

# *"Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Competitiveness in Western Balkan and Regional Economies, in the context of Smart Specialization Strategy"*

In the Context of the Project: Promoting Smart Specialisation Strategy as a Regional Perspective in the Western Balkans

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# Introduction – Smart Specialization in Albania

In recent years, countries, and regions in the European Union (EU) have developed Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) as a new tool for boosting innovation and regional development. The S3 approach, that is gaining increasing interest worldwide, represents a place-based innovation policy concept that seeks to identify promising areas for public and private intervention in terms of promising innovation niches and domains where knowledge-based value-added can be increased. It stresses the potential of cross-sectoral linkages, besides traditional industries and promotes the diversification based on these linkages.

As part of the planned activities for European Union accession, the Republic of Albania initiated the process of preparing the Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) in 2017, following the methodology and guidelines of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) .

S3 represents an interplay of industrial, educational, research/scientific, and innovation policies aiming to create economic growth by leveraging a country's competitive advantages. S3 aims to address Albania's key socioeconomic challenges by achieving better alignment between innovation and research capacities and development opportunities. In 2021, a group of independent experts conducted a detailed analysis of Albania's capacities, resources, and competitive advantages.

Nowadays, a strong focus on innovation policies is even more urgent due to the growing need of addressing the societal challenges of the last decade.

The introduction of S3 to the Western Balkans is considered within the context of the EU's enlargement policy that provides an accession perspective and envisages support for several policy areas including socio-economic development. As a result, S3 became part of the WB6 regional agenda, as part of the Smart Growth pillar in MAP REA followed by the Common Regional Market Action Plan 2021-2024 in the context of the Berlin Process, and of the EU Agenda for the Western Balkans 2021-2027. S3 is also part of the Chapter 20 "Enterprise and Industrial Policy" and Chapter 25 "Science and research" of EU Acquis in the framework of Albania EU integration.

To assist Western Balkan economies in the design process of designing of their S3 JRC of EC has developed an S3 Framework that includes all steps to the final draft of the strategic document to be used as a guideline.

Smart Specialization is expected to be of high importance not only for Albania's integration in the EU, but also for the growth of Albanian's economy, unlocking the innovation and competitiveness potential in specific domains.

Albania started the process of designing its S3 in 2016 and in 2017 it registered in the platform of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission for S3 .

Considering the importance of this process for the Albanian Government and the fact that it covers a wide number of sectors, the process is coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister leading the S3 Interministerial Committee and assisted by the National S3 Team. The Interministerial Committee is composed ministers and other representatives from the quadruple helix:

- the Minister of Finance and Economy;
- the Minister of Education and Sports;
- the Minister of State for Protection of Entrepreneurship;
- the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- the Minister of Tourism and Environment;
- the Minister of Culture;
- the Minister of Health and Social Protection;
- the Minister of State for Service Standards;
- the General Director of the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC);
- the General Director of INSTAT;
- the General Director of the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA);
- the General Director of the National Agency of the Information Society (AKSHI);
- the General Director of the General Directorate of Industrial Property;
- the Head of the S3 National Team.
- the Chairman of the Conference of Rectors;
- the Chairman of the Academy of Sciences;
- the Head of the Union of Chambers of Commerce;
- the Head of the Union of Albanian Producers;
- the Chairman of the Association for Local Autonomy.

The Albanian S3 Team is composed mainly by experts and representatives of the different institutions at technical level.

The Committee has the political leadership of the process of drafting the S3 and its implementation. Albanian S3 Team developed an S3 Roadmap based on the JRC Framework and so far several steps have been taken to develop a Strategy at national level and at the same time by keeping a regional perspective.

National S3 Team supports the Committee with expertise and deals with preparation of the S3 and the implementation of the S3 Roadmap.

The country finalized the first steps of context analysis, through a thorough Quantitative and Qualitative mapping of the economic, innovative, scientific, and productive domains that might be considered in the selection of technological potential of the country identifying potential vertical and horizontal S3 priority areas. Such priority domains are identified based on the economic, innovation, and scientific strengths of a region or a country, expert knowledge, and stakeholder dialogue, the latter being one of the main features of the strategic process.

As a result, six priority areas for a Smart Specialisation Strategy in Albania (sub-articulated in 11 industries) and 4 cross-sectorial areas: intelligent specialization were identified as potential domains where innovation would bring an added value to the economy:

1. Agriculture, Fishing & Aquaculture, and Forestry
2. Manufacturing
3. Energy
4. Tourism
5. ICT
6. Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)

Cross-sectorial identified areas: Blue economy; Healthy food; Renewable resources energy; Extended BPOs.

One of the most distinctive and important features of the S3 strategy development methodology is the implementation of a bottom-up approach known as the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP).



This participatory process, envisages that the priority domains are not to be defined top-down by policymakers alone, but rather agreed through a comprehensive dialogue between the stakeholders of the territory, called the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP). This enables the identification and prioritization of key activities that connect innovation and scientific research with economic growth. It involves structured consultations with all actors involved in the Quadruple Helix (1. Central and Local Government, 2. Academia, 3. Business, 4. Civil Society). In this process, each actor has a crucial role, highlighting the leading role of entrepreneurship and productive businesses in identifying strategic development priorities, the role of academia in providing specialization aligned with the country's development priorities, the role of civil society as a catalyst for change and conveying the voice of society in the process, and finally, the role of central and local government in translating these needs and priorities into concrete policies with an impact on the development of innovative priority sectors.

The inputs from EDP working groups complemented and validated the outcomes from the mapping phase and will be used for drafting the final S3 document. During the EDP in Albania, to promote the stakeholders' dialogue within the 6 thematic domains emerged as relevant from the mapping exercise, a total of 32 events were organized by the S3 National Team from October 2022 to July 2023. These events included: national events, sectorial workshops, roundtables, bilateral meetings with cross-border countries, etc. The events were attended by 1275 participants from the quadruple helix. National S3 experts facilitated the discussion and helped to collect the inputs.

Each meeting was facilitated and moderated by at least two experts from the National S3 Team and experts of the relevant sectors. The organization of the national workshops aimed at involving subjects able to contribute to the dialogue by providing value added information and points of view useful for carrying out the SWOT analysis, the definition of the vision and the consequent identification of possible actions of the policy mix.

