

# Western Balkans' ERA Reporting

## Workshop

Skopje, 5 June 2024

# Welcome and Introduction

## WP2 MONITORING FOR AGENDA SETTING

Time	Agenda point
8:45-9:00	Welcome and introduction
9:00-10:30	Technical session: ERA Reporting along the ERA Policy Agenda Q&A
10:30-10:50	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:50-11:50	How to approach challenges with regard to WB ERA integration?
11:50-12:10	Strengthening R&I Capacity in the Western Balkans
12:10-12:20	Wrap-up
12:20-12:30	Closing remarks

# Aims of the workshop

- Raise awareness for benefits of ERA for WB economies (R&I systems and economic development, EU MS cooperation)
- Improve WB economies' knowledge about opportunities to participate and engage in ERA
- Inform about technical aspects of ERA reporting
- Foster peer discussion of Western Balkans' best practices in aligning to the ERA Policy Agenda



# Technical Session: ERA Reporting along the ERA Policy Agenda

# POLICY ANSWERS reports on WB ERA Integration (2022)

- POLICY ANSWERS produces WB ERA Country Reports for reporting years 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
- 2022 versions are based on methodology of the ERA Monitoring Handbook 2018
- POLICY ANSWERS has prepared reports with the support of external experts for:
  - Albania
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Kosovo\*
  - North Macedonia
  - Montenegro
  - Serbia
- Reports can be accessed [here](#)



\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

# 2023 WB ERA Country Reports

- 2023 versions of the reports are based on new guidelines for ERA Country Reports (as for EU-27)
  - Based on new ERA Monitoring Mechanism of the EC
  - Priorities defined in the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024
- POLICY ANSWERS has prepared reports with the support of external experts for:
  - Albania
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Kosovo
  - North Macedonia
- Reports for Montenegro and Serbia prepared by Ecorys
- Reports can be accessed [here](#)



# Structure of the ERA Country Reports

## Table of contents

ERA COUNTRY REPORT 2023: ALBANIA .....	3
1. National context .....	3
1.1. Overview of the ERA policy agenda implementation	3
1.2. Policy context	4
2. Implementation of the ERA policy agenda .....	4
2.1. ERA Priority 1: Deepening a truly functional internal market for knowledge	4
2.2. ERA Priority 2: Taking up together the challenges posed by the twin green and digital transition and increasing society's participation in the ERA	5
2.3. ERA Priority 3: Enhancing access to research and innovation excellence and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the EU	6
2.4. ERA Priority 4: Advancing concerted research and innovation investments and reforms	6
3. Country-specific drivers and barriers .....	6
4. Final remarks .....	7
5. Bibliography .....	9
6. Annexes .....	10
6.1. Annex 1: Graphs	10



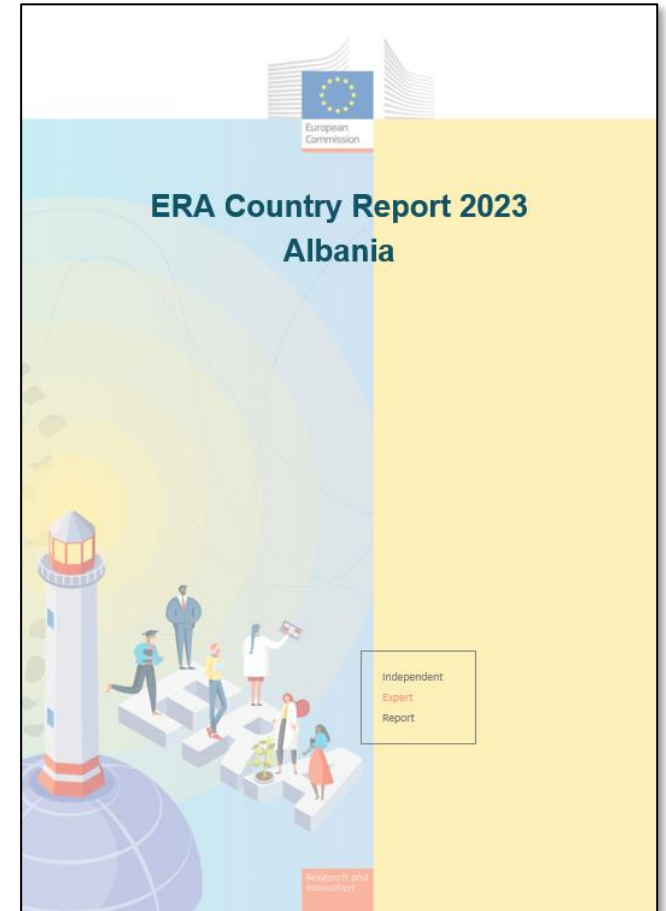
# Albania's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Albania is progressing towards priorities of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024; no formal commitment to the priorities yet
- Participation in the European Innovation Scoreboard and the She Figures report 2021
- Key initiatives:
  - New Draft Law of Science (not published yet) includes the topics: Open Science, research infrastructures and knowledge valorisation
  - Opening of the EURAXESS Portal
  - EIT Raw Materials Regional Innovation Centre opened in Elbasan in April 2024



