

Balkonnect

FESTIVAL
Business Without Borders **2026**

21-22 MAY 2026

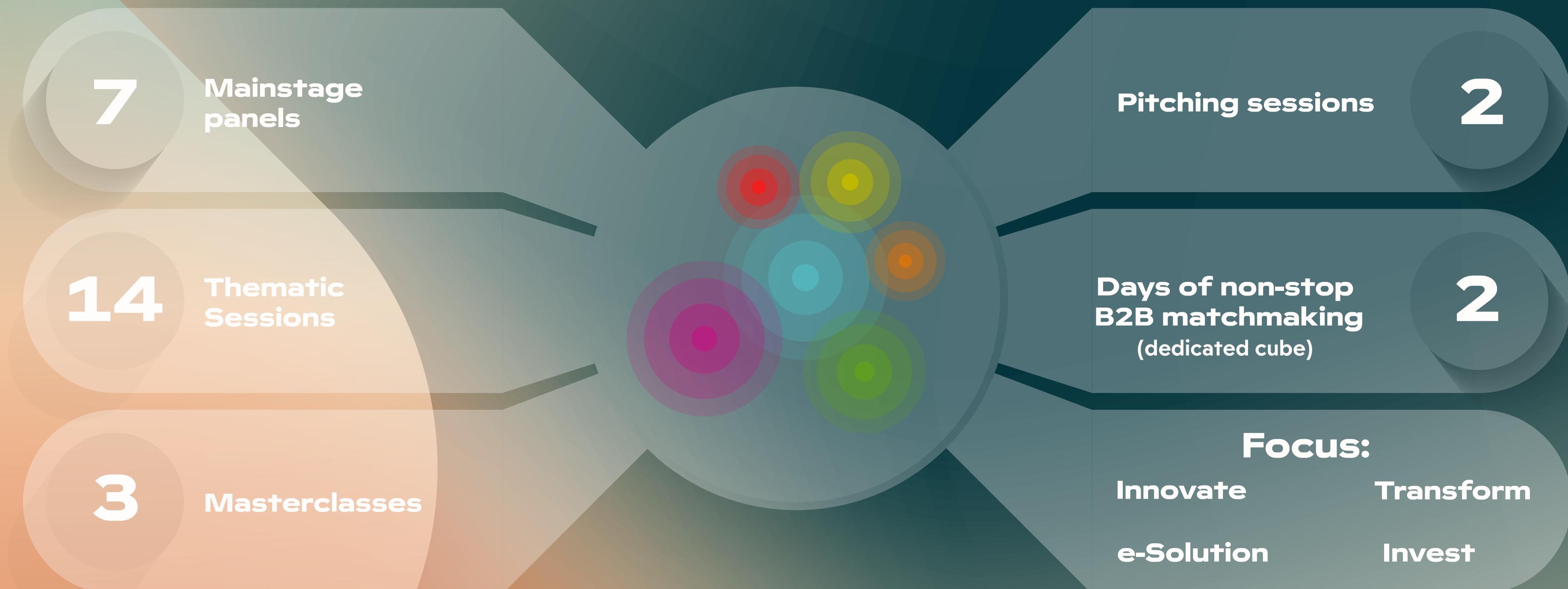
Piramida, Tirana

<https://balkonnect.com/>

Balkonnect Festival

Tirana 2026

From Prishtina 2025 to a Scalable Festival Model Tirana 2026



Benchmark (2025): 450+ participants · 50+ Panelists · 37 countries · 839 B2B meetings.

Balkonnect 2026: Program Logic



2 Days Clear Purposes

Day 1

Tourism & Experience Economy

World Business Angels Forum -
Balkan's Meetup

Bankable Projects Marketplace

Networking Cocktail

Non-stop

B2B Matchmaking
(dedicated cube)

Day 2

Renewables & Green

Digital & Banking

Masterclasses

Startup & SME Pitching

Registration link : <https://balkonnect.com/register/>

Tourism & Experience Economy

Why Albania owns this day

Tourism is Albania's strongest investment narrative- it's its Identity

Clear audience: investors, operators, developers, SMEs, public authorities/mechanisms

Mainstage

- Opening Ceremony
- Tourism Investment in Albania & WB

Thematic Cubes

- Season extension & destination management
- Hospitality tech & experience design
- Cultural heritage and diverse tourism offers
- Creative economy as tourism infrastructure

SME Exhibitions

Tourism, food, experiences, cultural heritage, creative SMEs, tour operators, show-cases



World Business Angels Forum – (hosted by WBAF)

Balkan's Meetup



The afternoon session shifts focus to angel investment opportunities across the broader Western Balkans region. This flagship segment positions Albania as the gateway to a dynamic emerging market, creating direct pathways from strategic conversation to actionable deal-flow.