## Regional Perspective

The Western Balkan countries are in the process of finalizing or initiating the implementation of their S3 strategies and have already identified priority areas with the potential for intelligent specialization in the coming years. It is of particular importance that the countries in the region focus on taking initiatives and collaborative efforts among government actors, researchers, businesses, and other societal actors to deliver innovative results that contribute to the development of each of the Western Balkan economies and the region. The intelligent specialization process should serve as a tool to identify regional priority sectors in conjunction with national ones. The idea is for each country to specialize in a field where it has more advantages and potential in terms of human and capital resources, enabling the region to benefit and enhance its competitive advantage.

Therefore, it is suggested that the WB6 countries collaborate to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences on key aspects that should be incorporated in the S3 Strategies to maximize their potential for boosting the economic performance of each country and the region. Furthermore, a special emphasis should be placed on the role and importance of collaboration between each of these countries in enhancing the performance of their shared priority sectors.

In this context, in addition to the 29 national EDP events, the National S3 Team, organized 3 bilateral workshops with representatives from government, academic, business sector and organizations from Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia with a view to promote smart specialization, based on the identification of priorities of common interest with these neighbor countries and develop cooperation paths. The meetings were organized in collaboration with the National S3 Teams of the three countries during the period June - July 2023. The goal was to identify and prioritize activities that bridge innovation, scientific research, and economic development.

These meetings played a vital role in promoting cross-border cooperation, sharing knowledge, and enhancing regional integration. The findings and recommendations from each meeting will serve not only as an input for the drafting and implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy in accordance with EU regulations, but also as first steps to common initiatives and cooperation agreements on specific topics of interest. The recommendations will also help the countries to better absorb and utilize EU funds allocated for the implementation of this strategy through increasing the collaboration and engaging in mutual projects.

# Overview of Meetings, Workshops, and Trainings

In line with EU methodologies, the Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) and Entrepreneur Discovery Process (EDP) processes in Albania have actively engaged key stakeholders from government, business, academia, and civil society, fostering an inclusive approach:

- **Bottom-up Approach:** The S3 and EDP processes in the Western Balkans have adopted a bottom-up approach, guided by methodologies from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission. This approach involves gathering input and insights from all relevant stakeholders at the very early stages of strategy development, ensuring inclusivity and a wide spectrum of perspectives.
- **Engagement of Quadruple Helix Actors:** These processes have seen active involvement from representatives of the Quadruple Helix, which includes key stakeholders from government, business, academia, and civil society. Their participation has been instrumental in shaping the strategies and plans.
- **Participation Across Priority Areas:** A total of 1,275 participants engaged in the overall EDP process. This engagement spanned various priority fields and was structured as follows:
  - 175 participants in the opening event
  - 964 participants in national roundtable discussions
  - 136 participants in regional workshops

## National meetings:

Helix	Agriculture	BPO	Renewable Energy	ICT	Manufacturing	Tourism	Total
Academia	57	10	14	17	22	59	179
Business	95	29	32	42	44	81	323
Civil Society	42	8	8	14	17	23	112
Government	55	29	36	53	75	102	350
Total	249	76	90	126	158	265	964

## Regional meetings:

Bilateral Meetings	Date	Number of participants
Albania - Kosovo	26.06.2023	50
Albania - North Macedonia	07.07.2023	43
Albania - Montenegro	17.07.2023	51

Overall, the participation of the quadruple helix actors from both countries in each event organized was very satisfactory, in qualitative terms. A considerable part of the actors invited responded positively to the invitations and confirmed their participation. Some of them even proposed other qualified subjects to be invited in the events, thus contributing to promoting awareness of the S3 approach among stakeholders. Their engagement during the meetings was generally very high and most of the participants were very active during the discussions taking the initiative to propose new perspectives and new ideas.

- **Additional Workshop Training:** In May 2023, a two-day workshop organized by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission in cooperation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania was held in Tirana. The workshop, titled "Smart Specialization Framework in the EU Enlargement and Neighborhood Region: Policy Mix and Monitoring for Smart Specialization for Albania and Kosovo," aimed to provide members of S3 teams and policymakers from involved ministries of both countries with information on key concepts of policy mix and S3 monitoring. The workshop also introduced a consistent methodological approach to S3 implementation and emphasized the identification of robust instruments and indicators for inclusion in the final S3 document.
- **Structure of the workshops:** The participants were distributed in different working groups/tables, each made up of about 10-12 people. The composition of the groups considered the need to bring together representatives from quadruple helix from both countries. Within each working group, a member of the S3 national team acted as a facilitator, both by asking the participants specific questions and by taking notes on a specific board of the opinions/considerations expressed. For each work session, a list of the most relevant points that emerged from the discussion was thus produced and a member of each group presented to other groups the main findings coming from the dialogue about SWOT, vision and policy mix.

## Significant Outcomes:

- **Inclusive Strategy Development:** The inclusive approach to strategy development has yielded positive results, fostering cooperation among diverse stakeholders, and enhancing the quality of strategic plans.
- **Policy Recommendations:** As a notable outcome, these meetings and workshops have generated valuable policy recommendations. These recommendations have addressed challenges and opportunities within the Western Balkans, setting the stage for improved collaboration which will contribute to economic development.
- **Regional Collaboration:** The engagement of participants from various Western Balkan countries has promoted regional collaboration and created a stronger relations between representatives of both countries that led also to application on common projects and initiatives. This collaborative spirit has contributed to the recognition of the region's importance in the EU integration process.

# Bilateral Workshops

## 1. Albania - Kosovo Bilateral Workshop

The bilateral workshop with Kosovo was an opportunity to jointly discuss and provide input on these two shared priority domains identified within the S3 framework. The outcomes and recommendations from this workshop will benefit both countries and enhance bilateral cooperation.

The workshop started with a welcome speech from both heads of National S3 Teams who stressed the importance of finalizing this strategy and collaborating on shared priority domains. In addition, it was mentioned that this strategy is important for both countries integration agenda in the European Union, specifically within the framework of chapters 20 and 25, which deal respectively with Enterprises and Industrial Policies, and Science and Research. It is also aligned with the European Union's Western Balkans Agenda on Youth, Sport, Innovation 2021-2027 and the Western Balkans Common Market Action Plan 2021-2024 in the context of the Berlin Process.

