

POLICY ANSWERS

Update for the EUSDR PA7 SG meeting
December 2025

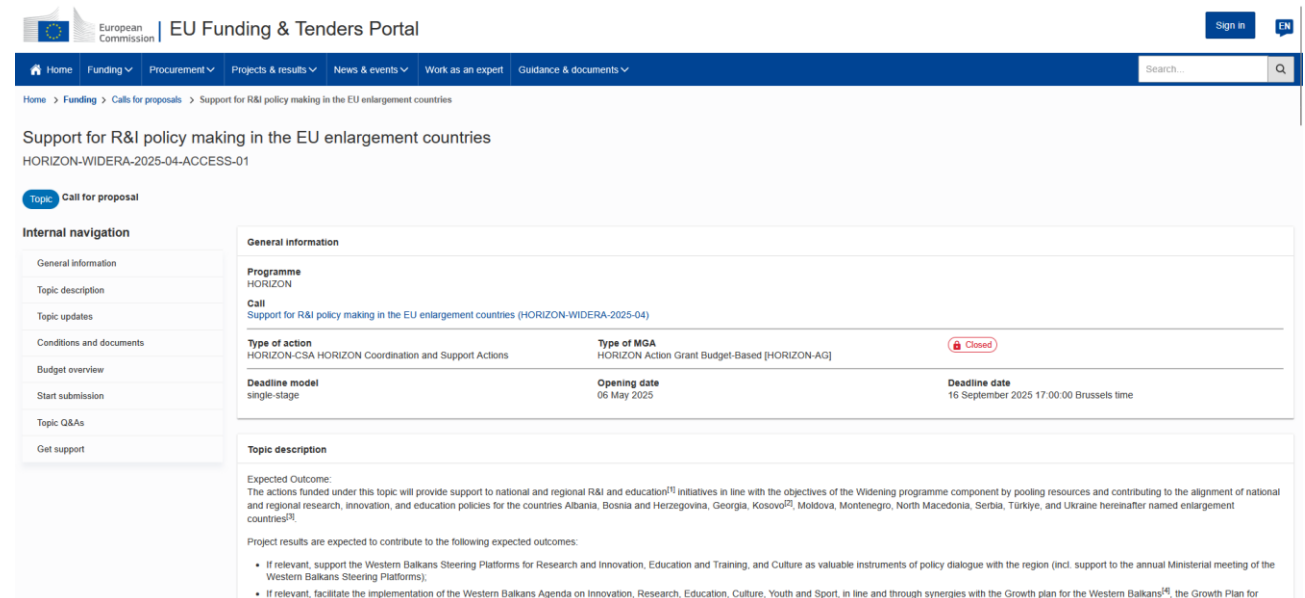


Project prolongation is planned ...

Project title	POLICY ANSWERS: “R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS”
Project funding	Coordination and Support Action under Horizon Europe WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-06-01 Support for R&I policy making in the Western Balkans ; Grant Agreement 101058873
Project duration	48 months: March 2022 - February 2026 -> April 2026
Project partnership	14 partners + wide stakeholder network
Project officer	Bernhard Fabianek and Agota David, DG Research & Innovation
Project coordinator	Elke Dall, Centre for Social Innovation
Project contact	policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu
Project website	www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu
Project social media	@WBInfoHub

A continuation is envisaged ...

Call was launched with
deadline in September.
Enlarged geographical area
(enlargement)
8 proposals have been
submitted.



The screenshot displays the EU Funding & Tenders Portal interface. The top navigation bar includes the European Commission logo and links for Home, Funding, Procurement, Projects & results, News & events, Work as an expert, and Guidance & documents. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area shows the call title 'Support for R&I policy making in the EU enlargement countries' with the identifier 'HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-04-ACCESS-01'. A 'Topic' button labeled 'Call for proposal' is visible. On the left, an 'Internal navigation' sidebar lists options: General information, Topic description, Topic updates, Conditions and documents, Budget overview, Start submission, Topic Q&As, and Get support. The main content area is divided into sections: 'General information' and 'Topic description'. The 'General information' section contains a table with details about the programme, call, type of action, type of MGA, deadline model, opening date, and deadline date. The 'Topic description' section provides an expected outcome and project results.