# Albania's ERA integration - selected barriers

- Prevention of better implementation of strategies, laws, and measures regarding R&I due to lack of R&I funding
- Insufficient professionalisation of research management
- Low participation of Albanian researchers in international projects and the ERA
- Low number of cooperations between academia and the private sector; insufficient support of knowledge valorisation and transfer

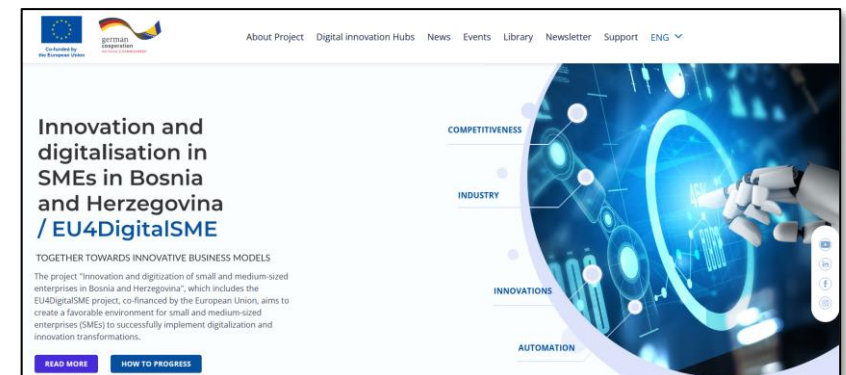


# Bosnia and Herzegovina's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Progress regarding the implementation of ERA priorities: Open Science, gender equality, promotion of attractive research careers, international cooperation, research infrastructures
- Increased success in Horizon Europe: University of Sarajevo (UNSA) as project coordinator; University Clinical Centre of the Republic of Srpska partner institution under EU Cancer Mission
- EU4DigitalSME project: increased academia-industry collaboration in the digital sector
- Researchers are increasingly interested in EU R&I programmes

