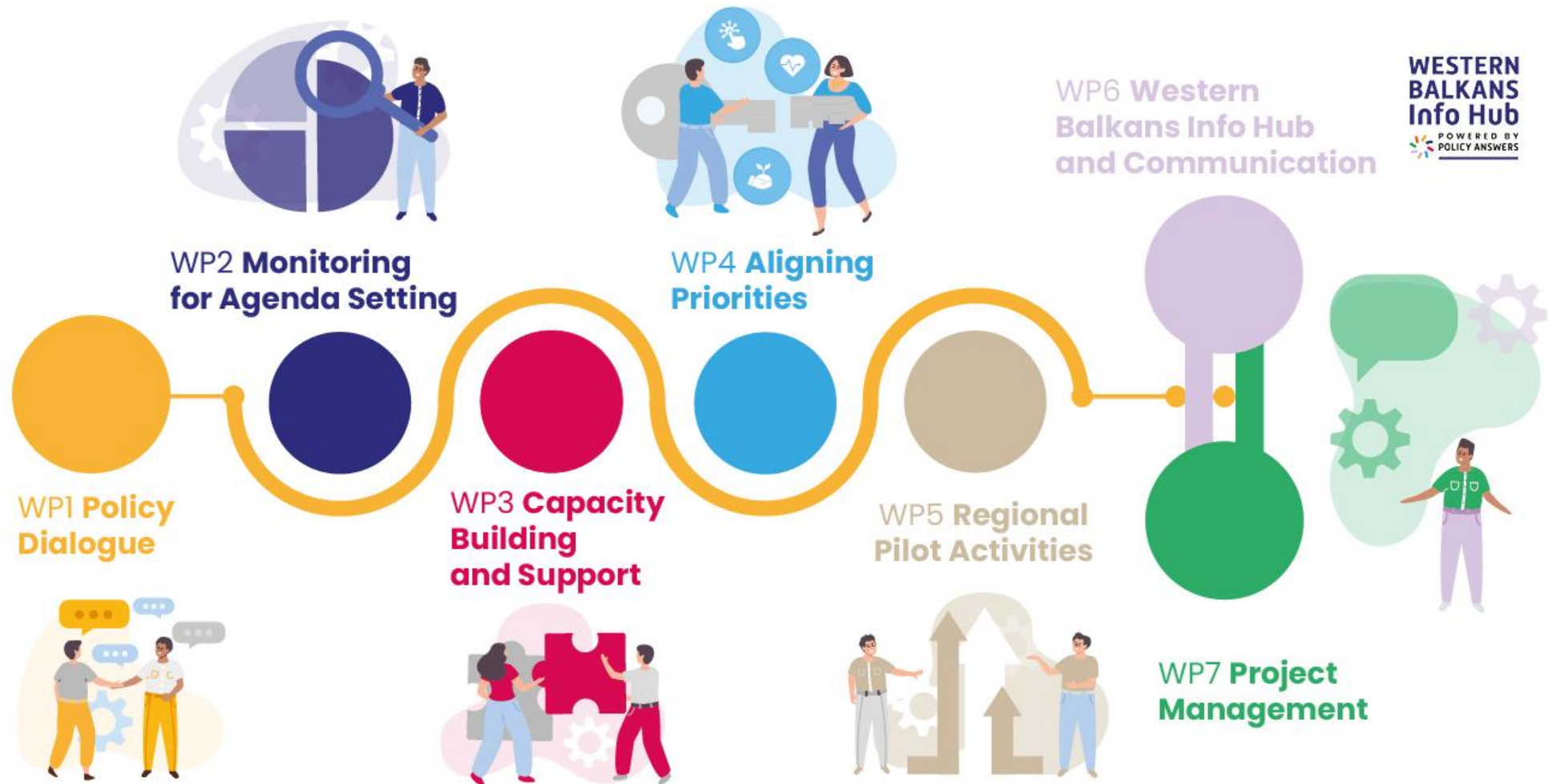


# The Western Balkans Mobility Scheme

Roundtable "Enhancing Mobility-Driven Research and  
Innovation in the Western Balkans"

