



Promoting Innovation in SMEs

Innovation is the key for productivity and long-term growth. Supporting innovation in SMEs can foster inclusive growth. SMEs are on average less innovative than large enterprises, but some of them can be or become highly innovative and can reach productivity levels above those of large companies. Companies which develop and use their internal strategic resources effectively (e.g. managerial and workforce skills, ICT, R&D, etc.), and collaborate with external partners in the innovation system, have better innovation performance. SMEs however often face larger barriers on capital and labour markets than larger established businesses. It is for that reason that multiple policy measures have been adopted to target those firms and their opportunities to engage in innovation. Authorities can support innovation in SMEs by fostering a sound business environment, helping them to fund, develop and use their internal strategic resources effectively. Similarly they can allow building an innovation system with supporting services, that is effective in the commercialisation of research and inclusive of a large range of SMEs.

• RECENT NEWS

- **STRENGTHENED EIT REGIONAL INNOVATION SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK ADOPTED**
The EIT recently announced the adoption of its Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) Implementation Framework for 2022 - 2027.
- **EBRD'S STAR VENTURE PROGRAMME**
The EBRD's Star Venture programme identifies high potential, innovative start-ups. The services provided include business advice and access to finance to strengthen their performance and accelerate...
- **BIZ GROWTH DESIGN, A TAILOR-MADE PROGRAMME FOR ALBANIAN START-UPS**
Biz Growth Design is powered by EU for Innovation and lead by Board of Innovation, a renowned international strategy and business design firm.
- **FLEXIBLE START-UP SUPPORT | DURRËS IS LAUNCHED**

After successful completion of the Flexible Start-up Support – Vlorë Edition, we are happy to announce the next city that will get support from this programme: Durrës! This is a call for applications...

- **GREEK AND IRISH NATIONAL COMPETENCE CENTERS ON INNOVATION PROCUREMENT PRESENT BENEFITS OF INNOVATION PROCUREMENT**

The Greek and the Irish National Competence Centers, members of the Procure2Innovate Network, presented the principles and the benefits of innovation procurement in the Conference of the Vice Rectors ...

- **THE BESME PROJECT HAS ACCOMPLISHED "PRE-INCUBATION" PROGRAMMES FOR START-UPS IN MONTENEGRO**

The fourteen (14) sessions of "Pre-incubation program for start-up" by BeSME project "Enhancement of business Environment and Competitiveness of the Private Sector of Montenegro". The programme has been...

- **THE EUROPEAN STARTUP NETWORK EXPANDS WITH 7 NEW MEMBERS AND ENGAGES WITH LEADING EUROPEAN DECISION MAKERS**

On Tuesday 15 June 2021, the European Startup Network (ESN) held its General Assembly in Paris and welcomed 7 European startup associations as new members, bringing the membership base to a total of 31...

- **STARTUP EUROPE**

Startup Europe strengthens networking opportunities for deep tech scaleups and ecosystem builders to accelerate the growth of the European startup scene.

- **STARTUP EUROPE NETWORK (CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, WESTERN BALKANS)**

The Startup Europe Network will launch an open call for membership soon. Interested ecosystem builders from the Western Balkan and Central Eastern Europe regions are welcomed to apply. Check their website...

- **INVESTEU: EU PROGRAMME TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT**

InvestEU continues EU efforts to boost investment in Europe, support the recovery and prepare the economy for the future. MEPs approved the rules for the InvestEU programme for 2021...

- **PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS TO TAKE A STEP INTO EMERGING MARKETS**

In the coming years, the economic outlook is expected to grow in emerging markets such as China, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and others. These markets will present interesting opportunities for European...

- **INVESTEU FUND**

The InvestEU Fund starts in 2021. Following the launch of the InvestEU Programme, in addition to the EIB Group, a list of further implementing partners will be available on this website. InvestEU implementing...

- **FINANCING PRODUCTS FOR INNOVATIVE COMPANIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS OR UNIVERSITIES OR OTHER ENTITIES REQUESTING DIRECT FINANCING BY THE EIB**

The InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility - managed by EIF - is, in addition to InnovFin Equity, part of "InnovFin – EU Finance for Innovators", an initiative launched by the European Commission ...