General information		
Programme HORIZON		
Call Support for R&I policy making in the EU enlargement countries (HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-04)		
Type of action HORIZON-CSA HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions	Type of MGA HORIZON Action Grant Budget-Based (HORIZON-AG)	Closed
Deadline model single-stage	Opening date 06 May 2025	Deadline date 16 September 2025 17:00:00 Brussels time

Topic description

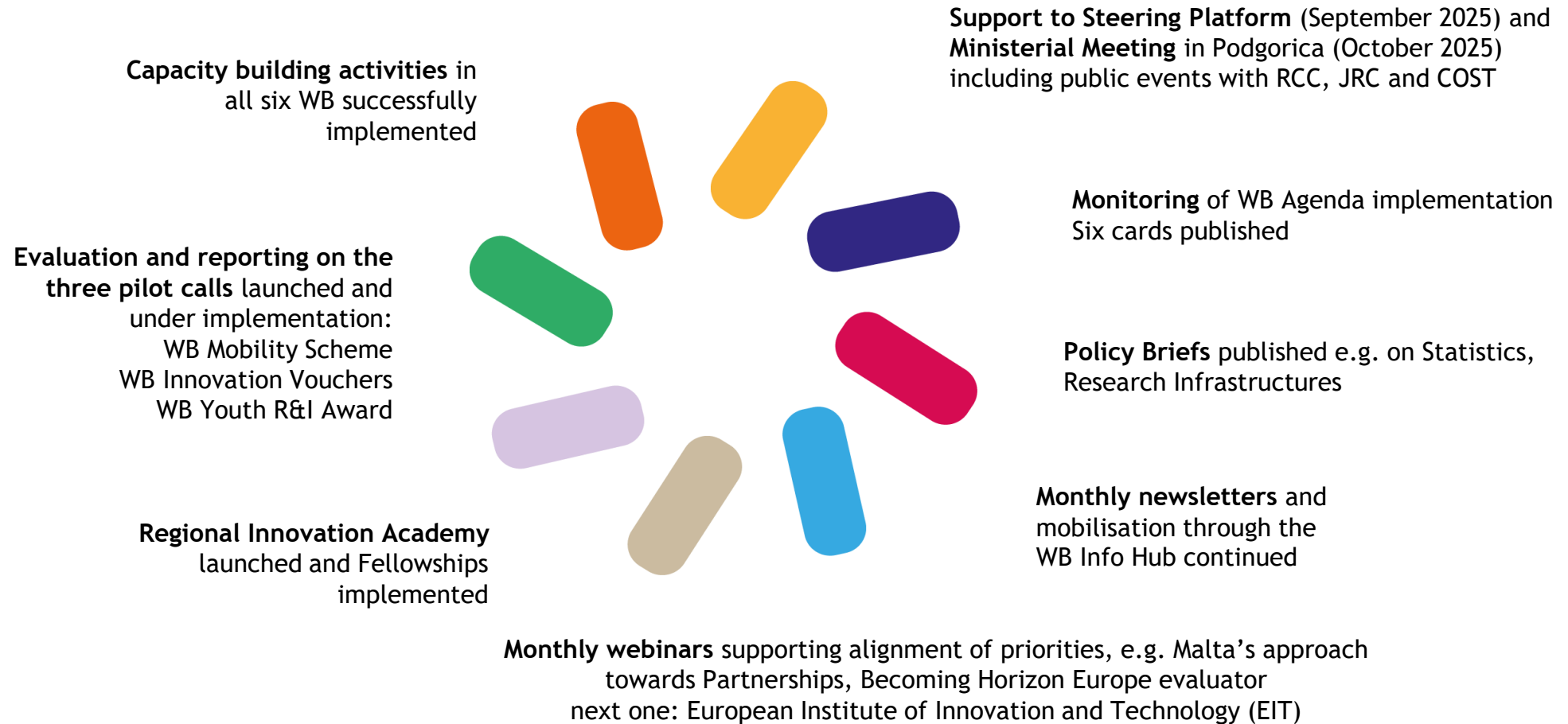
Expected Outcome:
The actions funded under this topic will provide support to national and regional R&I and education^[1] initiatives in line with the objectives of the Widening programme component by pooling resources and contributing to the alignment of national and regional research, innovation, and education policies for the countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo^[2], Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine hereinafter named enlargement countries^[3].

