POLICY ANSWERS

General and specific recommendations to improve the position of Albania in the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS)

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List of Abbreviations

AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
AKEP	Electronic and Postal Communications Authority of Albania
AKKSHI	National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation
AKPA	National Agency for Employment and Skills
AKSHI	National Agency for Information Society
AL	Albania
AP	Albanian EIS Action Plan (Ministry of Economy and Innovation, Order No. 179)
CIS	Community Innovation Survey
COST	European Cooperation in Science and Technology
DPPI	General Directorate of Industrial Property
EC	European Commission
EIS	European Innovation Scoreboard
EU	European Union
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
EUREKA	EUREKA Network - intergovernmental initiative to support cooperation between European industry and research institutes in the field of advanced technologies
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
GDIP	see DPPI
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	Gigabit Infrastructure Act
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MEI	Ministry of Economy and Innovation
MIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy

NASRI	see AKKSHI
PBA	Medium-Term Budgetary Program
PIKSH	Scientific Research Infrastructure Projects
PKKZH	National Research and Development Programs
PTI	National Technology and Innovation Programme
R&D	Research and Development
STEM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
VHCN	Very High-Capacity Network
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation

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1. Introduction

The European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) is the European Commission's (EC) annual benchmarking instrument for national innovation systems. It provides a comparative assessment of research and innovation performance across European Union (EU) Member States, but also neighbouring countries helping policymakers identify structural strengths and weaknesses and prioritise reforms.

In the EIS 2025 edition[1], Albania was classified as an 'Emerging Innovator', performing at 37.9 % of the EU average in 2025. It ranked 35th among the EU and neighbouring countries (39 countries in total). Its performance is below the average of 'Emerging Innovators' in the EU and neighbouring countries (37.9 % vs 46.0 % of the EU average in 2025).

In December 2025, the Ministry of Economy and Innovation (MEI) formally adopted an Action Plan, Order No. 179 — committing Albania to a structured programme of reforms aimed at reaching the 'Moderate Innovator' status by the end of 2030. Achieving this goal requires a sustained, multi-year effort across all four EIS pillars: Framework Conditions, Investments, Innovation Activities, and Impacts.

This document serves as an operational roadmap to support that effort. It is organised in two parts. The first part sets out general recommendations that address systemic weaknesses affecting performance across multiple indicators simultaneously, namely public governance, the statistical coverage, the financing instruments and the data infrastructure. The second part of this document provides specific recommendations for some of the indicators, mainly those where Albania's current position offers the most actionable improvement potential within the 2026–2030 window, and where targeted policy and statistical interventions can produce measurable improvements in the EIS ranking.

This document was elaborated based on desk research, semi-structured interviews involving the following organisations: the Albanian statistical office (INSTAT), Eurostat, the DG RTD and group interviews with Albanian public institutions directly or indirectly involved in the development of the EIS indicators (MEI, NASRI, AIDA, etc).

The document is structured as follows. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 sets out a series of general recommendations applicable to all indicators. These recommendations could be applied to the Albanian system to achieve medium- and long-term results by 2030. Chapter 3 provides specific recommendations for a limited number of indicators selected for their high potential to deliver results. Finally, the document concludes with some general observations and information on the possible future development of the EIS that may be of interest to Albanian institutions.

Table 1 below provides a diagnostic overview of Albania's position in the European Innovation Scoreboard 2025 by grouping indicators into four categories: low performance, satisfactory performance, with margin for improvement and missing indicators.

It shows that Albania performs particularly weakly in several core innovation inputs and outputs, including Research and Development (R&D) expenditure, scientific co-publications, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists, patents, and knowledge-intensive exports, with many of these indicators ranked near the bottom of the EIS distribution. At the same time, the table highlights some relative strengths, such as sales of innovative products, employment in

[1] European Innovation Scoreboard. (2025). https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/publications/all-publications/european-innovation-scoreboard-2025_en. Accessed 7 April 2026.

innovative enterprises and certain environmental productivity measures, where Albania performs better.

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Table 1: List of EIS indicators and ranking for Albania.

Indicator code	Indicator name	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Covered by the AL Action Plan in terms of measurement (Yes/No)
Indicators showing a low performance			
1.1.3	Percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning	36	Yes
1.2.1	International scientific co-publications per million population	38	No
2.1.1	R&D expenditure in the public sector (percentage of GDP)	38	Yes
2.2.1	R&D expenditure in the business sector (percentage of GDP)	36	No
2.3.2	ICT specialists (as a percentage of total employment)	38	Yes
3.2.2	Public-private co-publications per million population	38	No
3.3.1	PCT patent applications per billion GDP (in PPS)	38	Yes
3.3.2	Trademark applications per billion GDP (in PPS)	38	Yes
4.2.1	Exports of medium- and high-technology products as a share of total product exports	37	No
4.2.2	Knowledge-intensive services exports as a percentage of total services exports	39	No
Indicators showing a satisfactory performance			
1.1.2	Percentage of population aged 25-34 having completed tertiary education	27	Yes
3.1.1	SMEs introducing product innovations (percentage of SMEs)	25	Yes
3.1.2	SMEs introducing business process innovations (percentage of SMEs)	25	Yes
3.2.1	Innovative SMEs collaborating with others (percentage of SMEs)	28	No
4.1.1	Sales of new-to-market and new-to-enterprise innovations as a percentage of turnover	1	No