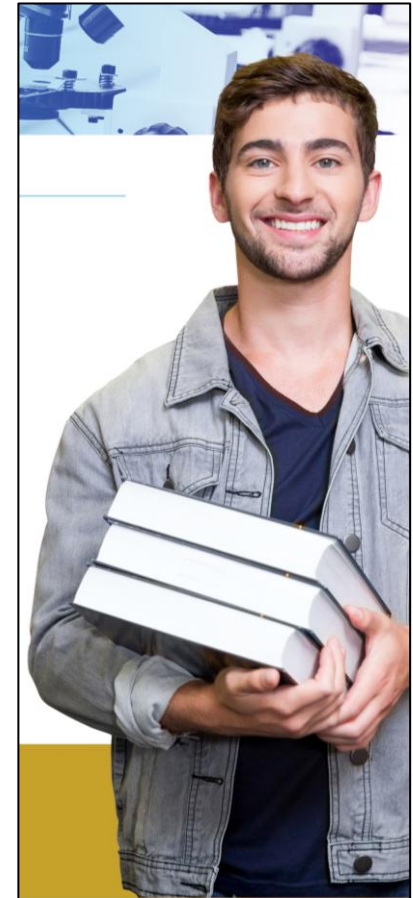
5 June 2025

# Project overview



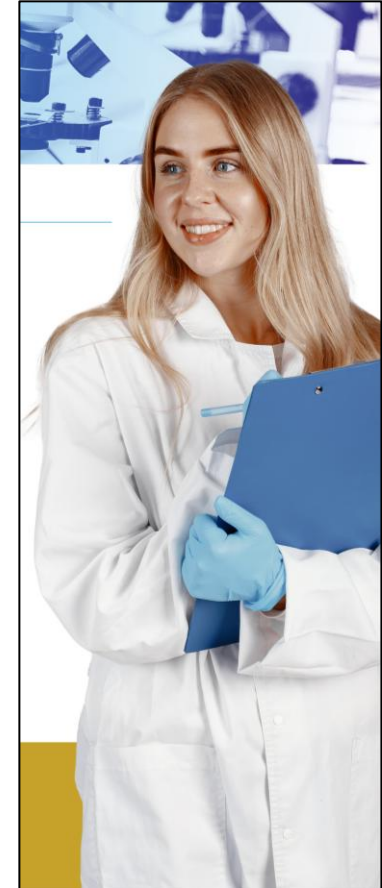
# Western Balkans Mobility Scheme in a nutshell I

- Three **objectives** of the scheme:
  - Fostering brain circulation and encourage brain retain within the WB at an early stage of the researchers' careers
  - Supporting excellence in research in the WB
  - Promoting and increasing the Open Access use of research infrastructure (RI) across the Western Balkans
- Building on previous experiences (e.g. Danube Region Rectors Conference, Report International Service Facility (2021) "Researchers' Mobility in the Western Balkans")
- Aiming for sustainability through a follow-up of the mobility scheme to be funded by regional, economy-level or international stakeholders



## Western Balkans Mobility Scheme in a nutshell II

- Project must cover a short-term mobility by young researchers (between two weeks and two months)
- Use of specialised equipment or facilities (research infrastructure) in another WB to do research
- All thematic research areas eligible (particular welcome: twin transition, relevant for strategies such as S3)
- Maximum 5.000 EURO per grant, eligible costs: (1) travel costs and living allowances as unit costs, (2) accession fees, consumables etc. by host institution, (3) costs for exploitation of project results (publication of scientific article, etc.)
- Project contract with the young researcher