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- If relevant, support the Western Balkans Steering Platforms for Research and Innovation, Education and Training, and Culture as valuable instruments of policy dialogue with the region (incl. support to the annual Ministerial meeting of the Western Balkans Steering Platforms);
- If relevant, facilitate the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, in line and through synergies with the Growth plan for the Western Balkans^[4], the Growth Plan for

The proposal “POLICY ENLARGE” has been invited to Grant Agreement negotiations by the European Commission
Coordinator: RCSID
Planned start -> April 2026

Achievements since the previous presentation (June 2025)



Forthcoming: Monitoring of the Western Balkans Agenda

- Research and Innovation
- Digital Competitiveness
- Environment
- Youth, Culture & Sports
- Education & Skills
- Common Regional Market

4th and last round (Q1/2026)

For the 3rd round:

<https://westernbalkans-fohub.eu/news/implementing-the-western-balkans-agenda-monitoring-cards-published-by-policy-answers-july-2025/>



Statistics and monitoring

- Identification of challenges
- Recommendations to ministries, national statistical offices, regional networks/ international bodies and RPOs to improve situation in relation to statistical data availability, quality, etc.

<https://westernbalkans-infohub.eu/documents/policy-answers-policy-brief-western-balkans-monitoring-and-reporting-challenges-and-key-takeaways/>

Characteristics	Description
 Data Availability	Difficult to obtain timely data
 Surveying and Sampling	Business register updates and functioning CRIS are prerequisites
 Data Harmonisation	Methodological changes affect data comparability
 Data Owners	Lack of designated data owners, contact and focal points
 Data Use	Results often not used for decision and evidence based policy-making
 Data Reliability	Proxy indicators and unresolved questions related to data reliability
 Problem Awareness	Policy makers are often unaware of challenges
 Resources	General lack of resources available in the R&I ecosystem and in particular at statistical offices

Figure 1: Challenges regarding R&I data collection and use for policy making

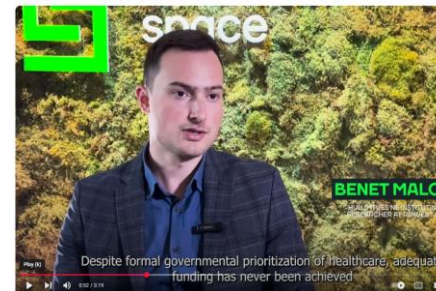
Invitation to discuss about FP10 recommendations

- How should the EU budget be structured to ensure competitiveness and resilience and active participation also of the Western Balkans?
- What are the efficiency and accountability reforms, including simplification and improved strategic targeting, that can ensure a more impactful multi-annual financial framework (MFF) / FP10?
- What approaches can ensure that EU budget allocations are consistently aligned with EU values, rule of law and horizontal principles including academic freedom?
- How should be Horizon Europe (FP10) linked or distinguished from the Competitiveness Fund?
- What strategies should be implemented to widen participation and support R&I ecosystems including the Western Balkans?
- How best can future framework programmes improve evaluation processes and criteria?
- Which priorities should be set and addressed?
- How can digitalisation, SME support and structural modernisation be integrated into research and innovation funding maintaining a distinct profile compared to the European Competitiveness Fund?

