



# YOUTH POLICY LAB MODEL

**WBYL**  
WESTERN BALKANS YOUTH LAB



Regional Cooperation Council



This project is funded  
by the European Union

## I. Introduction

The Youth Policy Lab is a flagship initiative within RCC' Western Balkans Youth Lab project funded by the European Union that aims to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. Based on the conclusions of Sofia EU-Western Balkan Summits held in 2018 and 2020, Youth Policy Lab is designed to provide a safe space for youth, enabling young women and men to work jointly and at equal basis with policymakers. As such, it is seen as an important instrument which can further support the implementation of the European Youth Dialogue principles in the Western Balkans.

## II. Youth Policy Lab model principles of co-creation

To ensure high quality of its outcomes, Youth Policy Model is based on common ground rules and principles of coordination, co-creation and good governance. Building

on evidence-based researches and inputs provided by relevant actors and stakeholders, Youth Policy Lab model encompasses strong consultations & information sharing component which aims to facilitate dialogue between policy makers and youth at various stages of policy cycle and to establish continuous partnership around key youth-related issues in the region. The nature of Youth Policy Lab and its reliance on substantial contribution from main actors and stakeholders are best reflected in its motto: Everyone's contribution equally matters.

## III. Youth Lab - from concept to reality

The Youth Policy Lab model applies to the regional level, encompassing regional Youth Policy Lab events (Kick-Off, Mid-Term and Final Event), and activities at the economy level (including Youth Policy Labs which should take place in each economy in between the regional events).

To make a Youth Lab a reality, a two-step process will be implemented, consisting of:

Consultations at the level of each economy	Consultations are run under coordination of the Working Groups and may include different methods (face-to-face or online) used to reach out to young people of different backgrounds to ask for their opinion on the topic of the cycle.
Implementation phase at each economy level	After careful analysis of the consultation outcomes, Working Groups should ensure that all relevant actors contribute to the definition and pursuit of political demands in further co-creation process. After setting the demands and goals, the Working Groups will shape them into action plans to facilitate the desired political or policy changes and ensure longer-term improvements of youth policies under the given economy context.

## IV. Youth Lab Policy Governance

### *Working Groups at economy level*

The Working Groups at economy level are perceived as key role-players under the Youth Policy Lab model, tasked with governing the economy-level processes and securing that these processes outreach diverse range of young people, allowing them to benefit from information sharing between the local, economy and regional levels. WGs will involve primarily members of the Regional Pool of Experts (youth and policy makers) coming from specific economy fields and other members relevant for topics under the Youth Policy Lab focus. WG will discuss ideas & challenges and propose solutions for the region at regional events, while between those, members from each economy will work on adjusting regional perspective to the local context and needs, and on including youth representatives and policy actors in these processes.

### *Functioning of the Working Group*

The respective ministries and governmental bodies will provide administrative support to the Working Group at economy level, ensuring that the envisaged activities run smoothly. Governmental representatives will have a leading role in strengthening youth representation at economy level, giving this role to a member of the Regional Pool of Experts. In other cases, National Youth Councils (NYC) would be the most adequate body. If there is no NYC, the role should be taken by a youth organisation

with proven experience in youth policy development and direct engagement with young people, represented by a young person (age limit is usually defined at the level of each economy).

The decisions within the WGs at economy level should be based on consensus among group members. In case a consensus cannot be reached, different members of WGs will have an equal say and decision-making power. While functioning as an informal body, WG can develop its own working procedures and methods as well as specific implementation and communication plans, as needed.

### *Co-chairing of the WG*

Co-chairing the WGs provides an additional aspect and reassurance to different stakeholders that the Youth Policy Lab process is based on the principle of co-creation. The co-chairs should represent the two sides of the Youth Lab process, the policy and decision-makers and the young people, allowing for a heavy workload to be shared and key strengths and expertise of representatives of different sectors utilised effectively to support youth policy objectives.

The co-chair from the governmental side can be a representative of the Ministry/Agency for youth, special government advisor or representative of another governmental body working on youth participation. The co-chair from the youth side should be chosen independently by the National Youth Council. If there is no NYC in a specific economy, then it should be a young person nominated by one or more youth organisations, who has substantial experience in youth participation.

## Regional Pools of Experts

Regional Pool of Experts is composed of appointed representatives of Ministries/ Youth Agencies or other relevant Ministries in charge of youth-related processes, as well as of youth representatives selected through open and transparent process in cooperation with National Youth Councils and Youth Umbrella Organisations, who will receive relevant training in implementing Youth Lab methodology so as to be able to implement this Methodology at economy level.

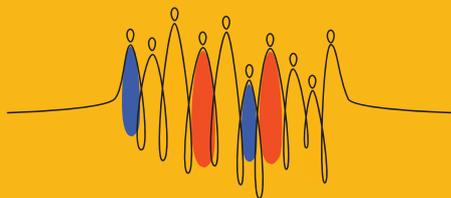
## V. Financial support to WGs and management of resources

Youth Labs are demanding and time consuming processes, requiring substantial resources to enable stable and continuous cooperation and inclusion of all the relevant

stakeholders. These resources should be put at disposal of WG and co-managed by both the governmental representatives and the youth representatives within the WG. Group members will jointly decide on specific actions to be taken in pursuit of the expected economy-level goals. Potential sources of funding are: 1) specific governmental funds to support the process; 2) technical assistance provided within RCC WBYL; and 3) specific projects on economy level with various international organisations and foundations and other sources, where available.

## VI. Monitoring and ensuring the impact

To provide for proper impact assessment of the Youth Lab, adequate qualitative and quantitative indicators should be defined jointly by all actors involved at the very beginning of the process, creating monitoring framework which will be used for both assessment and reporting purposes.



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