

16/02/2023

Meeting of the Western Balkans Steering Platforms

Skopje

# **POLICY ANSWERS’ updates and capacity building activities**



# About the project: 14 partners funded by Horizon Europe

- **Coordination and Support Action** under Horizon Europe  
[WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-06-01 Support for R&I policy making in the Western Balkans](#)
- Project start: **1 March 2022**
- Duration: **48 months**
- 14 partners participating
- Project Officer: **Bernhard Fabianek**
- Project Coordinator: **Elke Dall**

## Consortium

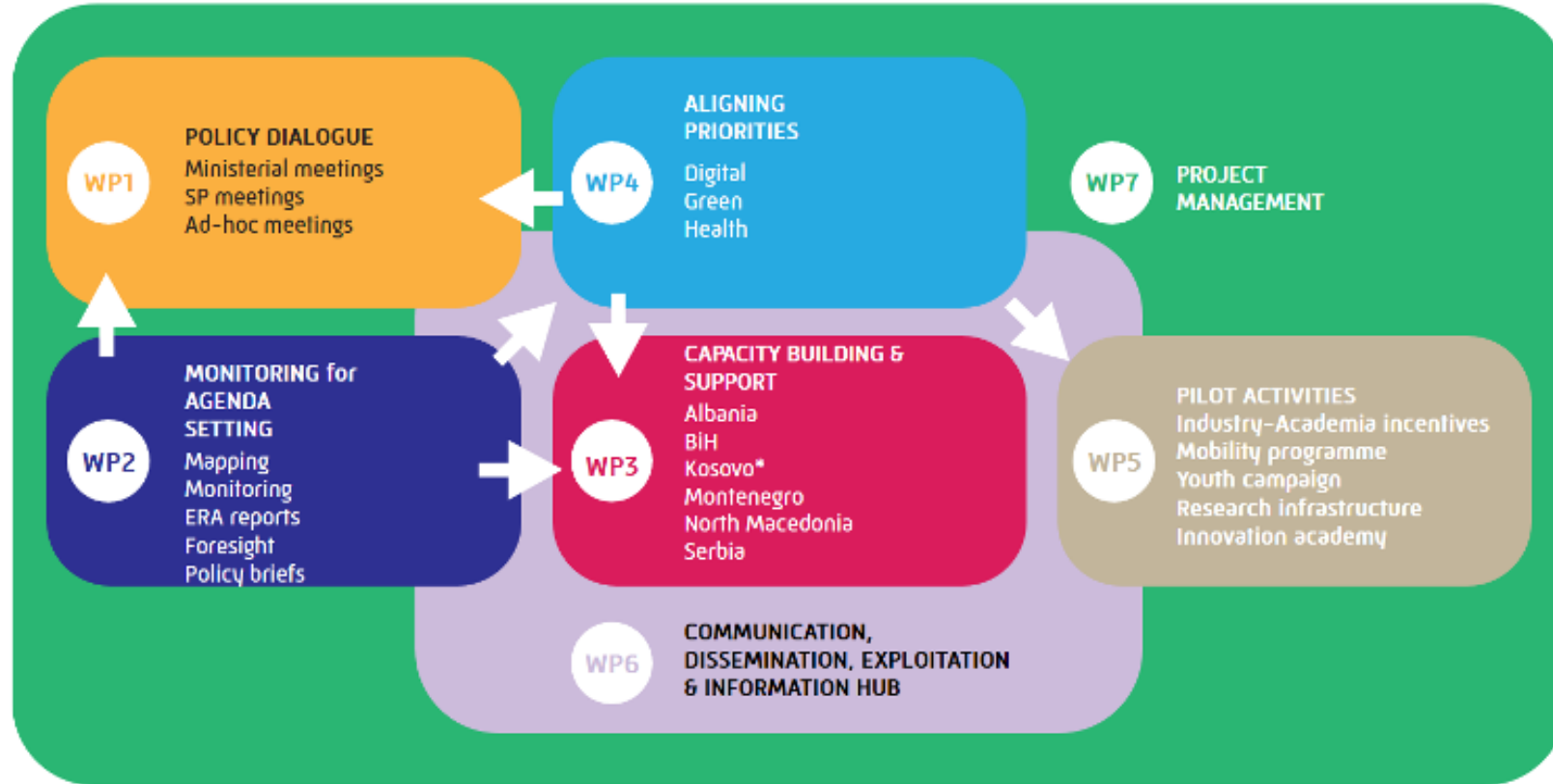
Coordinator: ZSI, Austria

Other beneficiaries from:

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Kosovo\*
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Austria, Croatia, Germany and Italy



