

# Research and Innovation

March 2026

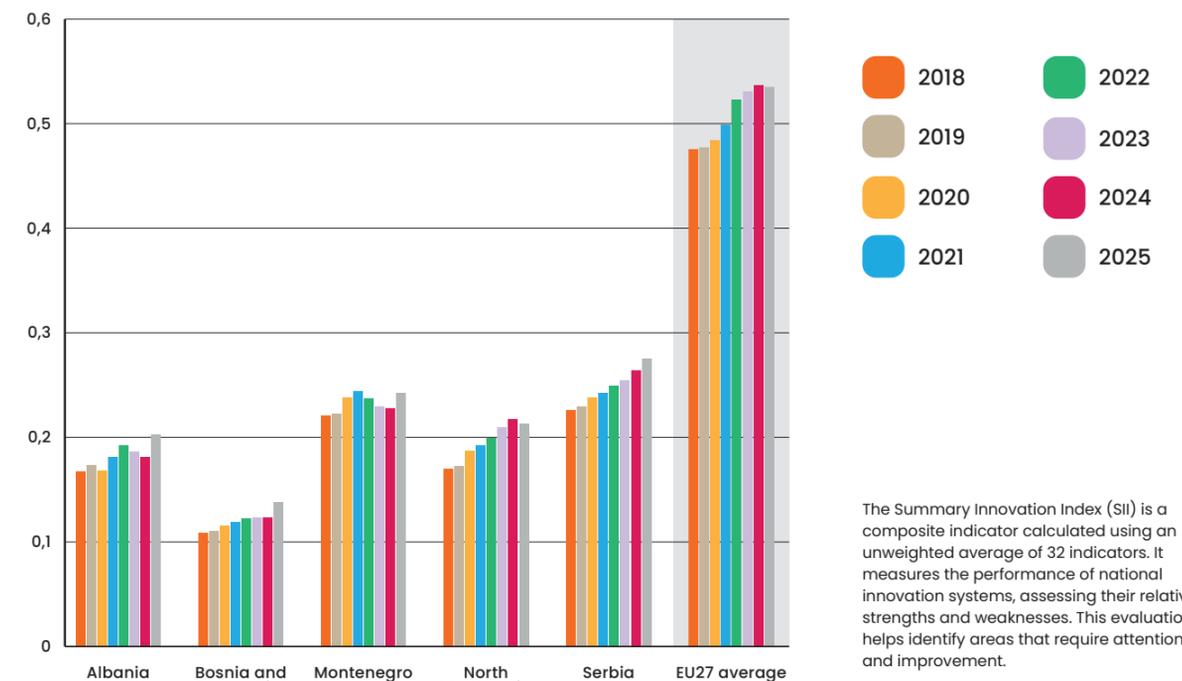
The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is a long-term strategy from the EU and the Western Balkans (WB) for cooperation with the region. It will contribute to the region's economic and societal development, building on three main pillars: Political, Thematic, and Regional.

The project POLICY ANSWERS monitors the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda, and the broader context, progress and achievements are summarised in regular reports. In this Monitoring Card, you will find the results of the fourth round of data collection in 2025 and at the beginning of 2026, in comparison to the data collected in the previous third monitoring round.

In terms of Research and Innovation, the monitoring focuses on the context indicator "Summary Innovation Index" and various achievements outlined in the WB Agenda (see next page).

## Achievements in a wider context of the Western Balkans Agenda

Summary Innovation Index



The Summary Innovation Index (SII) is a composite indicator calculated using an unweighted average of 32 indicators. It measures the performance of national innovation systems, assessing their relative strengths and weaknesses. This evaluation helps identify areas that require attention and improvement.

**Note**  
Data for Kosovo\* not available

**Source**  
[https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/publications/all-publications/european-innovation-score-board-2025\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/publications/all-publications/european-innovation-score-board-2025_en) (accessed November 10, 2025).