- **SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION THROUGH THE ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS**

The main aim of the Economic and Investment Plan is to spur the long-term economic recovery of the region and foster regional economic integration. We want to support a green and digital transition in...

- **ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

Over €580 million in extra resources is being made available for further EU-supported infrastructure development in the Western Balkans region. The European Union, acting together with major international...

- **COMMISSION REPORTS ON CONTINUED FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS BY WESTERN BALKANS AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

On 04/08/2021 the Commission presented its 4th report on the monitoring of the EU visa-free regime with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Georgia...

- **WESTERN BALKANS SUMMIT – PRIVATE SECTOR AND WB6 CIF AS ITS REPRESENTATIVE RECOGNIZED AS IMPORTANT PARTNER**

Seven years after the first Berlin Western Balkans Summit in 2014, the Summit Meeting on the Western Balkans in the framework of the Berlin Process that was held on 5 July 2021, recognized the importance...

- **EVENT REVIEW| ECONOMIC FORUM ON REGIONAL COOPERATION**

The Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania, the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia jointly invited to the Economic Forum on Regional ...

- **WB EDIF - FINANCING AND SUPPORT FOR WESTERN BALKANS SMES**

The Western Balkans Enterprise Development & Innovation Facility (WB EDIF) funded by the EU, offers different types of financing and support to accompany and help SMEs throughout all stages...

- **EVENT REVIEW: 1ST WESTERN BALKANS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FACILITY (WB EDIF) BUSINESS FORUM**

On 25 June 2021, the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF) held its first virtual Business Forum. The event was organized by the Enterprise Europe Network and supported...

- **EVENTS**

- September 6, 2021 | Maribor, Slovenia

- **SME INTERNATIONALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS**

SME Internationalization and Development of International Projects Training will provide comprehensive program for SMEs.

- September 16, 2021, OTHER

- **EUROPEAN CASES OF INNOVATION PROCUREMENT – EXAMPLES OF THE DIFFERENT PROCUREMENT STEPS**

On 16 September, four European innovation experts will present their public procurement on Innovation projects, focusing on different aspects of innovation procurement.

- September 16, 2021 | Celje, Slovenia

- **CONNECT2SLOVENIA - INTERNATIONAL MATCHMAKING EVENT**

The Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia organise in cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network to an International Matchmaking Event. The event will be organised in the scope of the 53rd...

- September 15-16, 2021 | Sarajevo/virtual, Bosnia and Herzegovina

- **CONFERENCE AND ONLINE B2B MEETINGS “CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WB 6”**

The Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) within the project „EU support to the WB6 CIF“, together with Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with chambers in the...

- September 21-22, 2021 | Budapest, Hungary

- **UNTOLD STORIES BUDAPEST**

Untold Stories Budapest is an annual event with a mission to create a learning and networking opportunity for startups. With a special focus on the CEE region, it connects founders from all over the world...

- September 28, 2021, OTHER
OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPEAN COMPANIES LOOKING AT DIGITALLY ENABLING THEIR BUSINESS.
Digital transformation is changing the way an organization operates. Systems, processes, workflow, and culture are all adapting, this transformation affects each level of an organization and brings together...
- September 30, 2021 | virtual, OTHER
MYSTERIES UNVEILED: INNOVATION PROCUREMENT IN PRACTICE
September 30th, from 10.00 to 11.30, the European Commission's Directorate General GROW will continue its webinar series on innovation procurement with a session dedicated to « Preliminary market...
- November 17-19, 2021 | Belgrade, Serbia
"CREATIVITY AND INNOVATIONS IN THEATRE, MEDIA AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION: VISIONS AND VALUES FOR THE FUTURE"
The Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade extends an invitation to the scientific conference with international participation under the title "Creativity and Innovations in Theatre, Media and Cultural ...

