



Smart Albania: Priorities and the Way Forward

**PARTNERSHIP WITH ACTORS OF THE 'QUADRUPLE HELIX' (Central and Local Government, Business, Academia, Civil Society)
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL S3 STRATEGY**

Venue:

Hotel Plaza Tirana

“Queen Geraldine“ hall, 3rd Floor

October 31st, 2023

09:30 - 15:00

The Strategies for Smart Specialization (S3) have been conceived and developed by countries and regions in the European Union (EU) as a new tool for fostering innovation and regional development. The S3 approach represents an innovation policy concept that is place-based, aiming to identify key priority areas in the regional/national economy where the impact of public investments in research, development, and innovation can be highly significant. It emphasizes the potential of cross-sectoral linkages, beyond traditional industries, and promotes diversification based on these connections.

S3 is part of the Common Regional Market Action Plan 2021-2024 in the context of the Berlin Process, as well as the EU's Innovation Agenda for the Western Balkans 2021-2027. S3 is also part of Chapter 20 "Enterprises and Industrial Policy" and Chapter 25 "Science and Research" in the framework of Albania's integration into the EU.

Albania initiated the process of preparing its Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) and registered on the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) platform for S3 in 2017.

The Albanian S3 team developed a roadmap for S3 based on the JRC framework, and significant steps have been taken regarding the development of the strategy at the national level, considering also the regional perspective .

According to the S3 guide, Albania has completed the initial steps of context analysis through a quantitative and qualitative mapping of the country's economic, innovative, scientific, and technological potential. This process identified vertical and horizontal pre priority areas, which will be further explored during the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) phase:

Vertical Priorities: Agriculture, Fishery and Aquaculture; Manufacturing; Energy; Tourism; Information and Communication Technology; Administrative and Support Service Activities (BPO).

Identified Cross-Sectoral Areas: Blue Economy, Healthy Food, Renewable Energy Resources, Expanded BPOs.

To be explored and developed: Clusters, Diaspora Engagement, Human Capital/Skills, Evidence-Based Policymaking, Industrial Policies.

The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) is an inclusive dialogue involving stakeholders from all sectors, also known as "Quadruple Helix" (central and local government, business, academia, and civil society). Discussions among these actors during the EDP, based on the findings of the preceding mapping phase, aimed at determining the priority areas of the S3 for Albania.

The National S3 team, under the special attention of Deputy Prime Minister Mrs. Belinda BALLUKU, organized 32 events (roundtable discussions and workshops) during the EDP phase from October 2022 to July 2023. These events involved a total of 1,275 representatives of the Quadruple Helix actors, including 3 regional workshops with neighboring countries Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. The discussions during these workshops have been translated into important policy recommendations addressing the challenges and opportunities related to common priority areas.

Furthermore, the regional events have successfully promoted regional cooperation and underscored its significance in the process of integrating Western Balkan countries into the European Union.

To discuss the results achieved so far during the process of preparation of S3 strategy, emphasizing the importance that had all stakeholders involved in the process, the Albanian Government is organizing the conference:

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The conference will commence with a speech by Deputy Prime Minister Mrs. Belinda BALLUKU.

The discussions at this conference will focus on:

- Presentation of the EDP results
- The importance of involving all stakeholders in the bottom-up approach to the strategy development process.
- Thematic discussions related to the identified priority areas during the S3 process.
- Engagement and full participation of stakeholders until the process is finalized.

The areas with potential for innovative development that were identified at the conclusion of the EDP will be the subject of discussion in the conference panels:

- **Renewable Energy and Natural Resources**
- **Sustainable and Healthy Food Supply Chain**
- **Sustainable and Diversified Tourism**

The conference panels will also discuss horizontal/ cross-sectoral interventions that are identified as necessary steps towards Albania's smart specialization. These include the development of human capital and the role of education, rural development and talent retention, the role and engagement of the diaspora, the impact of digitalization and new technologies on economic development, access to finance, and more.

We welcome you!