Indicator code	Indicator name	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Covered by the AL Action Plan in terms of measurement (Yes/No)
4.1.2	Employment in innovative enterprises	22	No
4.3.1	Resource productivity	29	Yes
4.3.2	Production-based CO_2 productivity	21	Yes
Indicators with potential margin for improvement			
1.1.1	New doctorate graduates in STEM	34	Yes
1.2.2	Top 10% cited publications	30	No
1.2.3	Foreign doctorate students as a percentage of all doctorate students	35	Yes
1.3.2	Individuals with above-basic digital skills	34	Yes
2.2.2	Non-R&D innovation expenditures (percentage of turnover)	35	Yes
2.3.1	Cloud computing in enterprises	31	Yes
3.3.3	Design applications per billion GDP (PPS)	31	Yes
Missing indicators for Albania			
1.3.1	High-speed internet access		Yes
2.1.2	Venture capital expenditures (percentage of GDP)		No
2.1.3	Direct government funding and government tax support for business R&D (percentage of GDP)		No
2.2.3	Innovation expenditures per person employed		No
3.2.3	Job-to-job mobility of Human Resources in Science and Technology		No
4.2.3	High-tech imports from outside the EU27		No
4.3.3	Labour productivity		No

2. General recommendations

The Albanian EIS Action Plan, adopted through Order No. 179 of 30 December 2025, is an official document that can be regarded as a starting point for improving Albania's position in the EIS. It sets out the policy priorities and measures intended to improve Albania's EIS performance over the period 2026–2030. However, many of its measures still lack operational detail. The analytical framework developed in this document points to recurring gaps in baselines, quantified targets, budget allocation and monitoring arrangements.

The following recommendations apply to all EIS indicators on which Albania reports or is expected to report and are intended to cover all aspects involved in their production and monitoring.

2.1. Strengthen governance and monitoring

To ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement of Albania's innovation and statistical monitoring frameworks, it is essential to establish robust governance and reporting mechanisms as described in the two following recommendations:

- **Set up regular (quarterly) monitoring meetings** (until at least the EIS 2027 report) with responsible officers from the National Statistical office (INSTAT), the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI, AKKSHI in Albanian), the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), the National Agency for Employment and Skills (AKPA in Albanian), General Directorate of Industrial Property (GDIP, DPPI in Albanian), and other involved institutions coordinated by the General Directorate of Innovation and Technology within the MEI.
- **Design an annual reporting framework** requiring all institutions responsible for collecting data for the EIS indicators and formulating the policy measures (Ministry of Education, NASRI (AKKSHI), AIDA, AKPA, AKEP, DPPI, MIE, etc.) to submit annual implementation reports to the MEI by the first quarter each year. This mechanism can serve internal coordination and policy follow-up purposes, and it would also support the implementation of the recommendations set out in the EC Albania 2025 Report[2], in particular those concerning the production of reliable statistics and data on innovation, science and technology.

2.2. Improve statistical reporting

For the year 2025, Albania has reported for 25 out of the 32 indicators included in the EIS which were collected, processed and calculated by INSTAT. Out of 25 reported indicators, 13 are based on data collected through statistical surveys by INSTAT, while the other indicators are reported through administrative sources.

Seven indicators are still missing which have a direct effect on Albania's ranking.

The following recommendations are the quickest and most effective possible in the short and medium term.

1. **Statistical gap closure:** Commission a dedicated INSTAT statistical gap-closure programme with European Statistical Office (Eurostat) technical assistance, targeting reaching at least 29 of 32 indicators by EIS 2027.
2. **Indicators prioritisation:** set priorities on the missing indicators to tackle first. INSTAT is

[2] Commission Staff Working Document. Albania Report 2025. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2025_en. Accessed 7 April 2026.

working on collecting the data for three missing indicators:

- 1.3.1 High speed internet access: data are already collected from the Electronic and Postal Communications Authority of Albania (AKEP) for the last 5 years. MEI in collaboration with AKEP and INSTAT need to resolve the methodological gap between AKEP administrative data (subscriptions) and the Eurostat survey-based approach, a harmonisation study is needed before the indicator can be credibly reported.
- 2.2.3 Innovation expenditures per person employed: in progress.
- 4.2.3 High-tech imports from outside of the EU27: in progress.

MEI, which is coordinating the AP, should also set up a plan and allocate budget to cover the other four missing indicators.

2.3. Make measures more operational and closely linked to EIS definitions

A recurring issue is that several measures targeting EIS indicators and covered by the Action plan are relevant in a broad policy sense but are not yet sufficiently connected to the exact indicator definitions used in the EIS (the value of that indicator change in the short-medium term can be seen). Measures should therefore be reformulated in a more operational way.

The recommendations are the following:

1. For each measure, specify the responsible institution, main output, implementation timeframe and target group.
2. Check each proposed measure against the numerator, denominator and data source of the corresponding EIS indicator.
3. Prioritise measures that are realistic in the short to medium term and can be monitored through existing institutional structures.