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



## Strengthening Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans: The POLICY ANSWERS project

POLICY ANSWERS is a strategic initiative funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WESteRn BalkanS". The project focuses on enhancing research and innovation (R&I) policymaking and governance systems in the Western Balkans, while also addressing aspects of education, culture, youth, and sports. By providing essential support to the region's development, POLICY ANSWERS plays a crucial role in strengthening the Western Balkans' potential for successful participation in regional and multilateral research and innovation activities.

### Partners



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POLICY ANSWERS, "R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WESteRn BalkanS", is a Horizon Europe project funded by the European Commission, Grant Agreement N° 101058873.

Regional Indicators

WB Steering Platform on R&I meetings	WB policy dialogue under the Berlin Process	POLICY ANSWERS project Start of new Horizon Europe project for continuation of activities in April 2026
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Western Balkans Economy Indicators

Supporting Western Balkans' reforms for science and research alignment with the EU acquis Participation in European programmes, initiatives and schemes									
Indicator and overall assessment of the region	Bilateral/twinning projects under Chapter 25 (Science and Research)	Governments to increase GDP allocations to R&I	Trend in R&I data availability	Integration in the European Research Area (ERA)	Participation in European Partnerships under Horizon Europe (HE)	Western Balkans participation in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) initiatives			
<b>Albania</b>	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects	No new funding schemes reported Increased number of beneficiaries % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Upward trend in European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) data availability	High and increasing percentage of Open Access publications Below EU average success rate in Horizon Europe (HE) participation (10.56%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU Member States (MS)	Participation in 2 Partnerships / no new participation in the monitoring period	Increased participation in EIT HEI (Higher Education Initiative) EIT Community RIS (Regional Innovation Scheme) and EIT KIC RawMaterials Hubs established Increased number of pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Increased number of bilateral R&D projects No new Twinning projects reported	Increased number of funding schemes and beneficiaries % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Downward trend in EIS data availability	Moderately high but increasing percentage of Open Access publications Below EU average success rate in HE participation (12.68%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU MS	No participation in HE Partnerships mapped on the ERA-LEARN platform	Increased participation in EIT HEI EIT Community RIS Hub under preparation Increased number of pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			
<b>Kosovo</b>	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects	Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Constantly insufficient data availability	High and increasing percentage of Open Access publications Below EU average success rate in HE participation (9.25%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU MS	No participation in HE Partnerships	No new participation in EIT HEI EIT Community RIS Hub not yet established Increased number of pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			
<b>Montenegro</b>	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects	Increased number of funding schemes and beneficiaries % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Downward trend in EIS data availability	High and increasing percentage of Open Access publications Below EU average success rate in HE participation (11.31%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU MS	Participation in 3 Partnerships / involvement in one new participation in the monitoring period	Increased participation in EIT HEI EIT Community RIS Hub established No new pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects	Decreased number of funding schemes and beneficiaries % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Downward trend in EIS data availability	High and increasing percentage of Open Access publications Below EU average success rate in HE participation (11.21%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU MS	Participation in 1 Partnership / no new participation in the monitoring period	Increased participation in EIT HEI EIT Community RIS Hub operational Increased number of pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			
<b>Serbia</b>	Increased number of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects	Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	Downward trend in EIS data availability, but best in the region	High and increasing percentage of Open Access publications Close to EU average success rate in HE participation (15.3%) Increased number of joint HE projects with EU MS	Participation in 2 Partnerships / no new participation in the monitoring period	Increased participation in EIT HEI EIT Community RIS Hub established Increased number of pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative			

Legend: On track or maintaining achievement | Moderately improving Challenges remain | Stagnating Significant challenges | Decreasing Major challenges | Information not available

Highlights

Successful implementation of innovation-related reforms and digitalisation milestones contributing to the Growth Plan objectives  
Strong participation of the Western Balkans in Horizon Europe: enhancing cooperation in the European R&I system  
Increased participation of the Western Balkans in the EIT Higher Education Initiative