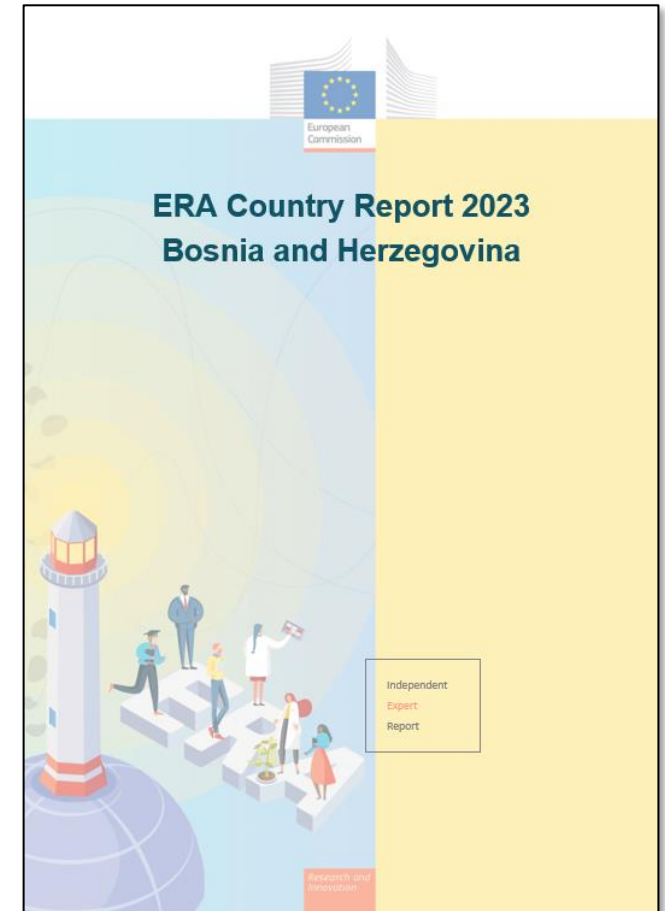


Horizon Europe project with UNSA as first project coordinator from BiH



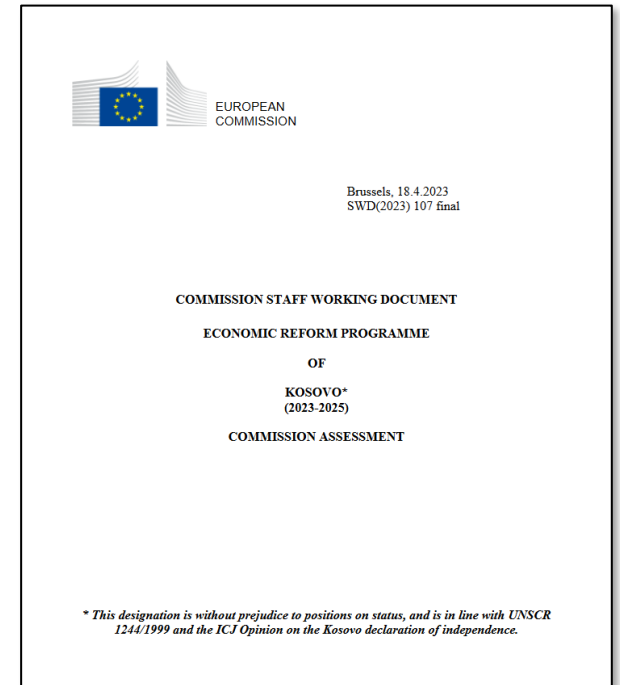
# Bosnia and Herzegovina's ERA integration - selected barriers

- Lack of cooperation of industry with research groups; low R&I investments by the private sector
- Limited progress of the Smart Specialisation Strategy
- Low support of researchers to participate in European programmes
- Low level of implementation of priorities of the ERA Policy Agenda



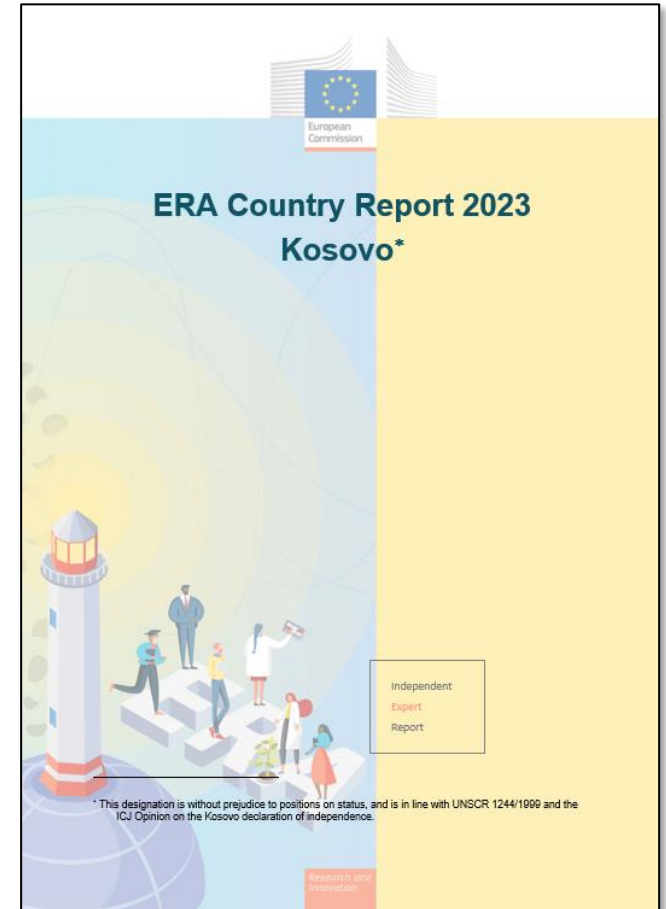
# Kosovo's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Gradual progress in aligning with the ERA priorities
- Increasing participation of researchers in European R&I programmes
- R&I as key priorities of structural reforms in the Economic Reform Programme 2023-2025
- National Research Programme 2023-2028: new opportunities to foster R&I (research excellence, internationalisation, Open Science)



# Kosovo's ERA integration - selected barriers

- Low level of alignment with ERA Policy Agenda due to fragmented legal and policy R&I framework
- Delay in development of Smart Specialisation Strategy
- Only little incentives for R&I actors for national and international cooperation
- Low level of cooperation between academia and business actors; no initiatives for private sector investment
- Lack of financing instruments for R&I activities