Example: The "Stipendium Hungaricum" programme[3]

Hungary provides a useful example of how a scholarship policy can support progress on EIS-relevant indicators, especially in the Human resources and Attractive research systems dimensions, which include indicators such as new doctorate graduates, international scientific co-publications and foreign doctorate students. Hungary combined internationalisation scholarships with research-oriented doctoral support. On the one hand, the Stipendium Hungaricum programme was designed to increase the number of international students in Hungary, including at doctoral level and on the other hand, the Cooperative Doctoral Programme[4] supported doctoral students conducting research in cooperation with businesses. These instruments did not tackle all of Hungary's innovation weaknesses, but Hungary's EIS profile showed improvements in indicators linked to research talent and internationalisation. Between 2018 and 2025, performance rose by 112.5 points in foreign doctorate students, by 11.6 points in new doctorate graduates and by 16.1 points in international scientific co-publications[5]. This suggests that scholarships can be more than social support: when targeted to doctoral training, international attraction and science-business collaboration, they can also function as a concrete innovation policy tool.

[3] Stipendium Hungaricum. https://stipendiumhungaricum.hu/about/. Accessed 7 April 2026.
[4] Cooperative Doctoral Programme for Doctoral Scholarships. https://nkfih.gov.hu/english/nrdi-fund/cooperative-doctoral-programme-kdp-2023. Accessed 7 April 2026.
[5] EIS report for Hungary. (2025). https://ec.europa.eu/assets/rtd/eis/2025/ec_rtd_eis-country-profile-hu.pdf. Accessed 7 April 2026.

2.4. Build an evidence base for evaluation and policy learning

Over the years, Albania has accumulated substantial administrative data across different areas such as education, labour market (employer-employee linked data); however, these datasets remain fragmented and not easily accessible across institutions (i.e. ministries).

This institutional fragmentation hampers the ability to:

- exchange data in real time;
- set up an evaluation process to know whether innovation measures are working (for example evaluating the effects of grant allocations on outcomes).

A useful institutional example is Hungary's reform of 2007. Hungary introduced a legal framework[6] that allowed the anonymised use of administrative data under strict conditions and created an institutional mechanism for linking datasets through irreversible identifiers. The reform supported scientific research and the ex-post evaluation of public policies and EU-funded programmes but also facilitated data linkage across institutions.

The relevant lesson for Albania is not that such a reform automatically and directly improves innovation performance and its EIS ranking, but that legal clarity and a trusted institutional structure are essential for the use of administrative data for statistical reporting (EIS indicators based on administrative data), monitoring and evaluation purposes.

In terms of operational recommendations, the next steps could be:

1. Assess the feasibility of a legal and institutional framework for the anonymised linkage and controlled sharing of administrative data across public institutions.
2. Clarify which institution should coordinate secure data linkage and access for statistical and research purposes.
3. Use linked data gradually to improve policy monitoring, evaluation and evidence-based adjustments to the action plan.

2.5. Counterfactual simulation: where would Albania have ranked with complete data?

Albania's current EIS composite score is computed over 25 of 32 indicators. The seven missing indicators are not assigned with a zero score but are just excluded from the calculation of the EIS summary index. This means Albania's current ranking is based on an incomplete picture of its innovation system, and the direction of the bias is still unknown: Albania might rank higher or lower with full data availability, depending on its performance on the missing indicators.

Before investing in new policy measures, it is analytically essential to understand what Albania's score would have been if the missing indicators had been available.

To address these uncertainties and allow the prioritisation among missing indicators, a counterfactual simulation exercise could be commissioned. For each of the seven missing EIS indicators, Albania could reconstruct the best available estimate of past values (2018–2024) using existing survey or administrative sources. These reconstructed values should then be entered into the EIS composite score formula to simulate Albania's counterfactual ranking in each year. The simulation answers a policy-critical question: is Albania's 35th ranking an accurate reflection of its innovation system?

[6] Scharle, Á. (2019). Hungary: A Case study on improving access to administrative data in a low-trust environment. In: Crato, N., Paruolo, P. (eds) Data-Driven Policy Impact Evaluation. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78461-8_8

2.6. Introducing targeted enabling instruments

A focused set of practical instruments that support innovation, skills and business upgrading would strengthen the implementation of AP. The emphasis should remain on feasibility and institutional readiness rather than on many new initiatives.

- Consider targeted instruments that support business innovation, skills upgrading and stronger science-business collaboration (e.g., innovation vouchers, matchmaking platform for scientists and entrepreneurs, strengthening participation of Albanian companies in EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, support to the innovation hubs).
- Align new instruments with the weakest areas of Albania's research and innovation system, especially where the current plan contains no clear operational mechanism.

3. Specific recommendations for proposed measures in the Action Plan

This section covers a selection of EIS indicators that are more likely to implement recommendations with a medium-to-long-term impact by 2030. It also addresses the issue of missing indicators, which affect Albania's overall EIS score.

3.1. Indicators with potential margin for improvement

The selected indicators in this group represent Albania's most actionable EIS improvement opportunities. Their ranks range from 30th to 35th — significantly below the EU average but not at the structural floor of rank 38–39 where movement requires decade-long investment. Each indicator card below presents the current measures, operational recommendations for improving their specificity, budget considerations and measurement issues identified in the analytical framework.

