

NEWSLETTER

Implementation of the WBF supported projects goes on

The 18 projects in the framework of the WBF First Call, have already started the implementation phase all over the region, with high visibility & bringing together people from our six Contracting Parties. We are following & monitoring closely this phase, by creating a strong partnership with all involved actors. It is an everyday work through contacts, visits, mentoring & assistance for giving solutions to different problems. The successful application of the projects is the main instrument for fulfilling WBF main objectives and mission. Therefore, we have focused this issue of WBF Newsletter mostly to activities of our projects during this period.



Belgrade-Skopje

Pitching for the future: Balkan Start-ups

Cansee (Serbia), Macedonia2025 (Macedonia) and Restart (Bosnia and Hercegovina) hosted the first leg of an international start-up pitching competition for their national winners, with the financial support of WBF. The event was organized in Belgrade on 22nd of June 2018 with the participants from the WB region.

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Vojvodina-Skopje-Podgorica

“Into the future without water?! – Documentary TV series Green Patrol in Action”

WBF supports “Green patrol in action!”, documentary TV series looking into harmful environmental impacts of derivative mini hydro power plants. This is an initiative of “Green Initiative of Vojvodina” focused in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Documentaries of Macedonia and Montenegro are already shared with public.

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Brussels

Antall József Knowledge Centre organized a conference on WB

WBF was invited to a Conference, organized by the Antall József Knowledge Centre in cooperation with the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, in Brussels. Discussion took place on current challenges of young generations and the future of innovation and entrepreneurship in the WB.

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Prishtina - DOKUTECH, technology & ideas meet!

By Dafina Beqiri

The region should focus in embracing such projects and become a level where knowledge is dispersed and transferred, innovation systems are built and where competition spurs economic growth. Direct support towards these projects should be more active in order to provide a constant process of technology knowledge transfer and innovation, a process that would diffuse the tension between communities and transform it into a regional competitiveness, reconciliation and economic growth.

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In the process of implementing WBF Projects

In this section we will bring to you some news, activities and photos related to the main project activities, as they are taking place in our region during June 2018 period.



Pitching for the future: Balkan start-ups

Cansee (Serbia), Macedonia2025 and Restart (Bosnia and Hercegovina) hosted the first leg of an international start-up pitching competition for their national winners, with the financial support of the Western Balkans Fund.

All three NGOs hosted an annual business development program called the LEADER Project with the help of MBA students from Richard Ivey Business School in Canada. Over the course of two weeks, participants learned how to develop a business plan and pitch. This year, for the first time, the top three participants from each of the three countries will present their startup ideas in Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Skopje. Today at the first leg in Belgrade, we heard startup ideas that included: an online dating app, an online booking platform for regional food tourism, wearable jewelry that tracks six health indicators, and an environmentally friendly fertilizer.

This new initiative will give the winning participants the priceless opportunity to present their startup idea in front of potential investors from Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, and from around the world. Further, and if not more importantly, the initiative will help foster new links and networks between the young participants, and between investors and business people from the three countries.

The future of the Balkans is business. The ultimate winner will be awarded with funding and the opportunity to present their startup idea in front of over 400 people at the annual Macedonia2025 Summit. The next leg to be held in Sarajevo on 9 August 2018, and the third leg in Skopje on 7 November 2018.

CanSee (Canadian - Serbian Business Association), Macedonia2025, and Restart are NGOs that were founded to promote economic development in Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Hercegovina respectively. The Western Balkans Fund, is an inter-governmental grant giving organization that promotes greater regional cooperation, people to people contacts in the Western Balkans, and its integration with the European Union.

Please click here for more info related to this project in Macedonian, English and Albanian.

- www.macedonia2025.com/news/single/1158
- <http://cansee.biz/en/NewsEvents/details/298>
- <https://businessmag.al/konkursi-i-pare-rajonal-business-pitching-zhvillohet-ne-beograd-mbeshtetur-nga-fondi-i-ballkanit-perendimor/>

DOKUTECH, where technology and ideas meet!