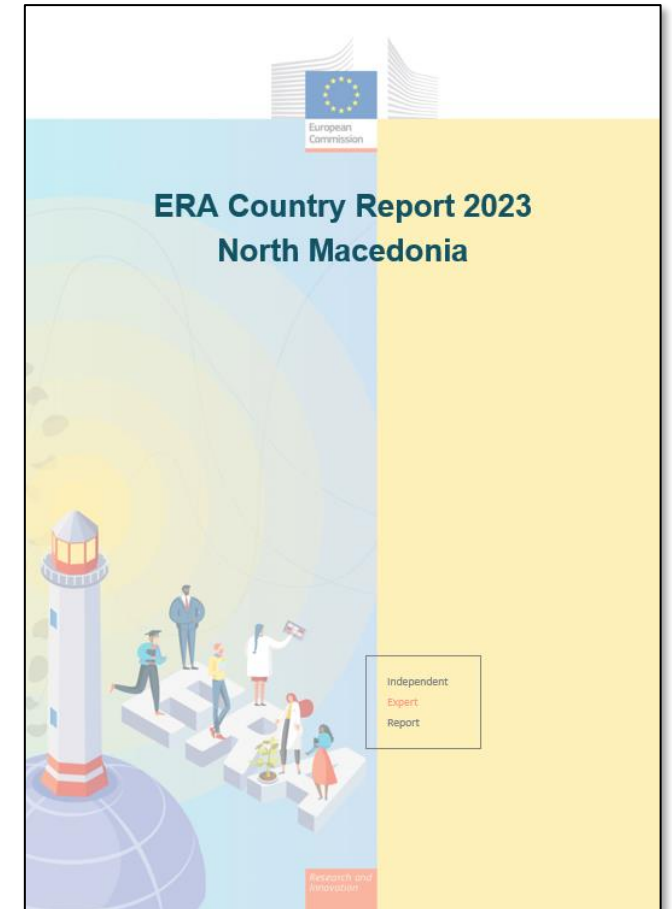
# North Macedonia's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Formal commitment to six ERA Actions under three priority areas of the ERA Policy Agenda in September 2023
- First EIT Innovation Hub launched at the Centre for Technology Transfer and Innovation in Skopje in June 2023
- Adoption of Smart Specialisation Strategy 2024-2027 with action plan 2024-2025 by government in December 2023



# North Macedonia's ERA integration - selected barriers

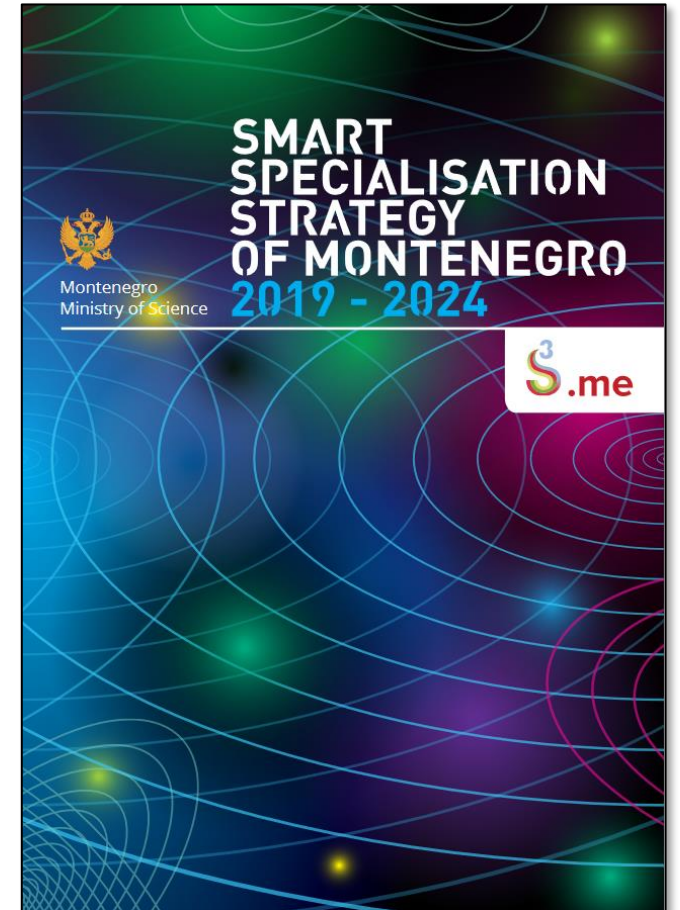
- Inefficient use of R&I funds due to delay in implementation of key strategies, programmes and priorities
- Unfavourable structures of GERD by sector of performance and funding sources
- Aim of development of a knowledge-based society through Green and Digital Transition is in danger because of low R&I funding from both the public and private sector
- Low support of science and technology parks as obstacle to the development of the full potential of the business sector
- 