Indicator 1.1.1 - New doctorate graduates in STEM

1.1.1 | New doctorate graduates in STEM | EIS 2025 Rank: 34 | Covered by AP: Yes	
Data owner	Ministry of Education | NASRI (AKKSHI)
Measurement (numerator/ denominator)	Number of doctorate graduates in STEM fields (ISCED 8) / Population aged 25–34

Measure: M1. To improve the normative acts related to the determination of priority fields of scientific research.

Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: 2030

Recommendation: Relevant measure but currently too broad. Priority field determination must rest on an evidence-based methodology that combines a) labour market demand data; b) data on PhD enrolment and completion statistics; and c) research performance metrics (using data from Scopus).

The methodology should be reviewed every 3 years and published. The proposal related to the

determination of priority fields is closely linked to Measure M5 of this indicator as reported below which says that the National Science Council meeting should formally mandate this methodology as its first output. This would help ensure that prioritisation effectively supports an increase in the number of STEM doctorate graduates.

Albania is also part of the Smart Specialisation initiative but there is no mention of it in the AP.

Budget: Low-budget measure. Costs are principally for external methodological expertise, including data work. No budget is specified in the AP.

Measure: M2. To prioritise funding within the National Programmes for project proposals in STEM fields.

Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: 2026 onwards

Recommendation: Operationalise through named instruments:

- STEM Doctoral Fellowships — annual competitive awards covering tuition and stipend for 3-year STEM PhDs.
- Thesis-Completion Grants for PhD candidates in final year.
- Industrial Doctorate co-financing scheme with private sector co-sponsors (minimum 30 % industry contribution).
- Cotutelle/joint degree agreements with EU universities.
- Diaspora Co-Supervision Programme pairing candidates with Albanian researchers abroad.

Each instrument needs an annual beneficiary target and ISCED-8 STEM field tracking.

Budget: Budget plan should be specified. Given the direct funding implications of this measure, the action plan should indicate the annual financial envelope, source of financing, implementation mechanism and the expected number of beneficiaries for each instrument supporting STEM doctoral training.

Measure: M3. Prioritise STEM in national programme calls (PKKZH, PTI).
Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: Annual calls

Recommendation: This is a relevant supporting measure. By prioritising STEM fields in national research programme calls, it can reinforce the research environment that supports doctoral training. Its contribution to the indicator would be stronger if combined with direct support for STEM PhD enrolment and completion (e.g. provide the most updated data).

Publish annual results disaggregated by ISCED field.

Current STEM PhD enrolment and completion data should be published as baseline before the next call.

Budget: Implemented via existing AKKSHI funding envelopes in annual calls, with potential additional budget allocations if needed to strengthen STEM research capacity and doctoral training.

Measure: M4. Prioritise STEM in PIKSH infrastructure programme.

Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: Annual calls

Recommendation: Related to M3. Infrastructure investment should follow research priority decisions from M1. Add a specific criterion: PIKSH-funded infrastructure must demonstrate capacity to host STEM doctoral researchers, measured by number of PhD positions it enables.

Budget: Costs absorbed within existing PIKSH envelope. Infrastructure investments should be conditional on doctoral training plans.

Measure: M5. To convene the National Science Council for the purpose of determining priority fields.

Institution: Ministry of Education

Timeframe: 25 February 2026

Recommendation: See comments related to Measure M1. The Council's output must be a formally published priority field list, structured to align with ISCED-8 classification so it can be tracked against the EIS indicator.

The Council should also mandate INSTAT to publish annual STEM doctoral graduate data disaggregated by field and gender, since the 2024 data point is currently missing from Eurostat.

Budget: No budget is specified in the AP.

Indicator 1.2.2 - Top 10% most cited scientific publications

1.2.2|Top 10 % most cited scientific publications| EIS 2025 Rank: 30|Covered by AP: Yes	
Data owner	NASRI (AKKSHI) | Ministry of Education | Scopus data
Measurement (numerator / denominator)	Scientific publications among the top-10 % most cited worldwide / Total number of scientific publications

Measure: M1. To increase the funding of national programs by AKKSHI that will improve the number of publications in foreign indexed journal.

Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: 2030

Recommendation: This measure as written targets quantity (more publications) rather than quality (top 10 % citations). The EIS indicator measures citation impact, not publication count.

Reframe this measure M1 as a Research Excellence Fund with two components:

- a Citation Bonus — additional payment to research teams whose Scopus-indexed publications achieve top-quartile citation rates within 24 months of publication;
- open-access mandates for all AKKSHI-funded publications, since open-access articles typically receive significantly higher citations.

Set a 5-year target: increase Albania's share of top-10 % cited publications from the current level to the EU accession candidate average.

Budget: No budget is specified in the AP.

Measure: M2. To index the national journals published by higher education institutions

according to the criteria defined in Order No. 36 dated 24.1.2023 "Për miratimin e rregullores për krijimin e regjistrit shtetëror të revistave shkencore që botohen në Republikën e Shqipërisë" (in English: For the approval of the regulation on the establishment of the state register of scientific journals published in the Republic of Albania for categories of journals within the country).

Institution: NASRI (AKKSHI)

Timeframe: 2030

Recommendation: This measure supports long-term domestic research quality but does not directly drive top-10 % Scopus citations, which reflect international citation networks.