## Kosovo's Progress towards finalization of S3

### Kosovo's Engagement in the Smart Specialization Process

Kosovo began its engagement in the Smart Specialization process in 2018 when it officially registered in the Smart Specialization Platform. The government of Kosovo, on March 23, 2018, expressed its commitment to this initiative. Subsequently, the National Team for the Smart Specialization Platform was established, initially in 2018, and later revised in 2020 to include a wider range of institutions and stakeholders from academia, civil society, and the private sector.

The National Team, led by the Office for Strategic Planning within the Office of the Prime Minister, comprises central-level institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Economy, the Academy of Sciences, the University of Prishtina, the University for Business and Technology, the Chamber of Commerce, and business associations related to ICT, metals, and energy.

The National Team is responsible for leading and coordinating the process related to the Smart Specialization Platform, including the preparation of necessary policy and document analyses for this platform.

Since then, Kosovo has designed a roadmap for the Smart Specialization Strategy development with the assistance of the European Union, aligning it with the methodological framework of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for Smart Specialization in the Western Balkans and EU Neighborhood. According to the JRC methodology, the key steps for this process include:

- Decision to initiate the process and analysis of the strategic framework.
- Diagnostics - which involves quantitative and qualitative analysis of economic, innovative, and scientific potential, leading to the identification of priority fields.
- Stakeholder engagement, known as the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP), involving representatives from the public, private, academic, and civil society sectors to identify challenges and policy instruments.
- Design of the monitoring, implementation, and financing system.
- Preparation of the strategic document for Smart Specialization.

Kosovo has completed the first three phases and is now in the process of establishing the monitoring, implementation, and financing framework based on the results of stakeholder dialogues.



## II. Identification of Priority Fields

The quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in 2021 and 2022 have identified several industries and sub-sectors with potential for innovation and development, setting the stage for stakeholder dialogues as a crucial step in Smart Specialization. These analyses include a combination of statistical methodologies to explore Kosovo's economic, scientific, and innovative potential. The qualitative analysis integrates the results of public consultations and interviews.

The qualitative analysis integrates the results of public consultations and interviews, covering more than seventy interested parties from the quadruple helix of the national ecosystem.

The analysis identified three verticals:

- wood processing, agro-processing, and green energy and two horizontals
- ICT and creative industries economic and productive sectors as priorities for Smart Specialization

## III. Stakeholder Dialogues - EDP Process

As a result of the analyses, a consultative process known as the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) began in September 2022 and concluded in early 2023. This process engaged stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including academia and civil society. The primary focus of this process was discussing specific needs and policy instruments to support innovation.

During the EDP, three workshops were conducted, each focusing on one of the prioritized fields. The discussions in the first and second rounds of workshops, held from September to December 2022, primarily revolved around developing and finalizing SWOT analyses. These analyses identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each sector, serving as an initial step to assess the current situation and inform the selection of policy instruments.

The third round of workshops, held from January to March 2023 as part of the EDP, addressed policy instruments (policy mix). During this round, contributions from various stakeholders were gathered, focusing on measures contributing to achieving strategic objectives and actions, as well as performance indicators.

## **B. Shared Priority Domains identified:**

- **ICT**
- **Food Processing**

Both countries after analyzing the priority domains identified through the S3 Process agreed on the shared priority domains worth exploring together in the bilateral workshop. During the joint bilateral meeting, representatives from both countries (business sector, academia, government, and civil society) congratulated the initiative to join and discuss together the possibilities for pushing forward selected priorities related to innovation and development.

The workshop represented a significant opportunity to collaborate and work towards common goals for innovation and economic growth in Albania and Kosovo in ICT and food processing areas.

At the bilateral workshop with Kosovo, discussions on shared domains were organized into working tables with participants representing all four helixes—government, industry, academia, and civil society.

Below, it is presented a concise summary of the key findings and priorities highlighted during the meeting, in alignment with the agenda for the shared priority domains:

## ICT:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Projects
<b>Digitalization and Innovation</b>	Digitalization of work processes, real-time information exchange, cybersecurity, AI exploration, harmonized systems, technology adoption, ICT use encouragement, synergies, best practices sharing	Digital skills education, Start-Up support, smart product development, interoperability, legal harmonization, GDPR compliance, addressing labour shortages	Joint platform, research network, hubs, comprehensive Data Science system
<b>Digital Skills and Economic Development</b>	Digital education, Start-Up support, smart product development, interoperability, legal harmonization, GDPR compliance, labour market challenges	Up-skilling and Re-skilling, recognized services, Cybersecurity Centre, Digital Excellence Centre	Bilateral cooperation, digital education projects, Digital Excellence Centre

## Food Processing:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Projects
<b>Legal and Policy Harmonization in Agriculture</b>	Legal policy harmonization, contract enforcement, communication gaps, joint research institute, university collaboration	Legal harmonization, contract enforcement, communication channels, joint research institute, university collaboration	Legal policy harmonization, contract enforcement, joint research institute
<b>Smart Agriculture and Agro-processing</b>	Digital tracking system, labour shortages, finance access, smart product development, standards harmonization, supply coordination	Training, finance access, smart product promotion, standards harmonization, supply coordination, subsidy schemes, knowledge sharing, structural collaboration, agro-processing focus, export exploration, sustainable practices	Joint fund, consortia, EU-certified labs, trade fairs, training programs, shared audit, innovative techniques
<b>Trade Policies and Agro-Processing</b>	Legislation completion, input taxation, subsidies, agency empowerment, certification, standardization, origin determination, technology investment, intergovernmental agreements	Legislation completion, input taxation elimination, subsidies, agency empowerment, certification, standardization, origin determination, technology investment, intergovernmental agreements	Joint fund, consortia, EU-certified labs, trade fairs, training programs, shared audit, innovative techniques, coordination agency

## 2. Albania - North Macedonia S3 Bilateral Workshop

The Joint Bilateral Meeting between Albania and North Macedonia started with a warm welcome from the Heads of National S3 Teams, who expressed their sincere appreciation for the presence of participants. They emphasized the need to expand collaboration beyond conventional processes with Western Balkan countries. Identified priority sectors for cooperation included agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and raw materials. This diverse gathering included private sector representatives, government officials, academia, and civil society from both nations, highlighting the significance of their joint efforts.