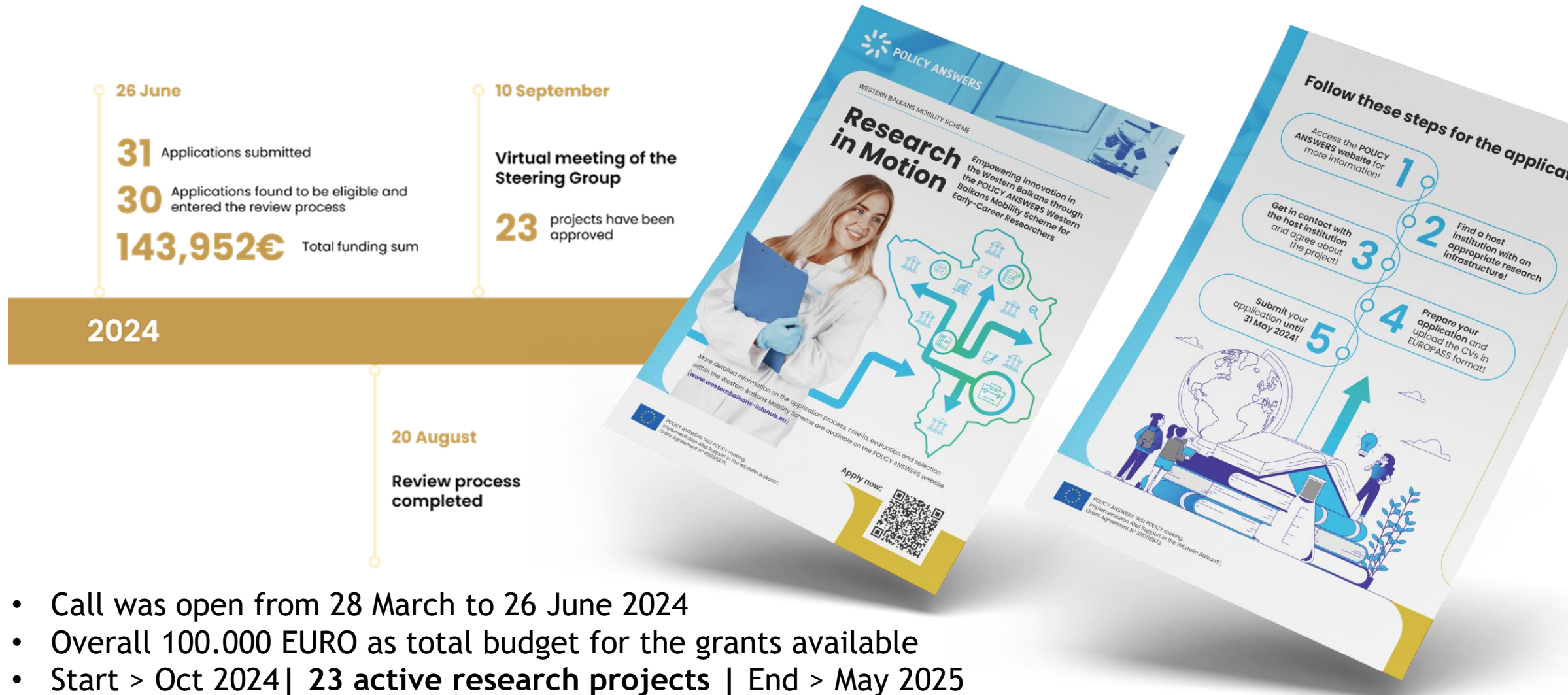
# Process and evaluation

- Promotion through Western Balkans Info Hub ([www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu](http://www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu)) and project partners (at least one partner in each WB)
- Robust and complex process managed by DLR Projektträger
- Easy to approach experts for the evaluation (thematically open, needs a broad set of evaluators to choose from)
- Slight flexibility in the selection through a Steering Group meeting





# Selection and timeline



## WP5 REGIONAL PILOT ACTIVITIES

# Statistics

Distribution of applications according to economy of home institutions

ALB	BIH	XKX*	MNE	MKD	SRB
3	8	3	3	6	8

Status of early-career researcher (ECR)

PhD student	Postdoc
17	14

Distribution of applications according to economy of host institutions

ALB	BIH	XKX	MNE	MKD	SRB
4	5	2	4	3	13

Experience in international research mobility  
(number of stays abroad)