More importantly, it is to add a measure requiring Albanian researchers to submit publications to high-impact international journals in their fields.

AKKSHI should publish a list of target journals (by discipline) aligned with the fields where Albanian researchers are most active in Scopus.

Budget: No budget is specified in the AP.

Measurement issues: This indicator relies on Scopus data processed by Science-Metrix for the European Commission. Albania has no direct control over this data source. AKKSHI (NASRI) should establish a real-time Scopus monitoring dashboard tracking Albanian institutional affiliations, citation counts and field-weighted citation impact, so that policy interventions can be calibrated before EIS reporting cycles.

Indicator 1.2.3 - Foreign doctorate students as a percentage of all doctorate students

1.2.3|Foreign doctorate students (% of all doctorate students)|EIS 2025 Rank: 35|Covered by AP: Yes	
Data owner	Ministry of Education
Measurement (numerator/ denominator)	Number of doctorate students from foreign countries / Total number of doctorate students

Measure: M1. To increase cooperation with foreign universities with a focus on internationalization.

Institution: Ministry of Education

Timeframe: 2030

Recommendation: This measure is too generic and has no defined output target. To move this indicator, Albania needs foreign doctoral students to enrol in Albanian universities.

That requires:

- a dedicated incoming scholarship scheme, suggest at minimum number of foreign doctoral fellowships/year by 2027;
- Doctoral programmes held in English language in at least two fields of research strength (e.g., Agriculture);
- Create Centres of Excellence (under indicator 1.2.1) designated as the hosting institutions which could also make use of excellent researchers from the Albanian diaspora as well as foreign researchers;

- simplified residence permit procedures for incoming doctoral researchers (requires coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs).

Budget: No budget is specified in the current AP.

Indicator 2.3.1 - Cloud computing in enterprises

2.3.1 | Cloud computing in enterprises | EIS 2025 Rank: 31 | Covered by AP: Yes	
Data owner	AKSHI | INSTAT
Measurement (numerator/ denominator)	Enterprises (10+ employees) using intermediate or sophisticated cloud services / Total number of enterprises with 10+ employees

Measure: M1. Modernise government systems using cloud platform technologies.

Institution: National Agency for Information Society (AKSHI) and INSTAT.

Timeframe: Not specified.

Recommendation: This measure targets government systems, but the EIS indicator measures cloud adoption by enterprises (10+ employees). Government cloud adoption does not directly move this indicator.

The measure must be redirected to enterprise cloud adoption.

Operational recommendations:

- MEI and AKSHI may evaluate to reframe it as a dual programme — government cloud modernisation (for public administration efficiency) and for example, add an enterprise cloud adoption subsidy scheme.
- AKSHI could publish annual enterprise cloud adoption statistics in coordination with INSTAT's ICT enterprise survey.

Budget: No budget is specified in the current AP.

3.2. Indicators with satisfactory performance

The AP covers all the indicators under the "Innovation activities" pillar. For indicators with satisfactory performance (3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.2.1), the AP provides effective measures, such as creating innovative schemes for research programmes that strengthen cooperation with the business sector. They specify the timeframe and budget for each measure. The responsible stakeholders are NASRI (AKKSHI) and AIDA.

The AP effectively addresses the low performance indicators within the same pillar, such as: 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, as well as 3.3.3, which has room for improvement.

3.3. Missing indicators

Table 1 in the introduction shows that the AP only covers one of the missing indicators, namely 1.3.1 in operational terms. The specific suggestions are provided below.

Indicator 1.3.1 - High-speed internet access

1.3.1 | High-speed internet access EIS 2025 Rank: missing | Covered by AP: Yes	
Data owner	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE) | AKEP | INSTAT
Measurement (numerator/ denominator)	Number of households with fixed very high-capacity network (VHCN) connection / Total number of households

Measure: M1. To improve the legal framework for high-speed networks / transposition of the EU Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA).

Institution: MIE

Timeframe: 2026

Recommendation: This is a relevant regulatory measure. The AP should specify which legal acts need to be adopted or amended, which authority is responsible for implementation, what concrete output is expected and how progress will be monitored.

Since this EIS indicator is defined in terms of household access to fixed very high-capacity network connections, the legal reform should be explicitly linked to measurable improvements in VHCN coverage and reporting.

The measure should also clarify how MIE, AKEP and INSTAT will coordinate so that regulatory progress is translated into data that can be reported consistently under the EIS framework.

Budget: No budget is specified in the current AP.

Updates: INSTAT has already confirmed that in collaboration with AKEP they will submit data on this indicator for the last five years by end of April 2026.

Measure: M2. To invest in covering white areas.

Institution: MIE

Timeframe: 2026–2030

Recommendation: This measure is relevant, but it should be made more operational. The Action Plan should specify the current share of households not covered, identify the white areas to be targeted, estimate the number of households concerned, indicate the financing instrument to be used, and define a coverage target by year.

To make the measure useful for the EIS indicator, investments should be directly linked to expanding fixed very high-capacity network access at household level, rather than to broadband infrastructure in general.

The annual progress reporting should be built into the measure so that infrastructure rollout can be translated into credible statistical reporting.

Budget: No specified costs in the current AP.