The government representative from North Macedonia discussed recent priorities supported by the EU and potential EU/regional programs for bilateral/regional cooperation. Two significant packages were discussed: one focusing on a regional program for cross-border cooperation between North Macedonia and Albania, **with a budget of 12 million euros**. The program aligns with the Smart Specialization Strategy, emphasizing environment protection, climate change mitigation, and research and innovation facilities.

The second package includes multi-country programs aimed at supporting various sectors, including youth cooperation, digital transition, Roma inclusion, gender equality, and the common regional market. The representative shared North Macedonia's experience in effectively managing EU funds under a special coordination structure, involving key institutions to boost the economy and support green policies.

### A. North Macedonia's Progress towards finalization of S3

North Macedonia initiated its involvement in the Smart Specialization process in alignment with the Berlin Process requirements, similar to other Western Balkan countries. The process officially commenced in 2018 when North Macedonia registered on the Smart Specialization Platform. This commitment was underscored by the government of North Macedonia, demonstrating its dedication to the Smart Specialization initiative. The National Team for the Smart Specialization Platform was established in July 2018 and underwent revisions in 2020 to ensure broader representation from various institutions and stakeholders, including academia, civil society, and the private sector. Led by the Ministry of Education and Science, this National Team comprises central-level institutions such as the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Ministry of Finance, the State Statistical Office, and universities, research institutes, and business associations relevant to the identified priority sectors.

The National Team is entrusted with the responsibility of **spearheading** and coordinating the Smart Specialization **Platform's** processes. This includes the preparation of essential policy analyses and documents crucial to the **platform's** objectives.

The Smart Specialization Strategy development in North Macedonia has been guided by a roadmap designed with the assistance of the European Union. This roadmap aligns with the methodological framework provided by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for Smart Specialization in the Western Balkans and EU Neighborhood. The JRC methodology outlines key steps in this process:

**1. Initiating the Process and Analyzing the Strategic Framework:** This phase involves making the decision to commence the process and analyzing the strategic framework.

**2. Diagnostics:** Diagnostics entail quantitative and qualitative analyses of economic, innovative, and scientific potential, leading to the identification of priority fields.

**3. Stakeholder Engagement (Entrepreneurial Discovery Process - EDP):** This phase engages representatives from the public, private, academic, and civil society sectors to identify challenges and policy instruments.

**4. Designing the Monitoring, Implementation, and Financing System:** This step focuses on creating the system for monitoring, implementing, and financing the Smart Specialization Strategy.

**5. Preparing the Strategic Document for Smart Specialization:** This stage involves the preparation of the strategic document outlining the Smart Specialization Strategy.

North Macedonia has successfully completed the initial four phases and is currently in the process of drafting the strategic document.

## II. Identification of Priority Domains

The quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in 2021 and 2022 have identified several industries and sub-sectors with significant potential for innovation and development. These analyses draw from a combination of statistical methodologies to explore North Macedonia's economic, scientific, and innovative potential. The qualitative analysis integrates results obtained through public consultations and interviews.

The analyses have pinpointed the following vertical priority areas:

- Electro Mechanical Industry - Industry 4.0
- Sustainable Materials and Smart Buildings
- Smart agriculture and food with high added value
- ICT
- As a horizontal are proposed two domains
- Energy for the future
- Tourism

and each of the priority domains has plenty and diverse opportunities for cross-innovation, with both vertical and horizontal domains.

These sectors represent the strategic areas where North Macedonia aims to concentrate its efforts and resources to drive innovation, foster economic growth, and enhance competitiveness.

## III. Stakeholder Dialogues - Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP)

Building on the insights gained from the analyses, North Macedonia initiated a consultative process known as the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) in September 2022, which concluded in early 2023. The EDP engaged stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including academia and civil society. The primary objective of this process was to facilitate discussions on specific needs and policy instruments required to support innovation within the identified priority sectors.

The EDP process included three workshops, each dedicated to one of the prioritized sectors. The discussions during the first and second rounds of workshops (held from September to December 2022) were primarily centered around the development and finalization of SWOT analyses. These analyses aimed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each sector, providing an initial assessment of the current situation and insights for the selection of policy instruments.

The third round of workshops (conducted from January to March 2023) within the EDP addressed policy instruments, often referred to as the "policy mix." During this phase, contributions from diverse stakeholders were solicited, focusing on measures that contribute to achieving strategic objectives and actions, as well as performance indicators.

This stakeholder-driven approach aims to tailor the Smart Specialization Strategy to the specific needs and opportunities identified within North Macedonia, fostering an environment conducive to innovation, economic development, and competitiveness in the identified priority sectors.

**B. Shared Priority Domains identified:**

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Renewable Energy
- Manufacturing industry
- Raw Material Industry and Sustainable Value-added Processing

The joint workshop aimed to foster cross-border collaboration, knowledge-based growth, and innovative approaches in shared domains, paving the way for a stronger partnership and a prosperous future, with the support of EU programs and funding.



## Sustainable Agriculture:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Projects
<b>Sustainable Agricultural Practices</b>	Green agenda, organic farming, territorial products, traditional practices, technology enhancement, blue economy, knowledge exchange	Climate change adaptation, next-gen farming, urbanization effects, retaining experts, storage efficiency, market balance, modernization, farmer cooperation, information access, sustainability frameworks, technology integration, invasive species, climate risk mitigation	Research, innovation, digitalization, environmental protection, education, regional collaboration
<b>Support for Agricultural Education and Innovation</b>	Collaboration, digital services, research, innovation, skill development, product quality testing	University cooperation, digitalization, technical assistance, research support, certified institutions	Research infrastructure, smart specialization, information sharing, digital literacy, waste reduction

## Renewable Energy:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Projects
<b>Energy Transition and Sustainable Power</b>	Transition to clean energy, decarbonization, efficient solutions, renewable energy investment, energy storage, diverse sources	Climate impact mitigation, urbanization adaptation, sustainable building, green agenda alignment, talent retention, information access, legal frameworks	Regional energy projects, research, innovation, education, energy cooperation
<b>Supporting Education and Innovation</b>	University-industry collaboration, digitalization, green transition assistance, research, innovation, skill development, product testing	Facilitating collaboration, digitalization, technical assistance, research, innovation support, certified testing	Research infrastructure, smart specialization, information sharing, digital maturity, education programs