By Dafina Beqiri

“The month of June started with some exciting and non-traditional events in the WB region, a WBF grantee IPKO Foundation organized next annual event DOKUTECH, an event that became one of the leading tech events in the Balkans devoted to idea of technology knowledge sharing, igniting discussions, women empowerment through technology and innovation, interactive workshops, DIY sessions, fun-filled days and musical evenings. Events like these show that Western Balkans region is constantly improving in terms of technology and innovation performance, by providing a path towards successful structural transformation of the economies driven by innovation. This approach towards technology and innovation is transforming the Western Balkans image into a new potential Silicon Valley of Europe by providing highly skilled youngsters in IT sector. IPKO Foundation, Share Foundation, Open Labs and Metamorphosis are a great example of a strong partnership since they managed to bring together over 6,000 technology lovers from Balkans, Europe, and United States. Partnerships like this not only increase cooperation between entities but also provide a common sense that much is to be gained from an exchange of experience by bringing people together working on the same goal. Currently, Western Balkans is at the defining moment as a result of numerous factors of change, and projects like DOKUTECH, present a positive change on the willingness to work together and showing that there is growing awareness in Western Balkans about the critical role of innovation playing in economic development and regional cooperation.

WBF through this project learned that all parties of WB region face similar challenges when it comes to technology and innovation. In order to better address them parties should together identify tools and mechanisms on how to tackle similar problems at a local and regional level. This approach enables not only entities involved in the project but also beneficiaries gain ideas about how to address similar challenges. Moreover, practices like this tremendously contribute to the promotion of cooperation within the region, where youngsters from different places can get together and broaden their perspective by comparing approaches, identify what has worked, what was a failure, jointly develop ways to address problems and communicate the results in order to make them available to others. Most important factor is enabling youngsters learn how to capitalize their projects and transfer good practices into the implementation stage.

Initiatives as such should not remain only at the Civil Society level, since quite often CSOs face challenges such as lack of sustainable access to finance which directly impacts the support towards youth talents in technology and innovation but mostly affects job creation. The region should focus in embracing such projects and become a level where knowledge is dispersed and transferred, innovation systems are built and where competition spurs economic growth. Increase of competitiveness within Western Balkans cannot be achieved by the region or by individual party acting on their own; there should act together to succeed since the economic success requires a close cooperation between all of them. Direct support towards these projects should be more active in order to provide a constant process of technology knowledge transfer and innovation, a process that would diffuse the tension between communities and transform it into a regional competitiveness, reconciliation and economic growth. Most importantly strengthens innovation capacities to pave the way for full integration into the EU!”

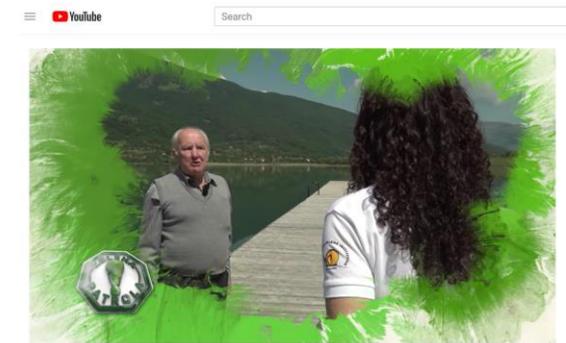
Dafina Beqiri is Programme Coordinator at WBF

Visit here for more info: www.doku.tech/





Makedonija - Sve za ništa, maj 2018.



Crna Gora - Nije pošteno!, jun 2018.



“Into the future without water?! – Documentary TV series Green Patrol in Action”

WBF supports “Green patrol in action!”, documentary TV series looking into harmful environmental impacts of derivative mini hydro power plants. The “Green Initiative of Vojvodina” team visits communities in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and investigate economic, social and environmental effects of the mini-hydro power plants to the rivers in Western Balkans. First, in a series of four documentary movies was recorded in Macedonia and provides informative overview of the pressing environmental challenges in this country.

Please click here for Macedonia documentary:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf7AFsQwODA>

Please click here for Montenegro documentary:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdlrWu9F74k&t=21s>

Some articles and publications related to WBF in English, Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian