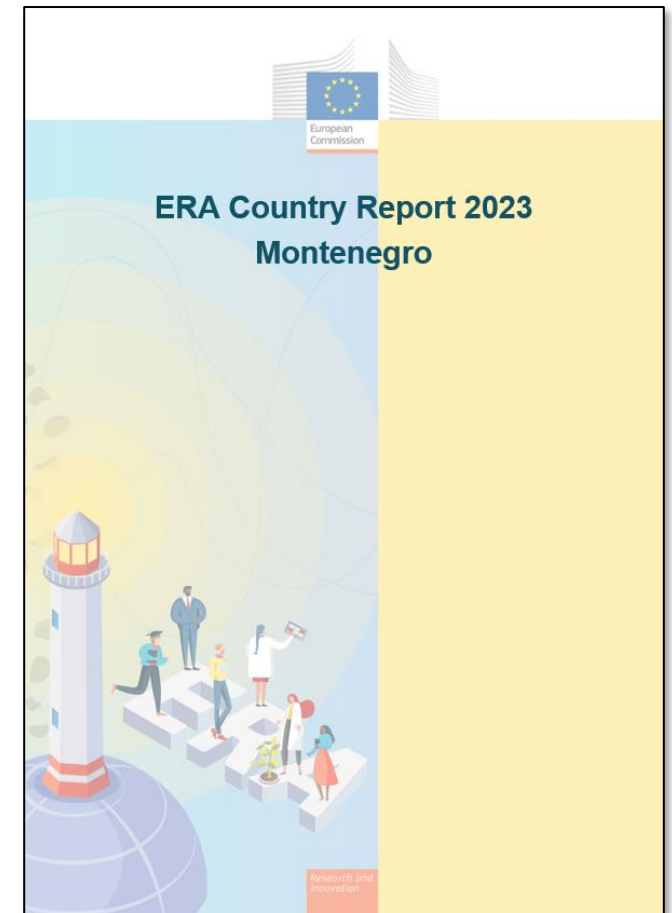
# Montenegro's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda through several initiatives; increased reformation of R&I system through the determination of internal capacities
- Integration of the ERA priorities in the draft National Strategy for Research Activities (2023-2027)
- Smart Specialisation Strategy 2019-2024: role model for the cooperation of different actors and for the strengthening of the academia-business cooperation and knowledge transfer



# Montenegro's ERA integration - selected barriers

- Low level of integration into ERA due to lack of domestic and international resources; low sustainability of R&I reforms and less advanced development of the R&I system
- Prevention of better development of science-industry cooperation due to low investments of the public sector into R&I
- No systematic collection of data: data gaps, little progress in monitoring and benchmarking R&I performance



# Serbia's ERA integration - selected drivers

- Advancements towards the ERA Policy Agenda: Open Science, gender equality; no formal commitment to any ERA actions
- Integration into ERA through institutional funding reforms and introduction of policy measures; creation of a favourable environment for R&I and science-industry cooperation
- Increase in the innovation performance according to the European Innovation Scoreboard
- Establishment of a system for the further development of deep-tech: Law on Digital Assets, tax incentive schemes for high-tech companies, PhD programmes on Artificial Intelligence



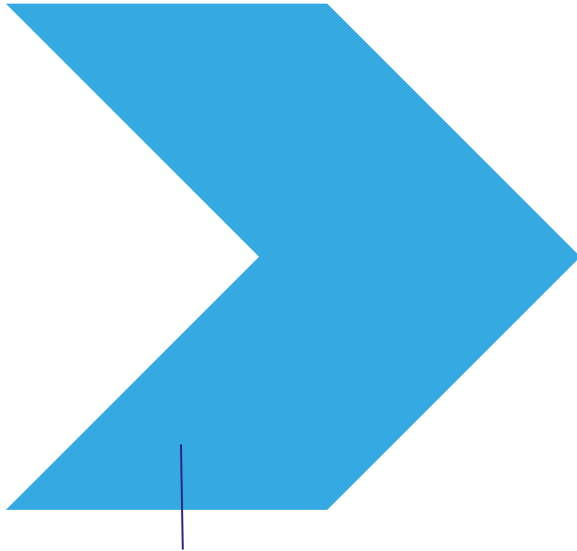
# Serbia's ERA integration - selected barriers

- Prevention of further implementation of ERA Policy Agenda due to low R&I funding
- No alignment with European Research Infrastructure Consortium Regulation
- Low efficiency in implementation of strategic policy documents and action plans (such as the Smart Specialisation Strategy)
- Lack of digital skills in interaction between academia and business stakeholders; low level of digital transferability