WP3 CAPACITY BUILDING & SUPPORT

Capacity Building continued

- Study visits
- Trainings
- Info Days
- Policy Briefs, studies, mapping
- Support to S3 development

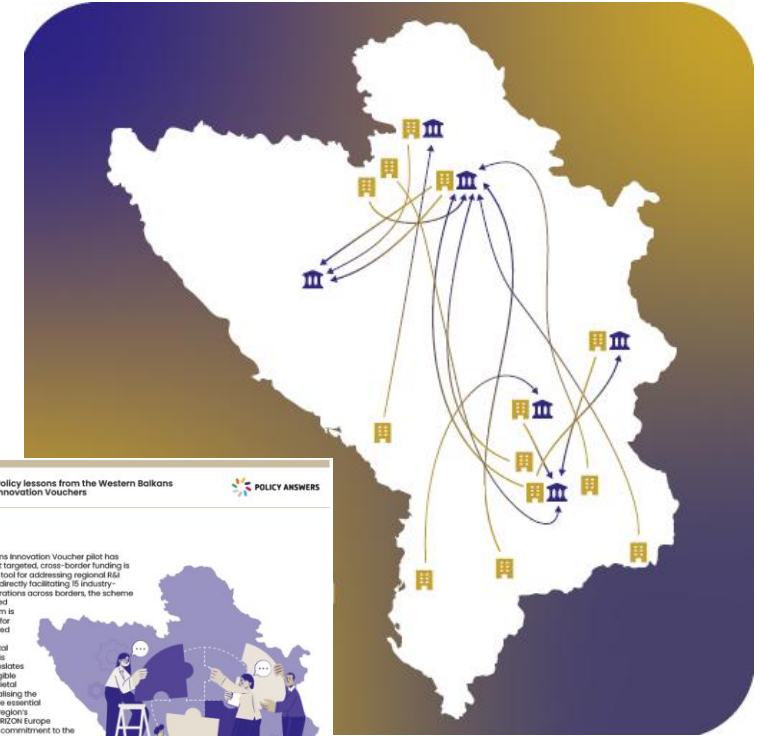


WB Innovation Vouchers

Policy Brief published!

A selection of awarded companies

- Pharmabest Group
- Agrounik
- GeoSoil Engineering
- Recrewty
- Inventiko
- SME Impact



WB Mobility Scheme

All projects (23) successfully concluded.

Forthcoming: Evaluation report and Policy Brief



WB R&I Youth Awards

Awarded projects

- Albania: Together for life
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Fondacija za inovacije, tehnologiju i transfer znanja
- Kosovo: Caritas
- Montenegro: NGO Center for youth education
- North Macedonia: Regional Advocacy Centre
- Serbia: Career Launch



Research Infrastructure Promotion

Policy Report published (incl. definitions, tools, results of events, etc.)

Forthcoming: Policy Brief on RIs

Exemplary cases:

- ANTARES / Biosense Institute
- Bio4 Campus
- RASH
- Tech4Green Campus
- ESS ERIC