• CALLS

- Deadline: August 31, 2021
JOB OPENING: OFFICER IN SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATION PROCUREMENT
The Sustainable Economy and Procurement team at ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability is looking to fill the position of a Sustainable and Innovation Procurement Officer at its European Secretariat...
- Deadline: September 13, 2021
CALL FOR ALBANIA-MONTENEGRO CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS
The IPA Albania-Montenegro Cross-border Cooperation Programme has launched its third call for proposals. Through projects implemented under this call, the programme aims to strengthen good neighbourly...
- Deadline: September 30, 2021
CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR INTERNATIONAL NETWORK PARTNERS OF THE ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK IS NOW OPEN!
This call aims at extending the Enterprise Europe Network to other global growth markets. Leading service-oriented business support organisations are invited to join the Enterprise Europe Network...
- Deadline: September 30, 2021
SME TRANSFORM CALL INVITATION
EIT Manufacturing announces over 1 M€ in financial support as well as dedicated expert support for SME transformation projects.
- Deadline: December 31, 2025
EUREKA OPEN CALL FOR NETWORK PROJECTS APPLICATIONS
The call for Network projects is open for applications all year round. Access national funding for your international collaborative R&D projects using our simple flexible programme. For more information...

• DOCUMENTS

- **AN OVERVIEW OF THE EU FUNDING AND SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS FOR INNOVATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

EU Funding is available for all types of companies of any size and sector including entrepreneurs, start-ups, micro companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, and larger businesses. A wide range...

- **[STARTUP CITIES IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AGE](#)**
Global venture capital is crushing records in 2021. Over €264bn has been invested in the first six months of the year, two unicorns have been created every day in 2021, 170 cities around the world now...
- **[COMPETITIVENESS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE 2021](#)**
Competitiveness in South East Europe 2021 A Policy Outlook The future sustainable economic development and well-being of citizens in South East Europe depend on greater economic competitiveness...
- **[SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING GUIDE \(BY BESME PROJECT\)](#)**
A roadmap for entrepreneurs on how to approach the financing decision.
- **[ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN - BROCHURE](#)**
The Economic and Investment Plan aims to spur the long-term recovery - backed by a green and digital transition - leading to sustained economic growth, implementation of reforms required to move forward...
- **[DIGITAL INNOVATION PROFILE MONTENEGRO](#)**
Digital innovation profiles are an important element in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) series of snapshots of information and communication technology (ICT)-centric innovation ecosystems...
- **[THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION POLICIES](#)**
A new systemic policy approach to address societal challenges
- **[COMMISSION NOTICE: GUIDANCE ON INNOVATION PROCUREMENT](#)**
Adopted in the context of the Communication on "A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation –Europe's chance to shape its technological leadership" and the input to the Leaders' informal dinner...
- **[INNOVATION PROCUREMENT - THE POWER OF THE PUBLIC PURSE](#)**
This brochure provides an overview of projects that are focusing on innovation procurement in the ICT domain funded by the EU's research and innovation funding programs FP7, CIP and Horizon 2020. This...

- **LINKS**

- **[FUND FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH MACEDONIA](#)**
The Fund support activities such as knowledge transfer, research on development and innovations for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to help achieve accelerated technological development. More...
- **[INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FUND OF MONTENEGRO](#)**
The Fund supports small and medium companies (credit and guarantee support is provided). Click here
- **[ICK INCUBATOR](#)**
An engaging environment and services for development and commercialization of viable business ideas, as well as visibility in the market. For both new and existing companies of Kosovo*. Click here to ...
- **[ACCESS TO FINANCE](#)**
This site helps you apply for loans and venture capital supported by the European Union. Just select your country to search for financial opportunities. Click here to access the service
- **[ERASMUS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS](#)**

The European exchange programme for Entrepreneurs who have just started their business or with firm intention to start a new one [Click here](#) for more information