- www.restart.ba/2018/06/18/first-regional-business-pitching-competition-in-belgrade-supported-by-the-western-balkans-fund/
- www.mreza-mira.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Saopstenje_PLJ_RegionalniZiri_180620.pdf
- www.seecult.org/konkurs/poziv-za-ucesce-u-ziriju-mladih-na-tri-filmska-festivala-u-regionu
- <https://civilmedia.mk/regionalen-biznis-natprevar-od-projektot-lider/>
- www.seelawschool.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=440:seels-succeeds-in-the-first-call-for-proposal-of-the-wesetern-balkans-fund&catid=79&lang=en&Itemid=702
- <https://unvi.edu.ba/6th-global-ecpd-youth-forum-youth-power-for-the-common-future-beograd-27-28-10-2018/>
- www.hipmont.me/2018/06/03/clio-na-balkanu-jacanje-mreze-nastavnika-istorije-i-unapredjivanje-prakse-nastave-istorije-ka-ala-za-pomirenje-u-regiji/
- <https://denar.mk/182200/ekonomija/prv-regionalen-biznis-natprevar-vo-belgrad>
- <https://marketing365.mk/prv-regionalen-biznis-natprevar-vo-belgrad-poddrzan-od-fondot-na-zapaden-balkan/>
- <http://diasporainvest.ba/blog-content/10438/prvo-regionalno-takmicenje-poslovnih-ideja>

- *For more please follow our Twitter page*

WBF EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Former MFA of Albania Prof. Dade visited WBF

We had the honor and pleasure to welcome to WBF Secretariat Prof. Dr. Arta Dade, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania. Prof. Dade is one of the great contributors in paving the path towards regional cooperation in WB6. During this meeting WBF team learned more about successes but also difficulties that madam Dade faced in the field of diplomacy, especially as a woman. It was quite encouraging to see how important it is to have strong women in diplomacy and how important it is for WB governments to enable women representing state interests. Madam Dade shared her gratitude towards Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the WB6 since initiatives like WBF give a clear sign to increase regional cooperation.

WBF visit to the Austrian Embassy in Tirana

Another example of support and cooperation with the Austria on regional cooperation processes in the Western Balkans. WBF team was invited for a meeting at the Austrian Embassy in Tirana. Discussions that took place were quite inspiring with Ambassador Johann Sattler since Ambassador continues to be one of the best experts in this respect. Ambassador Sattler was thoroughly informed about activities and recent projects of WBF in the region.

Antall József Knowledge Centre organized in Brussels a conference on Western Balkans

WBF was invited to a Conference, organized by the Antall József Knowledge Centre in cooperation with the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, in Brussels. Current challenges of young generations and the future of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans were discussed. Participants, representing think tanks, NGO-s and relevant institutions from WB region, had the opportunity to exchange ideas with EU Commissioners Hahn and Navracsics as well as with EU parliamentarians Maydell, Deli and Fleckenstein.

www.ajtk.hu/program-en/233/here-we-come---conference-on-talent-management-and-youth-perspectives-in-the-western-balkans

MARRI Forum in Tirana

WBF was part of the MARRI Regional Forum organized in June in Tirana. Within the framework of MARRI Ms. Tamara Mugosa, Director of MARRI RC, visited the WBF premises and met our team. MARRI as a regional initiatives helped the WBF learn more about successes and challenges regarding enhancement of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Meeting with Japanese MFA representative Ms. Odonera

In June 28, WBF team hosted a meeting with Ms. Rika Onodera Officer for Central and South Eastern Europe Division at the Japanese MFA. During this meeting the WBF informed Ms. Onodera about the projects and initiatives. During this meeting the WBF was informed about latest initiatives that Japanese government will support. This meeting was a great opportunity for WBF to learn more in details about these initiatives and see possible opportunities for cooperation in a future.





Visit us for more information:

- www.westernbalkansfund.org

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- https://twitter.com/balkans_fund
- <https://www.instagram.com/westernbalkansfund/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/westernbalkansfund/>

Projections of activities for the upcoming period

- ✓ 09 July: Visit to the Center for Information and Development (CDI), on the project Digital Girl of the Year
- ✓ 10 July: Visit to European Movement Albania, on the project "Creating synergy in Western Balkans for strengthening education, research and science"
- ✓ 10 July: "NGO Greenstep- kick off meeting" Play, Montenegro/ NGO Greenstep
- ✓ 19-21 July: Street Art Festival "Dodji na Amfi", Nis, Serbia/ Club For Youth Empowerment
- ✓ 22-28 July: "Challenge History 2 -REACT for the Future", Prizren, Kosovo/ Center for Peace and Tolerance
- ✓ 3-11 August: Dokufest- "Re-Thinking Films", Prizren, Kosovo/ Dokufest
- ✓ 9 August: Macedonia 2025- Business Forum, Sarajevo, BiH/ Macedonia 2025



NOTE: In our web page at the Calendar section you may find the latest information regarding the timing of the concrete activities of WBF projects, as they are updated accordingly.



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www.visegradfund.org

For more information please contact us: info@westernbalkansfund.org