## Raw Material Industry:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Projects
<b>Raw Materials and Mining Collaboration</b>	EIT raw materials Hub, strategy development, secondary raw materials, mineral exploration, regional projects	Urbanization effects, talent retention, information access, strategy implementation	Research, innovation, digitalization, education, regional collaboration
<b>Support for Education and Innovation</b>	University-industry collaboration, digitalization, research, innovation, skill development, product testing	Collaboration, research optimization, project participation, information exchange, digital transformation, upskilling, reskilling	Research infrastructure, knowledge exchange, regional collaboration, waste management

## 3. Albania - Montenegro S3 Bilateral Workshop

In the workshop with Montenegro, participants from both Albania and Montenegro came together to explore possibilities for collaboration in the context of Smart Specialization Strategies (S3). The bilateral workshop aimed to identify common priority areas and foster regional partnerships to promote economic growth and innovation. The Head of the National S3 Team of Albania stressed the importance of cross-border collaboration and the need to explore joint projects and investment opportunities. While the Head of the National S3 Team from Montenegro acknowledged the challenges of implementing the S3 strategy but highlighted the potential benefits of regional cooperation.

### A. Montenegro's Progress towards finalization of S3

#### I. Montenegro's Engagement in the Smart Specialization Process

Montenegro embarked on the journey of Smart Specialization with the aim of promoting economic growth, stability, and competitiveness. This process aligns with Montenegro's efforts to build a market economy based on the rule of law and stable institutions, which began at the turn of the new millennium. Furthermore, Montenegro's involvement in the Stabilization and Association Process has contributed to its political stability and created favorable conditions for economic activities.

The Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) drafting process in Montenegro adheres to the methodology developed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). The activities related to Montenegro's Smart Specialization Strategy commenced in early 2017. This strategy's development has been a collaborative effort, ensuring participation from various stakeholders at each stage, including public consultations to involve citizens. To facilitate inter-agency cooperation, an appropriate governance structure was established initially.

The S3 drafting process in Montenegro has followed key phases:

- **Initiation and Strategic Framework Analysis:** This phase involved initiating the process and analyzing the strategic framework.
- **Diagnostics:** Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to identify preliminary priority S3 domains.
- **Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP):** EDP, characterized by a bottom-up approach, utilized inputs from preliminary analyses to identify final priorities and conduct SWOT analyses for each priority sector.
- **State-level and Public Consultations:** Following the EDP, state-level consultations and public consultations in accordance with national legislation were conducted. The Government of Montenegro formally adopted the Smart Specialization Strategy.
- **Submission to the European Commission:** The finalized S3 Strategy was submitted to the European Commission for an opinion.

The Ministry of Science (MoS), with support from the Ministry of Economy (MoE), played a central role in coordinating the development of Montenegro's Smart Specialization Strategy. A quadruple helix governance model was adopted, ensuring collaboration between the government, academia, the private sector, and civil society. Experts from the European Commission provided systematic assistance throughout the process.

## II. Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP)

The EDP process in Montenegro followed the preliminary identification of seven priority areas based on quantitative and qualitative analyses. It emphasized broad stakeholder involvement, particularly business sector representatives, in discovering and generating information about potential new activities and opportunities. EDP aims to identify areas for innovation and development through interactions among policymakers, businesses, academia, and civil society.

The preparation for the EDP included training for the Montenegrin delegation on initiating the S3 process and leading entrepreneurial discussions. The EDP officially commenced with the S3.me Conference, bringing together participants from various sectors, followed by numerous workshops in priority areas, continuous monitoring by experts, and an interactive web questionnaire for all interested parties.

The final EDP conference involved over 150 representatives from different sectors, with more than 300 actors participating in this phase. This continuous process allowed for the collection of data and insights to refine priority areas, establish a vision for each sector, and define goals with concrete indicators and measures for implementation.

## III. Identified priority domains are:

- Sustainable agriculture and food value chain, Energy and sustainable environment, and Sustainable and health tourism – as vertical priorities;
- and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) – as a horizontal priority.

In summary, Montenegro's Smart Specialization Strategy emphasizes a collaborative, stakeholder-driven approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, and EDP to identify priority sectors and promote economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness. Through continuous engagement and systematic support from the European Commission, Montenegro aims to capitalize on its comparative advantages and diversify its economic activities for sustained development.

## **B. Shared Priority Domains identified:**

- ICT
- Sustainable and Health Tourism
- Sustainable agriculture and food value chain

During the joint workshop, the participants recognized the complementary nature of their economies and the potential for value chain creation and knowledge exchange. They discussed the importance of effective communication channels, capacity building, and financial resources to support the implementation of the S3 strategy.

The participants also acknowledged the significance of incorporating a gender perspective in the strategies and promoting the economic empowerment of women in the region. They highlighted the role of women-led businesses in various sectors and the importance of creating equal opportunities for women in decision-making processes.

Overall, the workshop served as a platform for fruitful discussions and identified potential areas of collaboration. The participants expressed their commitment to continue working together and to explore opportunities for joint projects and funding mechanisms. The collaboration between Albania and Montenegro is seen as a steppingstone towards a more prosperous and innovative future for boosting collaboration in the Western Balkans region.

The workshop was divided into 3 working sessions. The findings for each sector are presented below:

## ICT:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Initiatives/Projects
Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Youth programs, innovation funds, incubation, legal framework	Collaboration, mentorship, startup support, legal regulations, innovation fund establishment	Cross-border programs, knowledge exchange, innovation centers
Education and Lifelong Learning	Early-stage programs, lifelong learning	Lifelong learning programs, short courses	Joint curricula, open lessons, summer courses
Collaboration and Partnership	Ecosystem development, collaboration tools	Sustainable ICT solutions, collaboration among stakeholders, support funds	Regional/bilateral agreements, joint projects, communication platforms
Human Resources and Expertise	Lack of experts, brain drain	Talent attraction, expertise retention	Exchange programs, expert networks

## Sustainable and Health Tourism:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Initiatives/Projects
Education and Lifelong Learning	Lifelong learning programs	Short courses, lifelong learning	Joint curricula, open lessons, promoting traditional products
Collaboration and Partnership	Ecosystem development, financial resources	Stakeholder collaboration, financial assistance	Regional/bilateral agreements, joint projects, marketing
Tourism and Cultural Heritage	Cross-border collaboration, sustainable products	Sharing projects, sustainable tourism promotion	Joint touristic tours, sharing experiences
Human Resources and Expertise	Lack of experts, brain drain	Expertise attraction and retention	Collaboration in education, standardization