- **[IPARD III - \(INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, 2021 – 2027\)](#)**
This EU Program supports reforms in the EU accession process by making their agricultural sector and rural areas more sustainable and aligning them with the EU's common agricultural policy. Find here...
- **[INVESTEU PORTAL](#)**
Are you a project promoter based in the EU, and want to reach potential investors worldwide? Register your project in the InvestEU Portal and boost its visibility to a large network of international investors...
- **[INVEST IN ALBANIA](#)**
An independent, non-governmental publication with news on business, entrepreneurship, investments, tourism. Find the link here
- **[EU FUNDING PLAYBOOK](#)**
Designed for innovation promoters in Finland, this is a practical tool to learn about funding options and understand how and if it is worth to apply for funding. Find the website here
- **[PROCURE2INNOVATE](#)**
European network of competence centres for innovation procurement
- **[GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT](#)**
EC Website on Green Public Procurement (GPP).
- **[INNOVATION PROCUREMENT TOOLKIT](#)**
Your one-stop destination for online help in preparing your innovation procurement The eafip Toolkit provides support to policy makers in designing PCP and PPI strategies, and to procurers...
- **[INNOVATION PROCUREMENT PLATFORM](#)**
Innovation Procurement Platform, funded as a project under H2020
- **[INNOVATION PROCUREMENT](#)**
EC webpage on Innovation Procurement.
- **[WESTERN BALKANS 6 CHAMBER INVESTMENT FORUM \(WB6 CIF\)](#)**
Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) is a joint initiative of chambers of commerce and industry from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. ...
- **[ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK \(EEN\)](#)**
Whether you need information on EU legislation, help finding a business partner, want to benefit from innovation networks in your region or need information on funding opportunities, this is the place...
- **[EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION MANAGEMENT](#)**
Among the broad thematic selection of innovation related journal issues covered are: why should, and how can, companies create and operate innovation networks and alliances, how can innovation processes...

[FIND MORE RELATED ARTICLES](#)

Funding and Supporting Activities...

... of innovative promoters from the Western Balkans

The emerging potential of the Western Balkans based on innovative ideas and creativity can be translated into new business opportunities and growth, when overcoming the present economic and administrative challenges. According to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are classified emerging innovators thanks to specific strengths of their innovation ecosystems ...

[READ MORE](#)

FURTHER SELECTED EVENTS AND CALLS

• EVENTS

- October 11-13, 2021, Montenegro
4TH WB DIGITAL SUMMIT
After Skopje, Belgrade and Tirana, 4th Western Balkans Digitals Summit will take place in the second part of 2021 in Montenegro under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Montenegro and will be...
- October 10-15, 2021 | Dubrovnik, Croatia
16TH SDEWES CONFERENCE
The 16th Conference on Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environment Systems (SDEWES) is dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge on methods, policies and technologies for...
- October 14-15, 2021 | Amsterdam, Netherlands
RE-SOURCE 2021!
The RE-Source event is the annual gathering of corporate buyers and clean energy suppliers, where discussions of existing challenges take place and future solutions are born. Join us to learn, share experiences...
- October 14-15, 2021 | virtual, OTHER
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION & AUDITING PREPARATION FOR E.C. FUNDED PROJECTS
Projects funded under H2020 are still being run and are going to be subject to EC surveillance for as long as five years after their completion. That is why knowing and understanding H2020 financial rules...
- October 20-21, 2021 | Prague, Czech Republic
ENERGY TRADING (ETCSEE) CONFERENCE
A traders' conference with a 2-day in-depth programme exploring new markets and the newest technologies in the trading sector, with an exhibition and networking opportunities.
- October 28-29, 2021 | virtual, OTHER
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION & AUDITING PREPARATION FOR E.C. FUNDED PROJECTS

Projects funded under H2020 are still being run and are going to be subject to EC surveillance for as long as five years after their completion. That is why knowing and understanding H2020 financial rules...