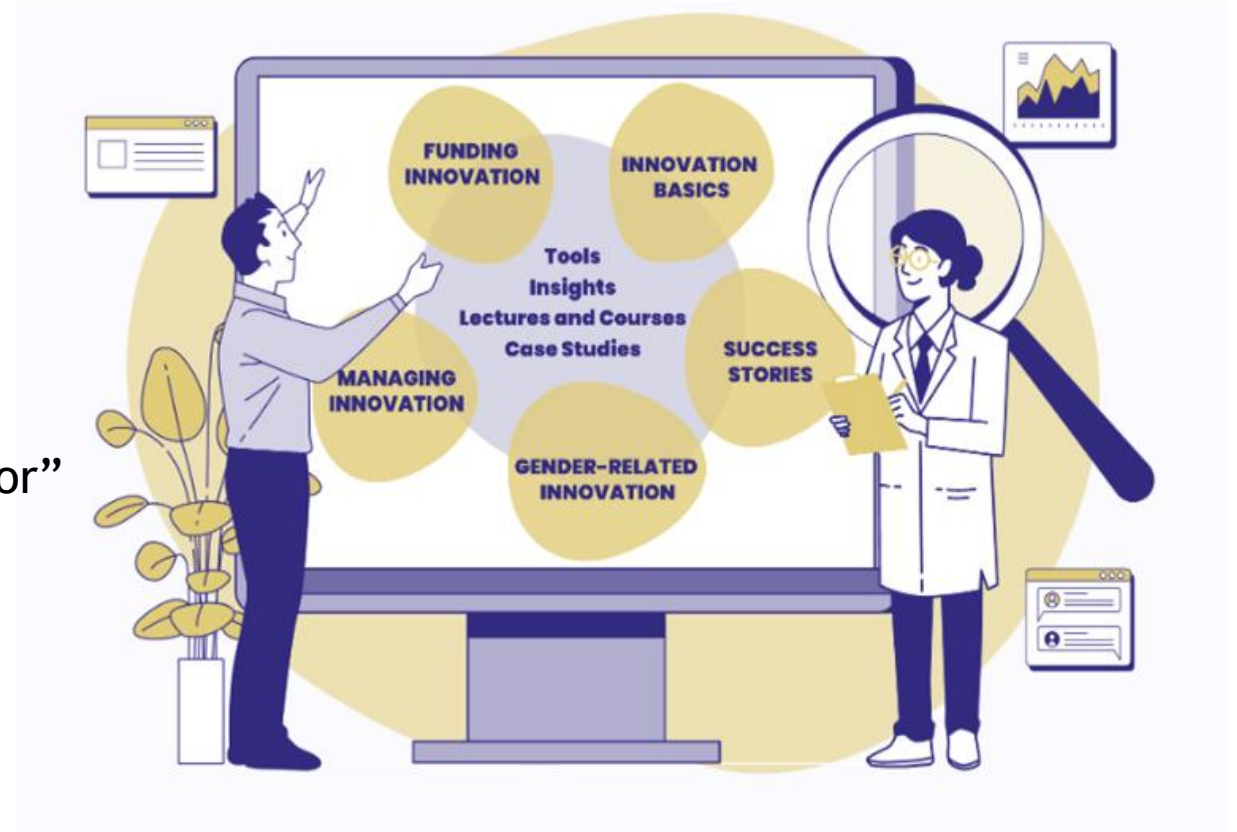
SEEIIST development



Regional Innovation Academy

A selection of Web Published Materials

- “My Startup Story”
- “WeGate: The A to Z of Fundraising”
- “Arger Racing Formula Student Team”
- “Mittelstand: Innovation For a Mid-Size Sector”
- “OECD: Business Innovation Statistics and Indicators”
- “ABW Serbia: Digital Transformation of Women’s Businesses”



Project Partner Fellowship Programme

16 fellowship reports published, such as ...

- “Brief Report: Good Practices in R&I Collaboration”
- “University of Sarajevo R&I Strategy and Implementation”
- “Strategic Foresight: Comparative R&I Systems Analysis”
- “UNSA Internal Report: Detailed Analysis of R&I Capacity”
- “Detailed Report: Research Infrastructure Development in WB”
- etc.



Forthcoming newsletters

Youth cooperation (December)

