

IMPACT STORY

**WESTERN
BALKANS
INFO
HUB**



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BALKANS
Info Hub**

powered by  **POLICY ANSWERS**

BACKGROUND

Fostering the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans remains a key priority for the EU.

Green transition, digital transformation, and an economy that works for people are crucial for relaunching and modernising the Western Balkans, helping to create jobs and growth, and addressing the long-standing challenges faced by young people in the region, such as limited job prospects and inequality. Research, innovation, education and culture are essential drivers in this process - underpinned by evidence-based policymaking.

The Western Balkans actively participate in many EU programmes, but information about many opportunities is not yet widely available in a structured form.



IMPORTANCE

The researchers, innovators, educators and stakeholders on the national, regional and local levels must receive information to build their strategies to integrate into the European Education, Research and Innovation Areas.



Since 2007, an Information Platform and a regular newsletter service for the interested community have been developed and improved into a solution called the **Western Balkans Info Hub**, supported by the project **POLICY ANSWERS**.

The Western Balkans Info Hub builds upon a website, social media and monthly newsletters, which **provide high-quality targeted information on research, technology and innovation in, with and for the WB.**



THE IDEA

The **Western Balkans Info Hub** is aimed to **support the better integration of the Western Balkans into the European Research Area (ERA)** as a part of joint efforts of the European Union and the Western Balkans meant to continue and scale-up cooperation on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

Led by the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in Vienna and involving 14 partner institutions, the Western Balkans Info Hub **builds on the solid ground created by successful past experiences** and tries to capitalise on the resources and networks available.





**POLICY
ANSWERS**

THE ROLE OF POLICY ANSWERS PROJECT

Due to the work of partners in the **POLICY ANSWERS** project, the platform can now **provide even more information**. Intense activity is developed by the project partners, and other active stakeholders to collate and announce the news, events, and other calls of relevance for the community.

All partners cooperate to support the dissemination of high-quality information via **www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu**, the monthly thematic newsletters and social media channels.

The POLICY ANSWERS project and the Info Hub **aim to inspire the stakeholders, particularly researchers and innovators in the Western Balkans, to engage with the various European initiatives and take part in the opportunities provided.**

WORK OF POLICY ANSWERS PROJECT

The POLICY ANSWERS project will launch and coordinate a **capacity-building programme and pilot actions to strengthen the Western Balkans' local efforts and support policymaking and implementation of the WB Agenda** through training activities. Aiming to address various skills gaps, the opportunities are and will be disseminated through the Western Balkans Info Hub.

The Info Hub will also **provide analytical results on specific thematic issues, information about ERA integration, stakeholder mapping, etc.** The **project** also **supports bi-regional dialogue** on research and innovation, education and training, and culture on behalf of the European Commission.

Stakeholders are invited to register for the newsletter on the platform and share the news they wish to be disseminated in the region by sending information to **info@westernbalkans-infohub.eu**.



CONNECTION WITH EUSDR

The project activities contribute to the EUSDR **Priority Area 7** (Knowledge Society) actions and targets with its strong focus on policy dialogue in the research and innovation field, stakeholder mapping, capacity building in accordance with the identified needs, academia-industry links, mobility of researchers, youth initiatives, access to research infrastructures, education in research and innovation, alignment of priorities in the fields of Digital Transformation, the Green Agenda and Healthy Societies.

POLICY ANSWERS will also contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises (**Priority Area 8**) with its policy dialogue and policy briefs, the planned "Regional Innovation Academy", and a regional support scheme for academia-industry cooperation.

Finally, the project activities align with **Priority Area 10** (Institutional Capacity and Cooperation) to support better funding coordination and strengthen institutional capacities (via capacity-building activities).



SUPPORT

Western Balkans Info Hub - powered by "POLICY ANSWERS" - is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I policy making, implementation and support in the Western Balkans".

The portal builds upon previous initiatives, such as WBC-RTI.INFO and WBC-INCO.NET, funded under different Framework Programmes (FP) for Research and Technological Development (RTD) of the European Commission and other contracts.





For more about the **Western Balkans Info Hub**, visit: <https://wbc-rti.info/>