Indicator 4.3.3 - Labour productivity

4.3.3 | Labour productivity | EIS 2025 Rank: missing | Covered by AP: No	
Data owner	INSTAT | Ministry of Economy and Innovation
Measurement (numerator/ denominator)	Real GDP in chain-linked volumes/Total hours worked

Measure: No specific measure is currently included in the Action Plan.

Timeframe: 2026

Recommendation: labour productivity is currently missing from Albania's EIS reporting. Albania reports data on the numerator (Real GDP in chain-linked volumes) but does not report data on total hours worked. In the medium term, Albania should develop a more robust system of labour accounts linking national accounts, Labour Force Survey data, business statistics, and administrative data where available. The experience of other Member States shows that there is no single model: countries such as the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Malta and Cyprus use administrative sources to estimate hours worked, although the exact source combinations vary. Information on data sources is available in the employment questionnaires from 2023 (sources of hours worked, from question 2.8)[7] and more detail in the country metadata files[8]. Albania should therefore adopt a pragmatic approach based on available national data and methodological consistency with Eurostat standards. As part of this process, INSTAT should review the 2023 Eurostat employment questionnaires, particularly the information on sources of hours worked, consult the national metadata files mentioned above. This would allow Albania to move towards a credible and internationally comparable labour productivity indicator.

Budget: A budget should be reserved to develop a national methodology for estimating and reporting total hours worked. Although the AP does not currently foresee a specific allocation, resources will be needed for methodological development, technical assistance, inter-institutional coordination and possible adaptation of existing statistical processes.

[7] Employment questionnaires. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/national-accounts/methodology/member-states-accounts/employment-questionnaires. Accessed 10 April 2026.

[8] Population and employment - national accounts. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/nama_10_pe_esms.htm. Accessed 10 April 2026.

4. Concluding remarks and way forward

In the EIS 2025 edition, Albania was classified as an "Emerging Innovator", performing at 37.9% of the EU average and ranking 35th among EU and neighbouring countries. The Albanian EIS Action Plan, adopted through Order No. 179 of 30 December 2025, provides an official framework for improving this position over the period 2026–2030, with the General Directorate of Innovation and Technology at the MEI tasked with coordinating implementation and monitoring.

The analysis developed in this report shows that an increase the ranking in the EIS will depend not only on the relevance of the measures included in the Action Plan, but also on their operationalisation and on the quality of statistical reporting. The main priorities can be summarised as follows: stronger inter-institutional governance and monitoring; faster closure of the data gaps, given that Albania reported 25 of the 32 EIS indicators in 2025; clearer alignment of policy measures with the exact EIS definitions and data sources; gradual development of an evidence base through better use of administrative data; and the introduction of a limited number of targeted enabling instruments in areas where the current framework remains too broad or incomplete.

Overall, the way forward for Albania is to make the existing framework more operational by assigning a clear budget to each measure, defining measurable outputs and targets, and establishing monitoring arrangements that make it possible to assess whether the measures are actually producing the intended changes in the relevant EIS indicators. Effectiveness should be understood as the capacity of each measure not only to exist on paper, but to deliver observable and measurable progress against the targets set. If these priorities are pursued consistently, Albania will be better placed to improve both the completeness of its reporting and the effectiveness of its innovation policy framework.

The (possible) evolution of EIS

The EIS is expected to undergo changes in the near future (possibly from the 2027 edition). The EC wishes for the EIS to adapt to the latest developments in the evaluation of innovation systems across EU Member States. These changes must address the challenges currently facing European research and innovation systems. It is crucial for Albania to anticipate these new requirements from the EC, particularly with regard to the important issue of future data availability.

According to official sources within the EC, the 2027 edition of the EIS could include two new categories of indicators: one or more indicators relating to entrepreneurship, introducing start-ups and scale-ups into the ecosystem landscape and one or more indicators relating to public procurement.

To ensure transparency and a clear understanding of the methodology underlying the EIS, the EC intends to use a limited number of indicators to calculate the EIS score. This number is expected to be capped at 36 (compared to 32 today). It is therefore possible that one or more of the current EIS indicators may be excluded from future editions (the specific indicators are not yet known).

Annex: Summary table of EIS indicators with the specific measures of the Action Plan

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
1.1.1	New doctorate graduates STEM	Yes	34	Indicator with margin of improvement	M1. To improve the normative acts related to the determination of priority fields of scientific research. M2. To prioritise funding within the Doctoral Program for doctoral platforms in STEM fields. M3. To prioritise funding within the National Programmes for project proposals in STEM fields. M4. To prioritise funding by AKKSHI within the framework of PIKSH for research and scientific infrastructures belonging to the STEM fields. M5. To convene the National Science Council for the purpose of determining priority fields.
1.1.2	Percentage population aged 25-34 having completed tertiary education	Yes	27	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. To increase the diversity of academic programmes in the country through the internationalisation of university programmes. At least 3 new agreements with international universities for double degrees or similar collaborations. M2. To profile Higher Education Institutions according to fields. At least 3 profiles.
1.1.3	Percentage population aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning	Yes	36	Low performance indicator	M1. To increase to 20% the number of unemployed jobseekers registered in the AKPA database who are treated with vocational training courses. M2. To establish multifunctional centres in order to increase the number of public providers and the territorial coverage of vocational training.
1.2.1	International scientific co-publications per million population	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To establish and strengthen national scientific centres of excellence that integrate researchers and research resources at the national and international level. M2. To create networks of scientific researchers inside and outside Albania. M3. To increase the number of Albanian researchers who have benefited from research exchange/mobility programs. M4. To increase the number of Albanian researchers participating in international projects such as Horizon Europe or networks such as COST.
1.2.2	top 10% cited publications	Yes	30	Indicator with margin	M1. To increase the funding of national programs by AKKSHI that will improve the number of publications in foreign indexed journals.