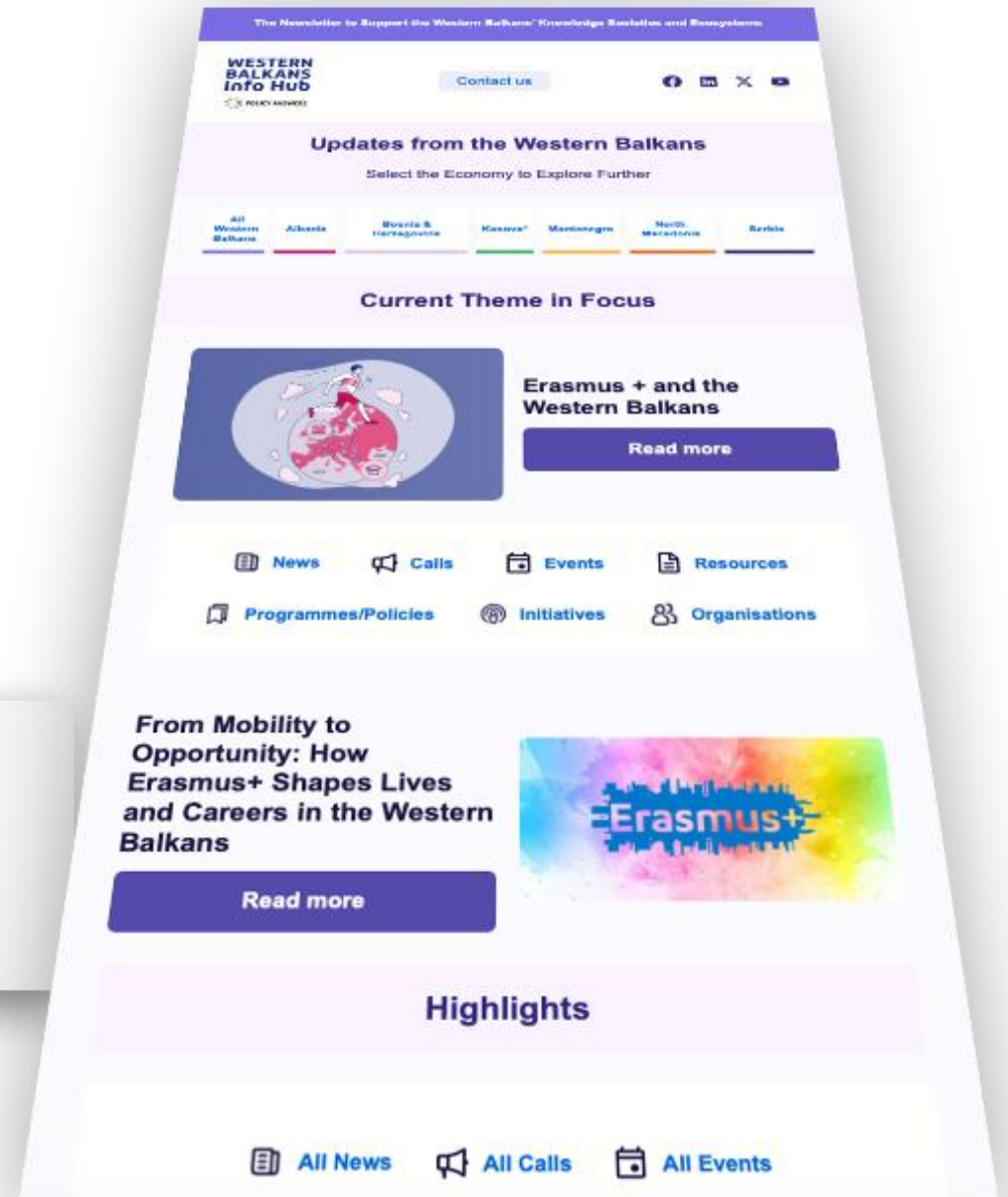
Smart Specialisation (January)

TBC Mobility (maybe February)



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Other developments and projects

- ✓ Foresight for enlargement countries - project starting and workshops to be organised soon
- ✓ COST Action SiDnet up and running - cooperation on science diplomacy
- ✓ Work Programmes 2026/27 provide interesting opportunities for the region
- ✓ FSTP calls remain interesting opportunities, e.g. [SoS2LearnDBS CLed](#): Community-led Actions that contribute to the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters” objectives in the Danube River Basin and Black Sea regions



Contact us at any time:

Elke Dall, dall@zsi.at
policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu

**THANK
YOU!**



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