## Sustainable Agriculture and Food Value Chain:

	Challenges	Solutions	Joint Initiatives/Projects
<b>Education and Lifelong Learning</b>	Lifelong learning programs, joint curricula	Short courses, open lessons, summer courses	Joint curricula, student exchange
<b>Innovation</b>	Technology adoption, genetic research	Tools, research, genetic species preservation	Collaborative projects, research labs
<b>Collaboration and Partnership</b>	Producer-government collaboration	Communication channels, collaborative projects	Certification centers. cluster development
<b>Human Resources and Expertise</b>	Lack of experts, brain drain	Expertise support, advisory bodies	Business support, network creation
<b>Environment</b>	Environmental preservation	Sustainable use of resources	Waste management, technology utilization

## Ongoing Regional Cooperation

In the context of the bilateral workshops, it's worth noting that Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, as neighbouring countries in the heart of the Western Balkans, share a rich history of collaboration. Their shared history, cultural affinities, and geographical proximity have served as the foundation for numerous agreements over the years. These agreements span a wide range of domains, including economic, cultural, and political cooperation, underscoring the depth of their interconnectedness.

These nations, with their commonalities and shared aspirations, have worked together to strengthen their ties and foster regional development. The ongoing collaborations showcased in this Report reflect their commitment to pursuing innovation, sustainable economic growth, and cross-border partnerships. These endeavours not only promote shared progress and prosperity but also highlight the potential for future collaboration and the pivotal role of regional cooperation in their collective journey towards a brighter, interconnected future.

In addition, the collaboration between the WB6 countries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, intensified when the Leaders of Western Balkans endorsed the Multi-annual Action Plan on Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (MAP REA), at the Trieste Summit held on 12 July 2017. The MAP REA, aimed to enable unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour, making the region more attractive for investment and trade; and accelerating convergence with the EU, thus bringing prosperity to Western Balkans citizens.

On November 10, 2020, the leaders of the WB6 endorsed at the Berlin Process Summit held in Sofia, the Common Regional Market (CRM) Action Plan 2021-2024. It builds on the achievements of the Regional Economic Area (REA). The CRM goal was to have a transformative effect by putting the region on the map for global investors, thereby creating jobs and offering greater choices at lower prices for its consumers and enabling people to work throughout the region. The implementation of the regional actions represents a steppingstone for WB6 businesses to better integrate into the European value chains and strengthen their competitiveness in the European and global marketplace .

The Smart Specialization Strategy has been included both at the Regional Economic Area (REA) and its Multi Annual Action Plan, and the Common Regional Market (CRM). It is a regional as well as national priority for the WB6 countries and collaboration between them during this process is crucial.

Despite the work and collaboration on drafting the Smart Specialisation Strategies, the countries have a long history of cooperation through the years. In this context, several of significant agreements have been signed between them, which show the good will and engagement of the Leaders to take common initiatives that will have an impact in the national economies as well as in the development of the region as a whole. Some of these agreements focusing on various areas, are presented below.

## **Albania – Kosovo Agreements**

Kosovo and Albania share a history of collaboration and have entered into numerous agreements since Kosovo's declaration of independence. To date, both nations have engaged in over 100 agreements spanning economics, education, defense, and development. However, the implementation of these agreements has faced challenges, with only 49% being fully realized. This extensive collaboration has been fostered through a biannual tradition of joint meetings since 2014.

These agreements have encompassed a wide array of domains, including education, transportation, energy, infrastructure, and tourism. Notably, the most recent agreements were signed in June 2022 during the eighth official meeting since Kosovo's declaration of independence, further solidifying their commitment to bolster bilateral ties.

In the context of our workshop, it's relevant to highlight agreements in the food processing sector. These agreements include commitments to harmonize legal policies in agriculture, ensure product quality, and develop smart agricultural products. Additionally, both countries have expressed their dedication to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and exploring opportunities for exporting animal-origin products to the EU.

Key recent agreements related to our workshop's focus include:

### **Agriculture:**

- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy, Employment, Trade, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Strategic Investments of the Republic of Kosovo for Labor Mobility.
- Agreement of Cooperation in the Implementation of Agricultural Support Programs and Rural Development between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development of the Republic of Kosovo.
- Agreement of Cooperation for the Exchange of Experience in Technical Processes between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development of the Republic of Kosovo.

### **ICT:**

In the ICT sector, Albania and Kosovo have also established agreements to ensure cybersecurity, develop harmonized systems, and promote the extensive use of ICT across all sectors. These agreements aim to boost digitalization, improve service quality, and create a conducive environment for digital innovation.

Key recent agreements related to ICT include:

- Memorandum of Cooperation on Establishing the 5G Digital Corridor and Facilitating Future Movement between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy and Environment of the Republic of Kosovo.
- Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kosovo for the Common Digital Platform of Pre-University Education.

These agreements reflect the ongoing commitment of Kosovo and Albania to fostering collaboration and advancing various sectors of their economies, including those discussed in our workshop.

At the Appendix below there are the overall agreements signed between these two states through the last years.

## **Albania – North Macedonia Agreements**

The first meeting of the two governments, held in Pogradec on December 15, 2017, was a pivotal moment. It was the first of its kind between the governments of both countries, and it marked a joint commitment to building a sustainable long-term mechanism with the aim of elevating the relations between Albania and North Macedonia to a new qualitative level. The jointly defined agenda, expressed in the Common Declaration signed at the end of this meeting, has a concrete substantive approach and aims for tangible outcomes.

This agenda includes intensifying bilateral relations through increased dialogue and exchanges in all areas of cooperation, mobilizing efforts to fulfill commitments within the framework of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, working to further connect Albania and North Macedonia through the development of road, railway, and energy infrastructure, improving the standards of the free movement of goods, people, and capital by following the One-Stop-Shop customs model.

Additionally, these agreements were signed:

No.	Document Title
1	Joint Declaration between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Edi Rama, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, H.E. Zoran Zaev, within the framework of the first intergovernmental meeting Albania - North Macedonia.
2	Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for the prevention and combatting of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism.
3	Plan for cooperation and consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania.
4	Memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania, on strengthening cooperation in the field of internal control.
5	Memorandum of cooperation between the General Directorate of Archives of the Republic of Albania and the Institute of Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Albanians - Skopje.