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
				of improvement	M2. To index the national journals published by higher education institutions according to the criteria defined in Order No. 36 dated 24.1.2023 "Për miratimin e rregullores për krijimin e regjistrit shtetëror të revistave shkencore që botohen në Republikën e Shqipërisë"(For the approval of the regulation on the establishment of the state register of scientific journals published in the Republic of Albania) for categories of journals within the country.
1.2.3	Foreign doctorate students as a percentage of all doctorate students	Yes	35	Indicator with margin of improvement	M1. To increase cooperation with foreign universities with a focus on internationalisation.
1.3.1	High-speed internet access	Yes		Missing indicator	M1. To improve the legal framework for high-speed networks/transposition of the EU Regulation for Gigabit Infrastructure (GIA act) M2. To invest in covering white areas.
1.3.2	Individuals with above basic digital skills	Yes	34	Indicator with margin of improvement	M1. To achieve the certification of 2,000 persons per year through the Digital Skills course offered by public vocational training centres.
2.1.1	R&D expenditure in the public sector (percentage of GDP)	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To increase the financing fund from the state budget for national programs (PKKZH, PTI, PD, PIKSH_ and those international ones, managed by AKKSHI. As foreseen in the PBA.
2.1.2	Venture capital expenditures (percentage of GDP)	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
2.1.3	Direct government funding and government tax support for business R&D (percentage of GDP)	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
2.2.1	R&D expenditure in the business sector (percentage of GDP)	No	36	Low performance indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
2.2.2	Non-R&D innovation expenditures (percentage of turnover)	No	35	Indicator with margin of improvement	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
2.2.3	Innovation expenditures per person employed	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
2.3.1	Cloud computing in enterprises	Yes	31	Indicator with margin of improvement	M1.To modernize government systems, relying on technologies offered by the cloud platform.
2.3.2	ICT specialists (as a percentage of total employment)	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To continue the implementation of the Coding program as an opportunity to increase the number of qualified and employed persons in the information technology sector.
3.1.1	SMEs introducing product innovations (percentage of SMEs)	Yes	25	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. Increase the percentage of the budget dedicated to R&D activities and market testing for SMEs. M2. To provide technical assistance (mentoring, design consulting, product development, standardization and certification), especially for SMEs with limited innovative capacities.
3.1.2	SMEs introducing business process innovations (percentage of SMEs)	Yes	25	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. To organize trainings, workshops, and information campaigns on the benefits of innovation in processes. M2. To provide practical guides and successful examples for the application of innovations in production, management, and logistics.
3.2.1	Innovative SMEs collaborating with others (percentage of SMEs)	Yes	28	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. To increase the financing fund from the state budget for the national program PTI (innovative research projects dedicated to HEI-business partnership), PKKZH (scientific projects where HEIs can collaborate with businesses), or international projects (Horizon Europe, EUREKA, etc.) managed by AKKSHI. Foreseen in the PBA. M2. To create innovative schemes for the co-financing of scientific research programs that strengthen cooperation with the business sector in addressing current societal challenges. M3. All stakeholders to be informed of and acquainted with the financing mechanisms and instruments.

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
					M4. To promote scientific research models with the participation of joint projects (Quadruple Helix Model). M5. To strengthen the capacities of HEIs and business representatives for writing and managing joint projects. M6. To strengthen the capacities of the scientific research project evaluation structures with the aim of ensuring the representation of business in these structures.
3.2.2	Public-private co-publications per million population	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To increase the funding from the state budget for the national PTI program (projects in partnership between HEIs and business) managed by AKKSHI. Foreseen in the PBA. M2. To increase cooperation between higher education institutions, central and local government institutions, the business sector, and civil society, through the expansion of research and development of joint projects (Quadruple Helix Model). M3. To create innovative schemes for the co-financing of scientific research programs that strengthen cooperation with the business sector to address current social challenges. M4. To strengthen the capacities of the scientific research project evaluation structures in order to ensure the representation of business in these structures.
3.2.3	Job-to-job mobility of Human Resources in Science & Technology	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
3.3.1	PCT patent applications per billion GDP (in PPS)	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To cooperate with universities and research centres M1.1 To train inventors on how to prepare a patent application for inventions (the patent description, claims, abstract, and drawings) M1.2 To train inventors to use international invention registers in order to avoid duplication of work as well as to be informed about developments in the field in which they are interested. M1.3 To train patent applicants on the most efficient routes they should follow to protect their inventions. M1.4 To provide the information corners for IP in technical and agricultural universities with informational materials from DPPI. M1.5 To include IP modules in curricula M1.6 To provide support for the integration of industrial property subjects into faculties. M2. To enable the "IP HELP DESK" service at DPPI. M2.1 To provide free counselling on the procedural steps for patent registration. M2.2 To provide individual guidance for the drafting of patent applications and technical documentation. M2.3 To provide guidance towards international markets. M3. To provide incentives for new applicants, temporary fee reductions for students, startups, and individual inventors. M4. To promote national successes through the publication of success stories of inventors who have obtained patents and of businesses that use patents for inventions.