# Project overview: POLICY ANSWERS is structured in 7 Work Packages



# The strategic background: Supporting the Western Balkans Agenda

## WESTERN BALKANS AGENDA ON INNOVATION, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

1. Stimulating a sustainable economy (post-COVID-19) and helping to create jobs.
2. Transforming research and innovation eco-systems towards EU standards.
3. Enhancing R&I eco-systems to boost the region's innovation capacities.
4. Counteracting climate change and supporting the digital transformation.
5. Promoting the implementation of the external dimension of the EU Green Deal and a sustainable agriculture in the WB.
6. Providing vocational education and continuing training for upskilling and reskilling of young and adults.
7. Establishing European vocational education and training as a global reference for skills development.
8. Nurturing knowledge-based societies.
9. Enhancing the quality of education and training including also the lifelong learning context.
10. Boosting human capital development in priority economic and investment sectors.
11. Reducing the gender and digital divide as well as promoting and implementing new technologies in line with priority fields in education.
12. Improving sustainable mobility and connectivity.
13. Fostering cultural cooperation within the region and the EU.
14. Strengthening regional cooperation and the Common Regional Market.

### THE POLITICAL AGENDA

The main priorities and accompanying actions for this Political Agenda are as follows:

- P.1 Engage in the Accession Negotiations for Chapters 25 and 26 for Albania and North Macedonia.
- P.2 Full Association to Horizon Europe for the Western Balkans.
- P.3 Full Association as Programme Countries of all the Western Balkans to the new Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programmes.
- P.4 Association over time of the Western Balkans region to the new Creative Europe (CE).
- P.5 Integration in the new European Research and Innovation Area (ERA).
- P.6 Enable a stronger participation in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the newly adopted European Education Area (EEA) and the Education and Training Cooperation Framework (ET 2030).
- P.7 Enable a stronger participation in the Copenhagen Process for Vocational Education and Training, the newly adopted Osnabrück Declaration for Vocational Education and Training and the Education and Training Cooperation Framework (ET 2030).
- P.8 Finalise the Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) and support their implementation for all the Western Balkans.

### THE REGIONAL AGENDA

The main priorities and accompanying actions for this Political Agenda are as follows:

- R.1 Increase investments in SMEs and their capacity to innovate, scale-up, and grow.
- R.2 Foster research, innovation, education and vocational training capacity building.
- R.3 Deepen Economic Union by linking the Western Balkan economies and bringing them closer to the EU Member States.
- R.4 Foster the Western Balkans transition to sustainability.
- R.5 Fostering cultural cooperation.
- R.6 Regional cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

### THE THEMATIC AGENDA

#### A EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

- I. Designing a set of deeply transformative policies.
  1. Increasing the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050.
  2. Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy.
  3. Mobilizing industry for a clean and circular economy.
  4. Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way.
  5. Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility.
  6. From 'Farm to Fork': designing a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system.
  7. Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity.
  8. A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment.
- II. Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies.
  1. Pursuing a green finance and investment and ensuring a just transition.
  2. Greening national budgets and sending the right price signals.
  3. Mobilizing research and fostering innovation.
  4. Activating education and training.
  5. A green path: 'do no harm'.