The consecutive meeting of the two governments Albania-North Macedonia, held in Skopje on November 14, 2022, saw the signing of agreements and memorandums covering various areas, including cooperation in the EU integration process, collaboration in defense and security, joint border control at the common border crossing point Qafë-Thanë, and a memorandum of cooperation in the economic and energy sectors.

Key recent agreements related to the common priority areas can be found in the Appendix below.

## Albania – Montenegro Agreements

The First Intergovernmental Meeting between Albania and Montenegro took place on July 3, 2018, in Shkodra. The meeting included delegations consisting of 11 ministers from both governments. A joint press conference concluded the meeting, and a Business Forum, organized by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry as well as the Investment Agencies of both countries, was held on the sidelines of the event. During this meeting, a Joint Declaration and seven Memoranda of Understanding/Cooperation were signed.

- **Intergovernmental Meeting and Press Conference:** Prime Minister Rama viewed this meeting as a significant step toward enhancing bilateral relations. Both countries have been cooperating effectively within the Euro-Atlantic integration process and the Berlin Process. Key topics discussed included the Adriatic-Ionian Highway, increasing border crossing points, infrastructure development between Velipoja and Ulcinj, and a common approach to Kosovo and its Dialogue with Serbia. The opening of border crossing points and the positive role of minorities were also highlighted.
- **Business Forum:** The Albania-Montenegro Business Forum, organized by the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of both countries, aimed to boost cooperation in various sectors, including trade, tourism, energy, transport, agriculture, IT, and wood processing. Approximately 170 company representatives from both nations participated. Discussions focused on cross-border projects, improving economic ties, addressing non-tariff barriers, and promoting trade and investment exchanges.

This meeting marked a significant step forward in bilateral relations and demonstrated untapped potential in various areas, such as the economy, trade, tourism, and cross-border cooperation. The participation of numerous companies in the Business Forum indicated the strong interest and potential for collaboration between Albania and Montenegro.

The signed documents were:

Agreement/Collaboration	Description
<b>Joint Declaration between Prime Ministers</b>	An agreement signed during the first Albanian-Montenegrin Intergovernmental meeting.
<b>Framework Agreement on Trans-boundary Water Management</b>	Agreement on bilateral relations in the field of trans-boundary water management.
<b>Mutual Assistance in Emergency Situations</b>	Agreement on mutual assistance in emergency situations between the Council of Ministers of Albania and the Government of Montenegro.
<b>Cross-border Operations for Airspace Patrolling</b>	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of Albania and the Government of Montenegro on cross-border operations for airspace patrolling.
<b>Border Crossing Opening (Zogai-Skie)</b>	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro on the opening of a border crossing Zogai-Skie for road and waterway traffic on Lake Shkodra.
<b>Cultural Cooperation Program (2018-2020)</b>	Program of cultural cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro for the period 2018-2020.
<b>Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Cooperation</b>	Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Cooperation between the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) and the Montenegrin Investment Promotion Agency.
<b>Cooperation Agreement between Chambers of Commerce</b>	Cooperation Agreement between the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania and the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro.

During the second joint meeting on 27th of February 2023 between the government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, several cooperation agreements were signed. These included a Joint Declaration between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, Edi Rama, and the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Dritan Abazovic; a bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Albania and Montenegro regarding the construction of a bridge over the Buna River; and an Agreement for the opening of the common border crossing point Shën Nikollë – Pulaj on the territory of the Republic of Albania, signed by Prime Minister Edi Rama and Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic. Furthermore, ministers from both governments signed agreements and memorandums in various fields, such as energy, fishing, plant protection, social protection, sports, culture, media, defense, and healthcare.

Other recent agreements related to the common priorities of the two countries are listed in the Appendix below.



# Appendix – Agreements between Albania and Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro

## Agreements between Albania and Kosovo

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
1	Cooperation agreement on border management	7.3.2006
2	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the recognition of the rights of the Albanians of Montenegro	27.3.2007
3	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	27.3.2007
4	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the recognition of the rights of the Albanians of Montenegro	4.5.2007
5	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of environmental protection	4.5.2007
6	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the mutual recognition of higher education diplomas	4.5.2007
7	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	4.5.2007
8	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of public order and security	4.5.2007
9	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	4.5.2007

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
10	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	4.5.2007
11	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of health	4.5.2007
12	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of culture and protection of cultural heritage	4.5.2007
13	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of transport	4.5.2007
14	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	4.5.2007
15	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of emergency management	4.5.2007
16	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of public administration	4.5.2007
17	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	4.5.2007
18	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of customs and scal affairs	4.5.2007
19	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	27.11.2007
20	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	27.11.2007
21	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	27.11.2007
22	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of culture	27.11.2007
23	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the eld of public administration	27.11.2007
24	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of tourism	27.11.2007

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
25	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of transport	27.11.2007
26	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of environmental protection	27.11.2007
27	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of health	27.11.2007
28	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of emergency management	27.11.2007
29	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of customs and scale affairs	27.11.2007
30	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	27.11.2007
31	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	27.11.2007
32	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	27.11.2007
33	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public order and security	27.11.2007
34	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public administration	27.11.2007
35	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	30.12.2007
36	Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the mutual recognition of higher education diplomas	30.12.2007
37	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	30.12.2007
38	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of customs and scal affairs	30.12.2007
39	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public administration	30.12.2007
40	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public order and security	30.12.2007
41	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	30.12.2007
42	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	30.12.2007
43	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of transport	30.12.2007
44	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	30.12.2007
45	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	30.12.2007
46	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	7.6.2010

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
47	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of customs and scal affairs	7.6.2010
48	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	7.6.2010
49	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public administration	7.6.2010
50	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	7.6.2010
51	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	7.6.2010
52	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of transport	7.6.2010
53	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	7.6.2010
54	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	7.6.2010
55	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of health	7.6.2010
56	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of environmental protection	7.6.2010
57	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	7.6.2010
58	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of culture	7.6.2010
59	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of tourism	7.6.2010
60	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of emergency management	7.6.2010
61	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public order and security	7.6.2010
62	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	27.5.2013
63	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of customs and scal affairs	27.5.2013
64	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	27.5.2013
65	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public administration	27.5.2013
66	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	27.5.2013
67	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	27.5.2013
68	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of transport	27.5.2013
69	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	27.5.2013
70	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	27.5.2013