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
3.3.2	Trademark applications per billion GDP (in PPS)	Yes	38	Low performance indicator	M1. To inform and raise awareness among businesses. M1.1 To organise national information and awareness campaigns by groups. M1.2 To organise roundtable meetings with businesses in major cities to explain the importance and rights deriving from the registration of trademarks and to provide information on the role of trademarks in export and competitiveness. M1.3 To use social networks for information through short videos, media materials, and interviews. M1.4 To place an informational material on e-Albania regarding the rights and importance of trademark registration at the moment of applying for business registration. M1.5 To publish success stories of businesses that have increased sales through registered trademarks. M2. To strengthen the capacities of DPPI M2.1 To conduct specialised training of DPPI staff by WIPO, EUIPO, and counterpart offices. M2.2 To draft the trademark roadmap for the standardization of the examination process. M3. To enable the “IP HELP DESK” service of DPPI. M3.1 To provide free advice on the procedural steps for trademark registration. M3.2 To provide individual guidance for drafting applications for trademark registration. M3.3 To provide guidance towards international markets.

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
3.3.3	Design applications per billion GDP (PPS)	Yes	31	Indicator with margin of improvement	M1. To inform and raise public awareness. M1.1. To organise national information and awareness campaigns regarding the importance of protecting an industrial design and the rights stemming from registration. M1.2 To organise activities in businesses with potential for industrial designs in the main cities to explain the importance of industrial designs. M1.3 To use social networks for information through short videos, media materials, and interviews. M1.4 To publish the success stories of businesses that have increased sales through registered designs and designers with protected creations. M2. To strengthen the capacities of DPPI M2.1 To conduct trainings for DPPI staff by WIPO, EUIPO, and counterpart offices. M2.2 To draft examination manuals for the standardisation of examination procedures. M3. To enable the “IP HELP DESK” service of DPPI. M3.1 To provide free advice on the procedural steps for the registration of designs. M3.2 To provide individual guidance for drafting applications for industrial design. M3.3 To provide guidance towards international markets.
4.1.1	Sales of new-to-market and new-to-enterprise innovations as percentage of turnover	No	1	Indicator with satisfactory performance	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
4.1.2	Employment in innovative enterprises	No	22	Indicator with satisfactory performance	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
4.2.1	Exports of medium and high technology products as a	No	37	Low performance indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)

EIS Indicator code	EIS Indicator Name	AL AP covered	AL EIS 2025 Rank	Indicator category*	Measure(s) of the Action Plan
	share of total product exports				
4.2.2	Knowledge-intensive services exports as percentage of total services exports	No	39	Low performance indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
4.2.3	High-tech imports from outside of the EU27	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the AP)
4.3.1	Resource productivity	Yes	29	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. Trainings for SMEs to expand the capacity of the local supply chain and service market for the demonstration of renewable energy technologies (technology transfer, project developers, installation, operation and maintenance, service providers, etc.) M2. Development of participation platforms for the promotion (awareness), development, and implementation of small-scale renewable energy applications
4.3.2	Production-based CO2 productivity	Yes	21	Indicator with satisfactory performance	M1. Use of energy-efficient vehicles M2. Reduction of mobility needs and distances through integrated planning M3. Integration of the goods transport system with EU networks (EU goods transport systems) M4. Drafting, publication, and dissemination of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices M5. Training of farmers for the implementation of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices M6. Installation of methane extraction plants in landfills M7. Informing domestic financial institutions regarding renewable energy
4.3.3	Labour productivity	No		Missing indicator	No defined measure (indicator not covered by the action plan)

** For the purposes of this document development, the EIS indicators were classified into four categories according to Albania's position in each of the rankings (as of 2025 the EIS covered a total of 39 countries).*

POLICY ANSWERS

ABOUT POLICY ANSWERS

POLICY ANSWERS (R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS) supports policy coordination in the Western Balkans and with the EC and the EU. 14 partner organisations, representing network nodes in the region and EU expert organisations, support policy dialogue through formal meetings (such as ministerial and steering platform and ad-hoc policy meetings), monitoring and agenda setting, capacity building and implementation of the EU's Western Balkan Agenda, as well as the alignment of thematic priorities. The project implements regional pilot activities and offers an information hub based on the westernbalkans-infohub.eu online information platform. The partners provide analytical evidence via monitoring and mapping activities of the stakeholder ecosystem, of the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda and of the Western Balkans' integration into the European Research Area as well as via strategic foresight. POLICY ANSWERS also allows for tailored and targeted capacity building activities in the Western Balkans as well as regional alignment of priorities in relation to the digital transformation, the green agenda and towards healthy societies. Pilot activities provide learning opportunities on policy and programme level and reach out to final beneficiaries related to improved academia-industry cooperation, researcher mobility, inclusion of youth in policy processes, promotion of research infrastructures and increased innovation skills in all areas.

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