary

This Legal and Policy Baseline and Gap Analysis examines Kosovo's environmental, climate, forest, and biodiversity governance framework in the context of European Union (EU) integration. It assesses the alignment of key national laws and strategies with the EU environmental and climate acquis and identifies systemic gaps affecting effective implementation and accession readiness.

The analysis covers a focused set of framework instruments, including the Law on Environmental Protection, the Law on Climate Change, the Law on Forests, the Law on Nature Protection, the climate change adaptation policy framework, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2011–2020). These instruments were assessed using a structured Gap Matrix methodology and benchmarked against core EU frameworks, including the European Green Deal, the European Climate Law, the EU Adaptation Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Habitats and Birds Directives, and the Aarhus Convention. Findings were further reviewed and refined through a validation meeting with civil society, academic, and municipal representatives.

The analysis confirms that Kosovo has established a broadly aligned legal and policy framework reflecting EU principles on environmental protection, climate action, biodiversity conservation, transparency, and public participation. However, implementation remains constrained by recurring and cross-cutting governance challenges.

Across all instruments reviewed, the most significant gaps relate to operational functionality rather than legislative intent. Institutional coordination between national authorities and municipalities remains weak in practice, contributing to fragmented implementation and limited policy coherence across climate, biodiversity, forestry, and land-use domains. Monitoring, data, and reporting systems are underdeveloped and insufficiently harmonised, limiting evidence-based decision-making and Kosovo's capacity to demonstrate measurable progress in line with EU requirements.

While public participation and access to environmental information are formally embedded in the legal framework, they remain largely procedural. Early and meaningful engagement of

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### Annex 2: Validation Meeting 1 – Summary of Findings (4 February 2026)

*This annex summarises the findings from the first validation meeting, which focused on testing the accuracy of the identified gaps against stakeholder experience.*



### Annex 3: Validation Meeting 2 – Summary of Findings (4 March 2026)

*This annex presents additional validation insights, further refining the understanding of implementation challenges and emerging priorities.*



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