#### A EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

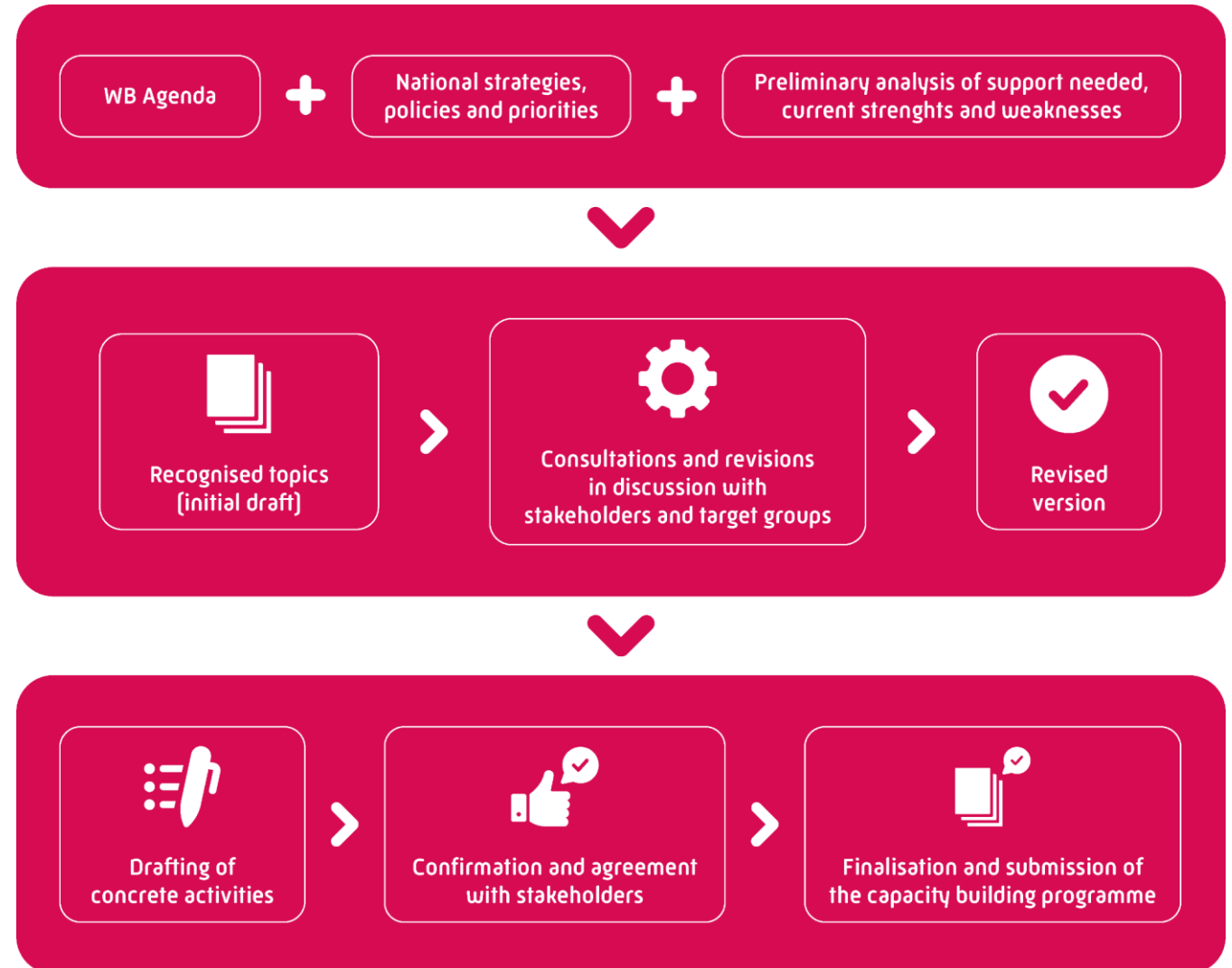
1. A digitally skilled population and highly skilled digital professionals.
2. Secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures.
3. Digital transformation of businesses.
4. Digitalisation of public services.

#### AN ECONOMY THAT CONNECTS AND WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE

- I. Equal Opportunities and Jobs for All.
  1. Empowering people through quality education, training and skills.
  2. Supporting professional mobility and economic reconversion.
  3. Creating more jobs.
  4. Fostering equality.
- II. Fair Working Conditions.
- III. Social Protection and Inclusion.
  1. Securing high social protection.
  2. Fighting poverty and exclusion.
- IV. Promoting European values in the world.
- V. Working Together.

# Capacity Building Programmes were co-created with stakeholders

The procedure for identification of relevant topics for capacity building activities in WB economies



# Capacity Building Support covers five broad topics

1. Capacity building and technical assistance in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
2. Support for participation in EU programmes.
3. Specific support to universities and technology transfer activities.
4. Specific support to the business sector.
5. General training sessions for quadruple helix actors in the area of circular economy, blue growth and health society.



# Capacity Building Programmes

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. Support for preparation of Horizon Europe partnerships and proposals.
2. Capacity building in research management and administration.
3. Capacity building in monitoring and evaluation.
4. Multisectoral approach to digitalisation, green agenda and healthy societies.
5. Building and strengthening the academia-industry linkages.
6. Assistance in (co)creating policy documents.
7. Support to Open Science.
8. Support to the development of a Smart Specialisation Strategy.

## MONTENEGRO

1. Training for Preparation of Applications for Horizon Europe Projects.
2. Training for Implementing Horizon Europe Projects in Montenegro.
3. Training for implementation of the Circular Economy Principles in Montenegro.
4. Training to Support the Development of Sustainable Agriculture and the Food Value Chain in Montenegro.

## SERBIA

1. Strengthening the capacity of the business sector for digital skills.
2. Green Transformation: New skills required to master the green transition.
3. Improving project proposal writing skills.
4. Training sessions on Programme evaluation: Evaluation practices in policies and programmes.

## ALBANIA

1. Training programme at universities to prepare and implement GEPs.
2. Support participation in Horizon Europe.
3. Support to promote EU funding for companies.
4. Supporting WB Agenda requirements on S3 implementation.
5. Promotion of innovation opportunities related to the blue economy.