0	up to 5	more than 5
12	18	1

Distribution of applications according to classification of R&D

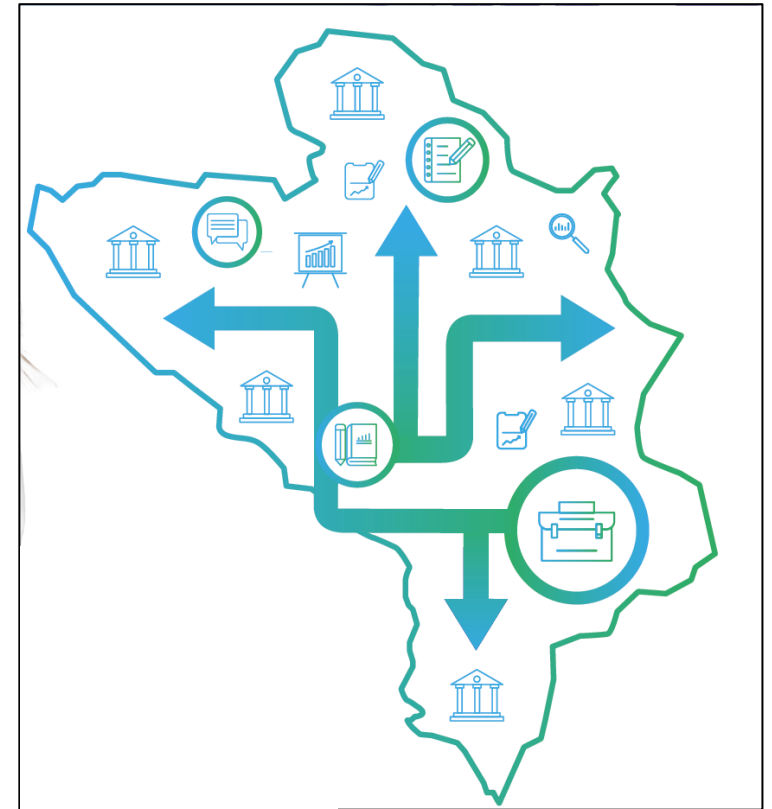
Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	Engineering and Technology	Humanities	Medical and Health Sciences	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
0	5	4	5	6	11

Gender of ECR

female	male
17	14

## Western Balkans Mobility Scheme: First evaluation results I

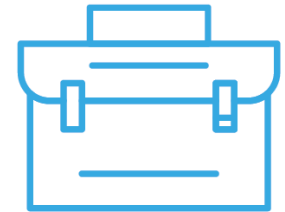
- The pilot measure addressed a relevant need and topic which is of interest for young researchers in the WB (31 applications received)
- However, a good dissemination and promotion strategy is of high importance in order to reach the target group (since without a prolongation of the deadline and improved promotion activities only ten applications would have been submitted)
- Each economy provided at least three applicants, which is an excellent result regarding the variety in number of researchers and size of innovation system within the six economies.





# Western Balkans Mobility Scheme: First evaluation results II

- The quality of applications proved to be high
  - Out of the 31 applications only one was not eligible
  - Out of the 30 applications that entered the review process, a total of 26 have been above threshold indicating their recommendation to be funded
- With 31 applications submitted and 23 projects funded the success rate is around 74%
  - This is a good rate, combining a slightly competitive approach with very strong motivating and positive signals
  - Against the background that this scheme addresses young researchers with little to no experience in competitive funding procedures it seemed to be appropriate to fund as much applicants as possible
  - With the 23 projects the budget was fully exhausted.



# Examples

A selection of awarded projects

- “Green Membranes”
- “The Case for Market Regionalisation”
- “Balkans: Understanding Diet and Health”
- “Green Technology for Pesticide Removal”
- “Balkan Accession: Realising Goals and Addressing Integration Needs”
- ...



**Dr. Dorajet Imeri,**  
Assistant Professor in Political Science  
at the University of Prishtina  
during his stay at the South-East European  
University in North Macedonia  
in the context of his WBMS project.



# Summary

### What has worked well?

- Building on previous schemes
- Cooperation with Rectors Conferences
- Recruiting of evaluator experts
- Cooperation with the Steering Group and selection
- Communication with the grantees

### What challenges have you encountered?

- Promotion takes time, deadline had to be postponed
- Administrative issues, e.g. it was difficult to grant extensions because of the wording in the call (“lessons learned” for the project team)
- Collecting success stories

- The projects are still running, and the evaluation process will start after all projects are finished.
- Our overall impression so far is that everything went well.

**Elke Dall (ZSI) and  
Ralf Hanatschek and Malte Schrage-Veltins (DLR-PT)**

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**THANK  
YOU!**