



**WESTERN  
BALKANS  
Info Hub**  
powered by POLICY ANSWERS

Newsletter

## [FOCUS ARTICLE] Mapping, monitoring and progress reporting – in service of the Western Balkans

In this month's focus article we would like to present one of the core elements of the POLICY ANSWERS project: **the analytical activities**. We believe that these create a real benefit for the region, and feedbacks from various stakeholders confirm our conviction: The high interest shown by policy makers, research institutions, scientific communities and the private sector in the Western Balkans for the structured information produced by POLICY ANSWERS reflects the importance of the projects' contribution. In the following, we would like to introduce how these tasks are being performed and what the products delivered are.

### Analytical activities

One of the objectives of the project POLICY ANSWERS is to monitor the cooperation and coordination between the European Union (EU) and the Western Balkans (WB): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. To achieve this, it is necessary to obtain a deeper insight into their systems in order to provide an overview of these six WB economies by collecting relevant information through analytical activities.

The work of POLICY ANSWERS is based on the EU Western Balkans Agenda (WB Agenda) which outlines a comprehensive, long-term strategy for cooperation with the WB. The WB Agenda is built on 3 pillars: Political, Thematic, Regional and focuses on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth, Sport.

The groundwork of the analytical activities in POLICY ANSWERS is made by **mapping relevant stakeholders and policy measures** in the WB; this is done by collecting comprehensive and detailed information on their relevant institutions, programmes, policies, strategies, initiatives, best practices, needs and common priorities. The data is collected for each of the WB economies individually, and also at regional and international level - related to the WB. The mapping is performed continuously on the basis of spread sheets, and data is updated respectively by all partners. Information is visualised on the project website allowing access to the interested community. The first phase of the mapping is already finished; more information and the resulting database of WB stakeholders can be found [here](#). The second phase of mapping targets WB programmes, policies, initiatives and best practices; it is currently in full swing and foreseen to complete the database in spring/summer 2024.

Another project activity focuses on **monitoring the implementation of the WB Agenda**. Information on ongoing and completed activities related to the WB Agenda is collected in spread sheets by all project partners. Two indicator sets were developed for the categories Research & Innovation (R&I), Digital, Education, Environment, Youth/Culture/Sports, and Common Regional Market: Paragraph 2



- determining directly the achievement of a target outlined in the WB Agenda;
- capturing the impact that the WB has in a wider context of the strategy.

The first round of data collection provides the baseline for later comparisons of the progress made. Further update rounds serve to monitor the development made.

A set of “**Monitoring Cards**” summarising the state of the implementation of the WB Agenda in each of its six categories was published in September 2023. You can access them [here](#).

A further project task is to provide reports on the progress made by each of the WB economies in their integration into the European Research Area (ERA). These **reports on ERA integration** are based on a structure predefined by the EC through ERA priorities and the ERA Policy Agenda developed for the EU-27. The reports are drafted by POLICY ANSWERS with the support of experts from the WB region. They draw a picture of the WB economies’ research and innovation system and give advice for policy makers. The latest ERA reports for the six WB economies have been recently published (2023 edition). You can find them [here](#). Summaries of the ERA reports are visualised in two-pager ‘ERA Cards’ and can be downloaded under [this link](#). More information on the ERA integration reporting is available [here](#). POLICY ANSWERS and other experts are now working on further reports for the edition 2024.

Another task is to provide strategically informed recommendations for policy making and agenda setting: a **Strategic Foresight exercise**, based on future scenarios for the WB, provides anticipatory science advice. During a Strategic Foresight workshop organised by the project partners in March 2023, recommendations for future programming and R&I policies were elaborated by R&I experts from across the Western Balkans. These recommendations will be presented to the R&I Ministers in the region at the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting in 2024. In order to further advance Futures Literacy in the region, a high-level event on future trends in R&I is planned at the side-lines of this Ministerial Meeting. More information on the coordination of the Strategic Foresight activities can be found [here](#).

A further element for giving advice provided by POLICY ANSWERS are **Policy Briefs** related to pertinent topics. A document is under preparation related to the development of the upcoming EU Framework Programme 10. This document will be based on input from WB stakeholders and we warmly invite you to [share your ideas](#) in this consultation process.

## Benefit for the Western Balkans

All these tasks are linked closely together and support each other: the stakeholder mapping and the monitoring of the WB Agenda is a helpful basis to drafting the ERA reports, which in their turn can give hints for the stakeholder mapping, the monitoring of the WB Agenda and the foresight exercise.

Furthermore, the outcomes of these analytical activities constitute an important input also for other tasks of the project: they inform the activities dedicated to policy dialogue - the Steering Platforms and the Ministerial Meetings; they also prompt at potential participants in capacity building measures, in events such as the Conference organised by POLICY ANSWERS, the Workshop and the pilot scheme on researchers’ mobility as well as research infrastructures.

To summarise and visualise the results of these analytical activities, the two-pagers produced - **Mapping Card, Monitoring Cards, ERA Report Cards, Anticipatory Science Recommendations** - are an important tool for the communication with the stakeholders and dissemination to the wider communities.



Funded by  
the European Union

POLICY ANSWERS - R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS

---

Please keep on following the [WB Info Hub](#) if you are interested in the most recent publications of POLICY ANSWERS' mapping, monitoring and progress reporting activities in the region. If you have input for these activities, please get in touch with our team at [Ulrike.Kunze@dlr.de](mailto:Ulrike.Kunze@dlr.de).