# Drafting process of WB ERA Country Reports

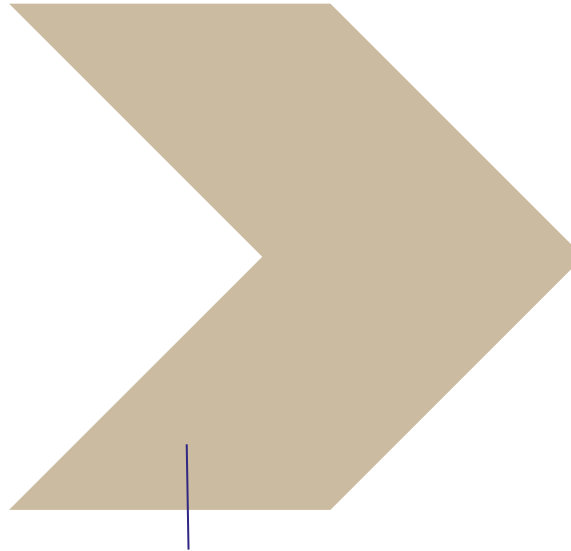
7-8 weeks



## Selection of experts

1. Publish call for applications
2. Select experts to draft the respective ERA Country Reports based on specified criteria to have transparent selection process
3. Costs for each expert for respective report: 1,000€

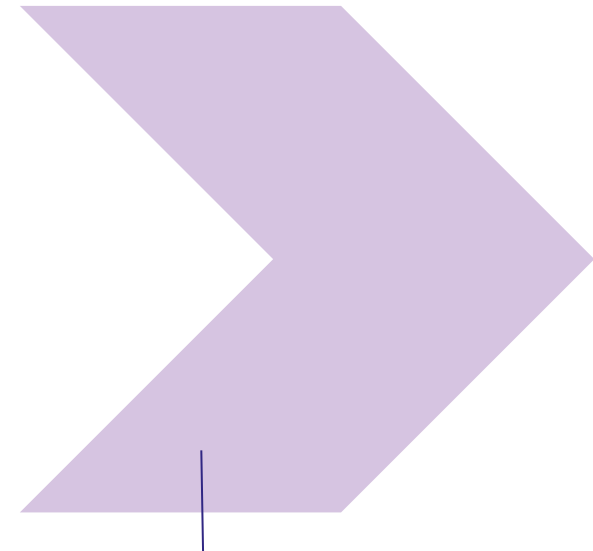
6 weeks



## Coordinate drafting process

1. Provision of methodology and template documents to experts
2. Give advice within process to experts and keep an eye on deadline dates

1-2 weeks

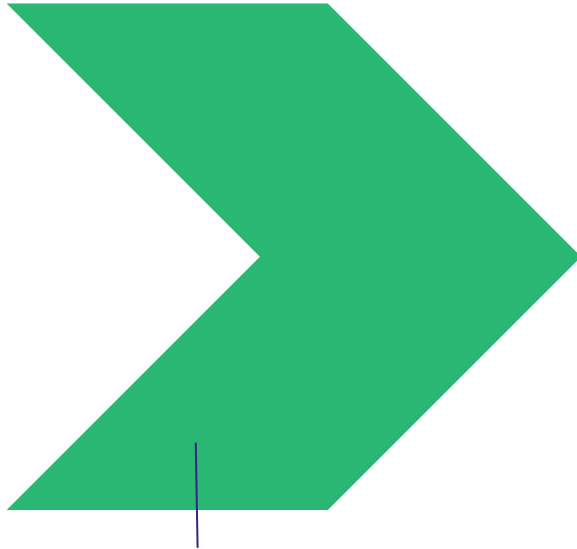


## Conduct QA/Give feedback

1. Conduct quality assurance of first draft and give feedback to experts
2. Revision by experts

# Drafting process of WB ERA Country Reports

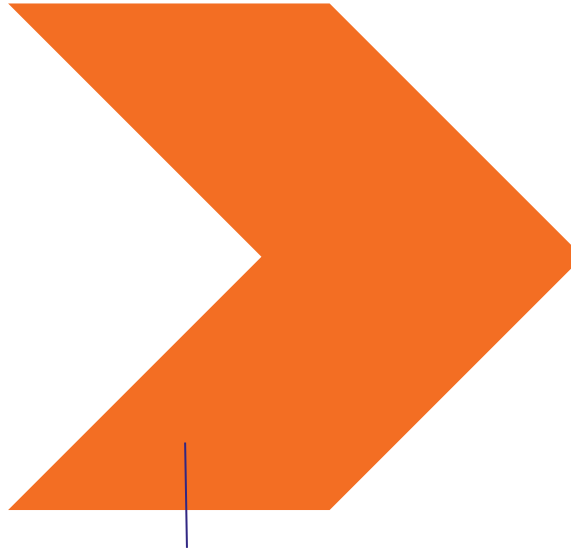
3-4 weeks



## Submit drafts to EC

1. Submit reviewed reports for feedback from EC and ERA Forum delegates and subsequently forward comments to experts
2. Revision by experts

