



Online Event

**Smart Specialisation in the Western Balkans and Türkiye: main achievements and challenges ahead**

*November 27, 2023*



## CONTEXT

During the last decade, Smart Specialisation has become one of the core strategic approaches to Research and Innovation, as well as an effective policy instrument for **higher competitiveness** and increasing opportunities in the EU.

Following the success of the Smart Specialisation approach across the EU Member States, the Western Balkan economies and Türkiye chose to develop **Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)** to strengthen their innovation ecosystems. Starting from a pilot project in 2017, the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) developed a S3 methodology, followed on a voluntary basis by the governments in the region.

Several Directorates-General (DGs) of the European Commission decided to further support this process, which is now included in the key policy and programming documents for the entire EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood region. In particular, in 2019 the JRC and the DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) started the project “Smart Specialisation Framework in the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Region”, to provide **S3 methodological guidance and support to the Western Balkans and Türkiye**. In 2022, a [S3 international conference](#) was held in Skopje (MK) with the aim to widely discuss the progress of Western Balkan economies in the “Western Balkan Agenda” and main achievements reached within the project.

The event “*Smart Specialisation process in the Western Balkans and Türkiye: main achievements and next challenges ahead*” is now coming at the end of the project and bringing together officials, experts, policy makers from the EU Enlargement region to present main activities recently carried out and discuss the progress made by territories on their S3.

## OBJECTIVE

Based on activities carried out during the last year and the support provided by the JRC to the economies in the region, this online event is organised with the aim of presenting some of main **analytical findings** and discuss **major territorial achievements**. The event will also be an occasion for territorial representatives to share domains of interest within their S3 processes, as well as main **lessons learned** during the implementation of the S3 design framework and challenges ahead.

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The support provided by the JRC to the economies in the region has followed a two-folded approach. On the one hand, horizontal activities have been carried out, encompassing the whole region and providing findings, evidence and tools available to all territories. The main goal of these activities was to provide a **common knowledge on the region** and **strengthen S3 capacities**. On the other hand, also **country specific activities** have been conducted and a targeted support has been provided with the aim to strengthen and speed up S3 processes at territorial level.

Following the two-folded support provided by the JRC, the event is organized in two sessions. In the first session, findings from the horizontal activities conducted this year will be presented, and main critical issues and opportunities will be discussed. The second part is dedicated to main territorial achievements and challenges ahead. All territorial representatives will present main areas of interest as well main lessons learned from the S3 framework, being implemented with different level of advancement.

Both sessions will be in plenary and followed by Q&A open discussions.

## **AUDIENCE**

The event is mainly oriented to **territorial policy makers** and **administrators, local stakeholders**, and members of **National S3 Teams** in the region, as well as **experts and officials** interested in research and innovation policies within the EU integration process. With the aim of having an open discussion on main issues addressed, two Q&A sessions are scheduled.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

Main project findings from activities recently carried out by the JRC will be discussed, and major territorial achievements in their S3 processes will be presented. Feedbacks from participants will contribute to further developments and analytical opportunities. The event will also be a chance to share the main challenges ahead at territorial level, as well as to explore untapped opportunities and latent synergies. From knowledge sharing and the collective awareness, new mission-led opportunities in the region could be further investigated and tailored practical guidance could be provided.

## AGENDA

November 27, 2023	
<b>10.30-11.00</b>	<p><b><i>Opening and welcome speeches</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emanuela Bellan, Head of Unit, JRC A.3</li> <li>○ Javier Menendez Bonilla, Team Leader, NEAR A.3</li> <li>○ Nikola Radovanovic, Team Leader, JRC B.3</li> </ul>
<b>11.00-12.00</b>	<p><b><i>Support to Smart Specialisation in the Western Balkans and Türkiye – main achievements</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hugo Hollanders, Maastricht University: “<i>Mapping potential in the EU Neighbourhood Enlargement Region</i>”</li> <li>○ Enric Fuster, SIRIS: “<i>Mapping science and technology activities and collaboration networks in support of S3 in the Western Balkans</i>”</li> <li>○ Macarena Sanz, IDConsortium: “<i>Perspectives on growth of the agri-food sector in the Western Balkans</i>”</li> <li>○ Domen Bole, Co-Creation: “<i>Lessons learned and key recommendations</i>”</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Followed by Q&amp;A</i></b></p>
<b>12.00-12.15</b>	<p><b><i>Technical break</i></b></p>
<b>12.15-14.00</b>	<p><b><i>Main achievements from territories and challenges ahead</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Serbia: Viktor Nedovic, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ Albania: Linda Pustina, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ Bosnia and Herzegovina: Tanja Lucic, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ Kosovo*: Vedat Sagonjeva, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ Montenegro: Marijeta Barjakatarovic, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ North Macedonia: Jasmina Majstoroska, National S3 Coordinator</li> <li>○ Türkiye: Mustafa Işık, Deputy Director-General at Ministry of Industry and Technology</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Followed by Q&amp;A</i></b></p>
<b>14.00-14.15</b>	<p><b><i>Next steps and closure of the event</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enrica Chiozza, Team Leader, NEAR D.5</li> <li>○ Alessandro Rainoldi, Head of Unit, JRC B.3</li> </ul>

*\*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*