EU4Digital

An accelerated digital transition for the Western Balkans

Context

The Western Balkan (WB) economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, are at different stages of EU integration with varying levels of digital readiness. All six economies have committed to aligning with EU policies through **the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans**, and their respective **Reform Agendas.** The Growth Plan outlines a pathway for economic integration into the **EU Single Market**, with digital transformation as one of its key pillars.

To achieve these goals, it is crucial to **expand digital infrastructure, develop e-government services, and support small businesses in going digital.** While there has been progress in, many challenges remain. High-speed internet is still limited in rural areas, government systems are outdated, and businesses often rely on paper-based processes. Stronger digital reforms are needed to connect the region, grow the economy, and meet EU standards.

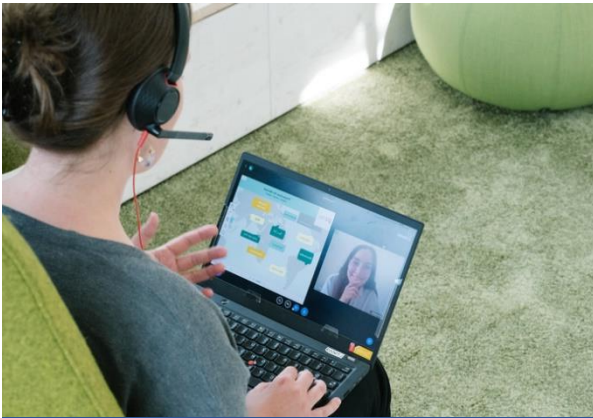| Project name	EU4Digital
Commissioned by	Co-funded by the European Union and Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Beneficiaries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
Funding	16.150.000 EUR (15.000.000 EUR of EU funds; 1.150.000 EUR of BMZ funds)
Duration	2024-2027

*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.

Action's Objective

This EU4Digital therefore aims to enhance digital connectivity and accelerate the digital transformation of the Western Balkans, facilitating their integration into the European Union's Digital Single Market.

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Our Approach

The Action aims to achieve its objective through the following actions:

Developing secure and sustainable digital infrastructure – Through the WiFi4WB initiative, the Action will provide free public Wi-Fi at the municipal level and install Wi-Fi access points in select public locations, increasing internet availability for residents and visitors. Additionally, it will support governments in establishing pipelines of digital infrastructure investments, with a focus on improving connectivity in rural and underserved areas to ensure wider access to digital services across the region.

Enhancing interoperability and e-governance – The Action will facilitate bilateral and regional agreements to recognize trust services, streamlining cross-border transactions and communication. It will support a pilot for interoperable e-services, showcasing their benefits and encouraging cross-border data exchange through the adoption of e-governance solutions within the region in alignment with the EU.

Supporting the digitalisation of businesses – To foster business digitalization, the Action will promote the application of EU standards across the region. It will lay the groundwork for introducing electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) in the WB, driving digital transformation in transport and logistics. Furthermore, it will strengthen the provision of expertise and assistance to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by strengthening the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) throughout the WB, facilitating closer integration with the EU's digital ecosystem.

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