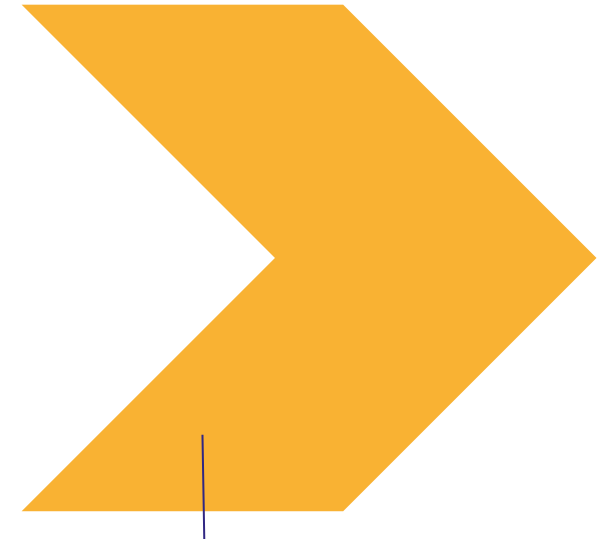
1 week



## Submit final versions to EC

Make sure formatting of reports is correct and all comments are integrated into final versions before submitting them to EC

1 week

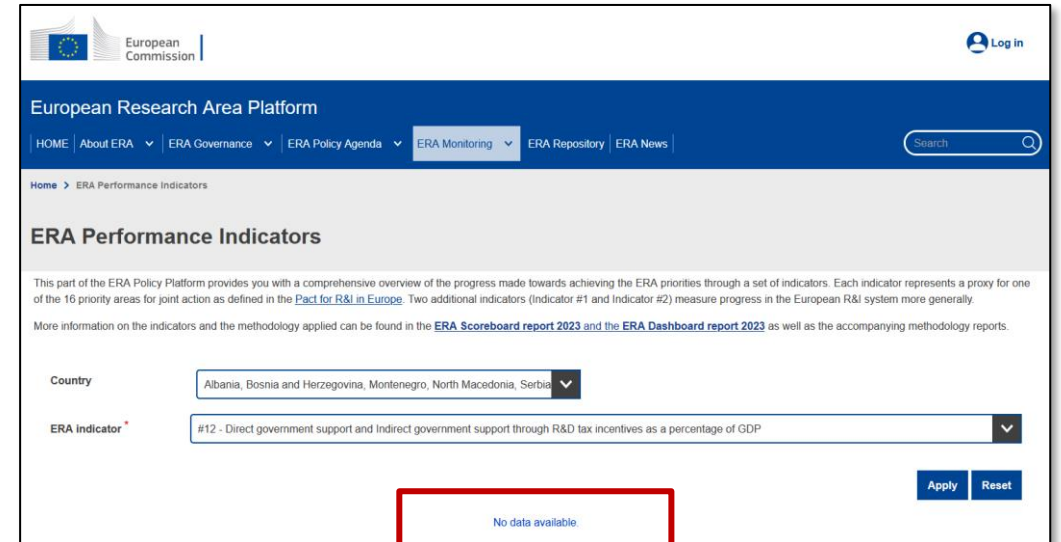


## Accompany dissemination activities

1. ERA Country Reports are being published by EC on their website
2. Coordinate further dissemination of reports (Western Balkans Infohub, Social Media)

# WB ERA Country Reports and data (un)availability

- Data availability in the WB is limited for (some of) the required ERA Performance Indicators to draft ERA Country Reports
- Only Serbia and Montenegro participate (partially) in providing ERA Performance Indicators
- Data gaps have to be filled with proxy indicators and qualitative information
- Comparability of WB ERA Country Reports with reports of EU Member States and other Associated Countries is low



The screenshot displays the European Research Area Platform interface. The header includes the European Commission logo and a 'Log in' button. The main navigation bar contains links for HOME, About ERA, ERA Governance, ERA Policy Agenda, ERA Monitoring (selected), ERA Repository, and ERA News. A search bar is located on the right. The page title is 'ERA Performance Indicators'. Below the title, there is a paragraph explaining the indicators and their purpose. A search filter is shown with 'Country' set to 'Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia' and 'ERA Indicator' set to '#12 - Direct government support and Indirect government support through R&D tax incentives as a percentage of GDP'. The 'Apply' and 'Reset' buttons are visible. A red box highlights the message 'No data available' at the bottom of the search results area.