## KOSOVO\*

1. Training of researchers for preparation of applications and implementing projects in Horizon Europe.
2. Technical Assistance for the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation & the National Research Council through providing inputs for New National Research Programme and increasing funding sources for R&I.
3. Support in advancing curricula with thematic priority areas at university level.
4. Support of increasing cooperation between the private sector and institutions in the field of research and innovation.
5. Organisation of workshop and provision of methodology guideline for project identification and preparation in light of the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.
6. Creation of a Coordination Forum of Quadruple Helix to create synergy amongst key actors.
7. Technical Assistance on the Implementation of the WB Green Agenda.
8. Monitoring of the implementation of the Digital Agenda.
9. Technical Assistance for the Ministry of Health.

## NORTH MACEDONIA

1. Policy Design, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (Research, Development and Innovation (RDI), education and culture specific).
  - a. Setting the stage: policy design.
  - b. Institutions in practice: coordination & collaboration.
  - c. Performance management: monitoring & evaluation.
2. Organisational management.
3. Fundraising for public institutions.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

# Supporting Foresight and Anticipatory Science Advice

## Analysis of 2021 scenarios

Identifying the most desirable aspects of the scenarios of the EU study:  
Strategic Foresight in the Western Balkans:  
Recovery on the Horizon

## From priorities to goals

Turning the identified policies into concrete goals

## Formulating options to WB6 administrations

Jointly determining which key policy options should be communicated to the EU-WB Ministerial Meeting



## Clustering of R&I priorities

Outcome: 3-5 R&I priorities

## Formulating measures to meet these goals

The goals will be translated into actionable measures for all WB6





# Aligning Priorities around Partnerships and Missions: Digital - Green - Health

Increasing participation and improving alignment building on an initial overview of the participation in the Framework Programme, Partnerships and Missions

Available on the Western Balkans Info Hub (version February 2023)

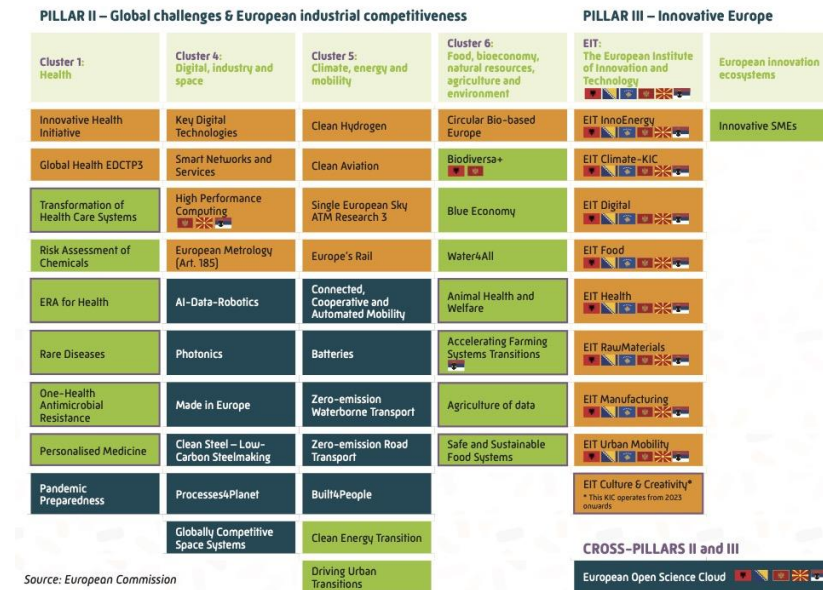


Link: <https://wbc-rti.info/object/document/23871>

## Association to the Framework Programmes



## 49 European Partnerships in the first Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 37 Partnerships Biennial Monitoring Report



Source: European Commission

■ Institutionalised partnerships (Art. 185/7, EIT KICs)
 ■ Co-programmed
 ■ Co-funded
  Not covered in the BMR 2022 due to a later start date

## 5 EU Missions



Adaptation by POLICY ANSWERS based on the Performance of European Partnerships, Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) 2022 on partnerships in Horizon Europe, page 5 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a6cbe152-d19e-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search> and various sources on participation of WB.

# Pilot Activities will include a Regional Innovation Academy

- Western Balkans Regional Innovation Academy will be presenting educational resources related to innovation management, innovation funding and related experiences
- Other pilot activities will impact skills and competences of particular target groups: regional innovation vouchers, researcher mobility, youth campaigns, promoting research infrastructures



# The Western Balkans Information Hub provides key resources

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