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
71	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of health	27.5.2013
72	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of environmental protection	27.5.2013
73	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of justice	4.4.2016
74	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of customs and scal affairs	4.4.2016
75	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of economic development	4.4.2016
76	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of public administration	4.4.2016
77	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of telecommunications and postal services	4.4.2016
78	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of science and technology	4.4.2016
79	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of transport	4.4.2016
80	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of agriculture	4.4.2016
81	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of education, youth, and sports	4.4.2016
82	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of health	4.4.2016
83	Agreement on cooperation in the eld of environmental protection	4.4.2016
84	Technical Agreement for military aviation training	13.1.2020
85	Cooperation protocol for diplomatic representation	23.04.2020
86	Implementation protocol in cultural diplomacy	23.04.2020
87	Cooperation agreement for EU accession negotiations	23.04.2020
88	Protocol amending cooperation agreement for security	2.10.2020
89	Amending Protocol for double taxation avoidance	2.10.2020
90	Cooperation agreement in railway transport	2.10.2020
91	Cooperation agreement for disaster assistance	2.10.2020
92	Joint Basketball League cooperation	2.10.2020
93	Additional protocol for health cooperation (COVID-19)	2.10.2020
94	Working group for <u>Presheva Valley</u> support fund	2.10.2020
95	Film co-production agreement	2.10.2020

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
96	Cooperation agreement in cultural heritage and museums	2.10.2020
97	Joint annual cultural calendar	2.10.2020
98	Cooperation for 5G digital corridor	2.10.2020
99	Mobility at work cooperation	2.10.2020
100	Digital platform for pre-university education	2.10.2020
101	Working group for support in Montenegro	4.12.2020
102	Protocol for consular representation in Struga	4.12.2020
103	Defense cooperation agreement with Slovenia	18.5.2021
104	Cooperation agreement between statistics agencies	7.6.2021
105	Facilitation of temporary residence permits	26.11.2021
106	Rules of local border traffic regime	26.11.2021
107	Amendment of the Common Border Crossing Point	26.11.2021
108	Mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters	26.11.2021
109	Agriculture cooperation	26.11.2021
110	Durrës-Prishtina railway construction	26.11.2021
111	Social security agreement	26.11.2021
112	Mutual facilities in customs and entry/exit control	26.11.2021
113	Diploma and certificate recognition	26.11.2021
114	Cultural heritage and museums cooperation	26.11.2021
115	Joint annual cultural calendar	26.11.2021
116	5G digital corridor and future mobility	26.11.2021
117	Mobility at work cooperation	26.11.2021
118	Joint digital platform for education	26.11.2021
119	Pharmaceutical and medical devices cooperation	26.11.2021
120	Cross-border health service cooperation	26.11.2021
121	Local border traffic regime in border areas	26.11.2021

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
122	Civil status cooperation	26.11.2021
123	Declaration of Ministers of Justice	26.11.2021
124	Tourist information and promotion platform	26.11.2021
125	Vlora LNG terminal development	26.11.2021
126	Mountain Search and Rescue cooperation	26.11.2021
127	Joint working group for economic cooperation	26.11.2021
128	Joint Border Control Activities at Shishtavec-Krushevë	20.06.2022
129	Agreement between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of the Republic of Kosovo to co-fund the feasibility study and the design of Durrës-Prishtina railway project.	20.06.2022
130	Administrative agreement on implementation of the social accord between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
131	Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kosovo for the implementation of joint border control at the joint border crossing point Morinë / Kukës (Vërmicë / Prizren).	20.06.2022
132	Cooperation agreement on implementation of support programs for agricultural and rural development between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of the Republic of Kosovo	20.06.2022
133	Cooperation agreement on exchanging experiences in technical processes between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
134	Cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology	20.06.2022

No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
135	Agreement on cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals and medical devices between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
136	Cooperation agreement on mutual cross-border health service between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
137	Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo on the regime of local border traffic in the border areas between the state border of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
138	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation on civil status.	20.06.2022
139	Joint Statement by the Ministers of Justice of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
140	Cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade of the Republic of Kosovo on the creation of a joint digital information and tourism promotion platform.	20.06.2022
141	Memorandum of Understanding on the energy sector between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Kosovo.	20.06.2022
142	Cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of the Republic of Kosovo on assessing the current state and improving roads infrastructure in cross-border villages connecting the Albania-Kosovo border areas.	20.06.2022



No.	Agreement Name	Date of Signing
143	Agreement between the Minister of State for Youth and Children of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation on the field of youth.	20.06.2022
144	Cooperation agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the government of the Republic of Kosovo on co-funding a major project on Albanian studies, namely the Albanian encyclopaedia.	20.06.2022
145	Memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation on the construction of Vlora's Lungomare terminal.	20.06.2022
146	Agreement between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation on mountainous and maritime search and rescue operations.	20.06.2022
147	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers of the Republic of Kosovo on the establishment of a joint working group for customs unification.	20.06.2022

## Agreements between Albania and North Macedonia

Agreement Title	Relevant Domain
Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation on the area of Public Finance and the EU Accession process	Education Exchange
Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs for cooperation in diplomatic training	Education Exchange
Cooperation Programme between Ministries of Education and Sports (2022-2025)	Education Exchange
Memorandum of cooperation for proofreading and Albanian language editing	Education Exchange
Memorandum of cooperation on Albanian sign language implementation	Education Exchange
Memorandum on energy sector cooperation	Energy
Agreement on cross-border road connectivity	Energy
Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation	Energy
Memorandum on the digitization of consular services	Energy
Agreement on joint security task forces	Raw Materials/Manufacturing
Cooperation agreement for the return of illegally exported icons	Raw Materials/Manufacturing
Cooperation on digital technology transformation	Raw Materials/Manufacturing
Agreement on cross-border air traffic services delegation over Lake Ohrid	Raw Materials/Manufacturing
Memorandum of cooperation on social policies and child protection	Sustainable Agriculture
Health cooperation agreement	Sustainable Agriculture
Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy of North Macedonia and the Ministry of State for Enterprise Protection of Albania	Sustainable Agriculture

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