# WB ERA Country Reports and data (un)availability

- Some data gaps can be filled with data from the European Innovation Scoreboard
  - Limited data available for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
  - No data for Kosovo available
- Recommendations for future WB ERA Country Reports:
  - Foster exchange about needed data for reports between national statistical offices and Ministries responsible for international cooperation in R&I
  - Collect data aligned to ERA Performance Indicators by national statistical offices and Ministries
  - Participate in collection of policy relevant indicators (UNESCO, Eurostat)





# INSPIRING ERA

*Breathing Life into the New European Research Area and the ERA Policy Agenda Through Engaging Awareness-Raising Initiatives*



Horizon Europe project (Coordination and Support Action (CSA))

EU Member States, Associated Countries, Stakeholders



Collaboration between EU Member States, Associated Countries, Stakeholders



Promote the successful implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda



Share findings and insights from the ERA Actions with the ERA community (researchers, RPO, HE, society, policy experts)



Foster mutual learning, cooperation and the exchange of best practices and lessons learned within a community of practitioners

## Activities of INSPIRING ERA

1. Information hub and contact point
2. Foster a community of practitioners
3. Communicate insights drawn from ERA Actions
4. Facilitate interaction, exchange and mutual learning
5. Provide policy recommendations and guidelines



[www.inspiring-era.eu](http://www.inspiring-era.eu)

# How to approach challenges with regard to ERA integration?

- Workshop participants are divided into two focus groups (blue/red)
- Focus groups gather in separate corners of the room (blue/red group)
- Focus groups have 20 minutes to collect ideas and write them down (whiteboards, pens and paper available)
- Each focus group has one moderator (FG1: Malte; FG2: Elke)
- Call to action: Each focus group needs one rapporteur who presents the results in the plenum (10 minutes)
- Discussion of results of focus groups afterwards in the plenum (15 minutes)



# Focus group topics

- Each focus group discusses one of the two challenges from the ERA Country Reports:
  1. Focus group 1: How to improve business-academia collaboration in the Western Balkans?
  2. Focus group 2: How can the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda be accelerated in the Western Balkans and what role does research management have?



# Wrap-up

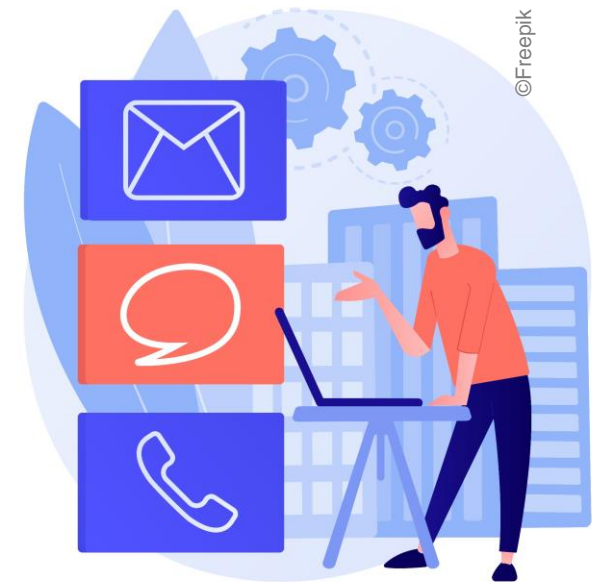
# Wrap-up

- We will keep you informed about future editions of the Western Balkans ERA Country Reports.
- Thank you for participating in the workshop and discussing this important topic with us!



# Further information and contacts

- EC and POLICY ANSWERS are happy to provide further information and support regarding the preparation of the WB ERA Country Reports:
  - Approach and methods to draft the ERA Country Reports
  - Information and sources to meet the EC criteria (indicators)
  - Timeline for drafting reports
  - Processes (e.g. preparing call for applications to contract experts)
- Contact persons:
  - Heiko Prange-Gstoehl, Policy Officer, ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers, DG R&I ([Heiko.PRANGE-GSTOEHL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Heiko.PRANGE-GSTOEHL@ec.europa.eu))
  - Malte Schrage-Veltins, task lead ERA monitoring, POLICY ANSWERS ([Malte.Schrage-Veltins@dlr.de](mailto:Malte.Schrage-Veltins@dlr.de))





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**THANK  
YOU!**