- October 31, 2021-November 12, 2021 | Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021. The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards...
- November 12-13, 2021 | Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
6TH INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE IN BALKAN STUDIES "BALKAN EXPRESS 2021 - NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE BALKANS"
Organizing committee: PhDr. Dana Bittnerová, CSc., PhDr. Mirjam Moravcová, DrSc., Mgr. Ivana Skenderija, Mgr. Markéta Slavková, Ph.D., František Šístek, M.A., Ph.D. Organizing institutions: Faculty...
- November 8-15, 2021 | Belgrade, Serbia
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF GREEN CULTURE "GREEN FEST"
The International Festival of Green Culture "Green Fest" was founded in 2010, and very quickly became the largest festival in the region of Southeast Europe, which connects activities in the field of ...
- November 18-19, 2021 | Vienna, Austria
EUROPEAN R&I POLICY EVALUATION CONFERENCE
The REvaluation 2021 Conference is jointly organised by Fraunhofer ISI, IFRIS and the Austrian Platform for Research and Technology Policy Evaluation. It will take place as live as possible, 18-19 November...
- November 23-25, 2021 | Copenhagen, Denmark
"ELECTRIC CITY" - A NEW ONSHORE AND OFFSHORE WIND EVENT
"Electric City" is a new onshore and offshore wind event, with participants from wind and beyond – heavy industry, mobility, district and domestic heating, storage, hybrids, hydrogen and many more – to...
- November 26-28, 2021, Austria
„CHANGING SOCIETIES – DIMENSIONS OF EUROPEANIZATION” - UNI GRAZ
The Field of Excellence "Dimensions of Europeanization" of the University of Graz organizes the ARQUS Research Focus Forum „Changing Societies – Dimensions of Europeanization" on November 26-28, 2021 ...
- January 13-14, 2022 | virtual, OTHER
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION & AUDITING PREPARATION FOR E.C. FUNDED PROJECTS
Projects funded under H2020 are still being run and are going to be subject to EC surveillance for as long as five years after their completion. That is why knowing and understanding H2020 financial rules...
- June 20-22, 2022 | Vienna, Austria
EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE PHOSPHORUS CONFERENCE
The European Sustainable Phosphorus Conferences are unique events bringing together companies, stakeholders, regional and national authorities, innovation and researchers, to discuss phosphorus and nutrients...

• CALLS

- Deadline: September 30, 2021
CALL FOR PAPERS "NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF HUMAN RIGHTS, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY"
Journal of Liberty and International Affairs now receives papers for its Special Issue 2021: "New technologies and the perspectives of human rights, politics, and society".
- Deadline: September 30, 2021

CERIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS NOW OPEN

The Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium, CERIC-ERIC is calling for proposals for coordinated access to more than 50 instruments and support laboratories for research in all fields of materials...

- Deadline: October 1, 2021
UNIVERSITY NETWORK OF MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES.
Join the program and become part of a university network that spans over five Med countries.
- Deadline: October 10, 2021
CALL FOR PAPERS: WALLACHIAN COLONIZATION IN THE HISTORY OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE (14TH-17TH CENTURIES)
The Balkan History Association is preparing a volume dedicated to this special phenomenon of colonization. Although the topic of Wallachian colonization has long been the subject of interest for many ...
- Deadline: October 12, 2021
FYSSEN FOUNDATION - CALL FOR PROJECTS AND NOMINATIONS
The aim of the Fyssen Foundation is to "encourage all forms of scientific inquiry into cognitive mechanisms, including thought and reasoning, which underlie animal and human behavior; their biological...
- Deadline: October 15, 2021
CFP: 'SOCIALIST CONSTITUTIONALISM AND DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT SINCE THE 1970S'
Organizers: Ivan Sablin & Matthias Koenig (Heidelberg University) Date & Venue: 12-13 May 2022, Heidelberg / Germany Disciplines: history, sociology, political science, and law This conference...
- Deadline: December 1, 2021
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE FREE STATE OF BAVARIA FOR STUDENTS / GRADUATES OF CENTRAL, EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN STATES
One-year scholarship program sponsored by the Free State of Bavaria for graduates of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European states for the funding year 2022/23
- Deadline: December 31, 2021
SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH AT OPEN RESEARCH EUROPE PLATFORM!
Fast publication and open peer review for research stemming from Horizon 2020 funding across all subject areas. Articles are published rapidly as soon as they are accepted, after passing a series of...
- Deadline: February 10, 2022
CEI COOPERATION FUND CALL FOR PROPOSALS
The CEI Cooperation Fund Call for Proposals is now open for applications. Cooperation Activities are innovative actions favouring mobility and networking activities (e.g. conferences, seminars, workshops...

[FIND MORE ARTICLES](#)

ABOUT THE INFORMATION PORTAL

Access to the WBC-RTI.info platform is free of charge. The Platform will be regularly updated this year, with particular focus on one selected theme per month. If you would like to suggest a research topic or promote your R&I project or your research results to over 11,000 interested

researchers and policy makers in the Western Balkans and Europe-wide, or if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at office@wbc-rti.info.

INFORMATION SERVICE

The WBC-RTI.info platform acts as a source of high quality targeted information on research, technology and innovation in/with/for the Western Balkan Six. The Platform supports the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkans and is funded by the European Commission (contract № 30-CE-0838742/00-87).



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