Reframe Perceptions

Transform the Western Balkans from a "peripheral market" to a strategic near-EU growth zone with compelling fundamentals

Translate Narratives

Convert macro economic narratives into investable micro-opportunities with clear entry points and exit strategies

Create Pathways

Build direct connections from conversation to deal-flow through structured matchmaking and follow-up mechanisms

City & Public Sector Project Pitches

From Concepts to Bankable Projects

This session provides cities and public agencies with a structured platform to present mature or near-mature investment projects. The focus is on readiness, financing needs and clear implementation pathways rather than early-stage concepts.



Overview:

1. Project Maturity • Assessment

Readiness levels, feasibility studies completed and regulatory approvals secured

2. Investment • Requirements

Total investment size, financing gaps and capital structure expectations

3. Partnership • Models

Public-private partnership structures, risk allocation and governance frameworks

4. Bankable • Attractions

Expected returns, revenue models and strategic value for investors

5. Implementation • Timeline

Realistic schedules, milestones and opportunities for synergy with other projects



Networking Cocktail (Invitation-Only)

This curated, high-value networking environment closes Day 1 by bringing together investors, speakers, institutional leaders and selected founders in a relaxed setting where meaningful business relationships begin.

Trust is Built After Hours

The most important conversations happen when formal programming ends and authentic relationships form

Business Deals Begin Here

Serious investment discussions and partnership agreements emerge from relaxed, high-trust environments

Content Shifts to Connection

Strategic networking becomes the primary outcome - quality interactions over quantity of contacts

Renewables & Green Growth Reality in the Western Balkans



This session addresses the green transition from a pragmatic, investment-focused perspective. Rather than aspirational policy discussions, the focus is on renewable energy deployment realities, grid readiness, permitting challenges and the financing structures that determine whether projects can be implemented at scale.

Mainstage

- Renewables & Green

Thematic Cubes

- Green Buildings & Energy Efficiency
- Circular Economy for SMEs

SME Exhibitions

Green, construction, energy efficiency, SMEs sustainability

Infrastructure Investment



Integrated infrastructure investments for energy, transport and circular economy that support urban development and tourism competitiveness

Thematic Cubes:

Urban & Tourism Infrastructure Projects

Topics:

- Urban regeneration and place-making strategies
- Tourism-supporting infrastructure (airports, roads, utilities)
- Financing models and operational sustainability

Energy, Mobility & Circular Infrastructure

Topics:

- Energy distribution and mobility systems integration
- Smart and sustainable transport solutions
- Circular infrastructure (waste management, resource recovery)
- Implementation challenges and financing structures

Digital Economy & Banking

This session examines trust as the foundational infrastructure of the digital economy. Without robust digital identity systems, cybersecurity frameworks and regulatory compliance mechanisms, cross-border digital business and secure financial transactions cannot scale.

Mainstage

- Trust in Digital Finance & the Digital Economy

Thematic Cubes

- Fintech & Open Banking in SEE
- SaaS & Digital Export from the Western Balkans

Masterclasses

Investors' MasterClass

"What do Investors Invest in"

by Mr. Baybars ALTUNTAS/ WBAF - Chairman

e-Wallet MasterClass

"How the European Digital Identity Wallet boost the digital transformation in the society"

by Prof. Dr. George DIMITROV/ Evrotrust - President

e-Banking MasterClass

"e-Banking & programming world"

Startup & SME Pitching

Investment-Ready Businesses from the Western Balkans

This mainstage session provides startups and growth-oriented SMEs with a structured platform to present their businesses to investors, corporate partners and financial institutions. The focus is on scalability, demonstrated traction and clear investment readiness.



Pitching Criteria & Focus Areas:

1 Scalable Business Models

Clear path to 10x growth, not lifestyle businesses

2 Revenue and Growth Strategies

Proven unit economics and customer acquisition

3 Investment Structure

Funding needs, use of capital and exit potential

4 Strategic Partnerships

Expansion plans and market entry strategies

5 Execution Capacity

Team strength and governance structures

Pitching Event link: <https://balkonnect.com/pitching-application/>

Balkonnect Festival Awards and Closing Session

The Closing Session celebrates standout achievements from the festival, summarizes key outcomes, outlines follow-up actions and officially announces the 2027 host city. This reinforces Balkonnect's identity as a rotating, regional deal-making platform rather than a fixed event.



Festival Highlights

Summary of key insights, announced deals and partnership commitments from the two-day program

Changemaker Awards

Recognition of startups, investors and public sector leaders demonstrating exceptional innovation and impact

Follow-Up Framework

Investment and project follow-up pathways to ensure momentum continues after the festival

2027 Host City Reveal

Official announcement of Balkonnect 2027 location, signaling the festival's regional rotation model

Balkonnect 2026 is not bigger by accident
It is **sharper by design.**



FINAL MESSAGE

Built on Real Lessons

Every element reflects learnings from Balkonnect 2025—what worked, what didn't and how to scale intelligently

Adapted to Piramida

The program architecture fits Piramida Tirana's unique venue characteristics and capacity constraints

Focused on Deals, Projects and Credibility

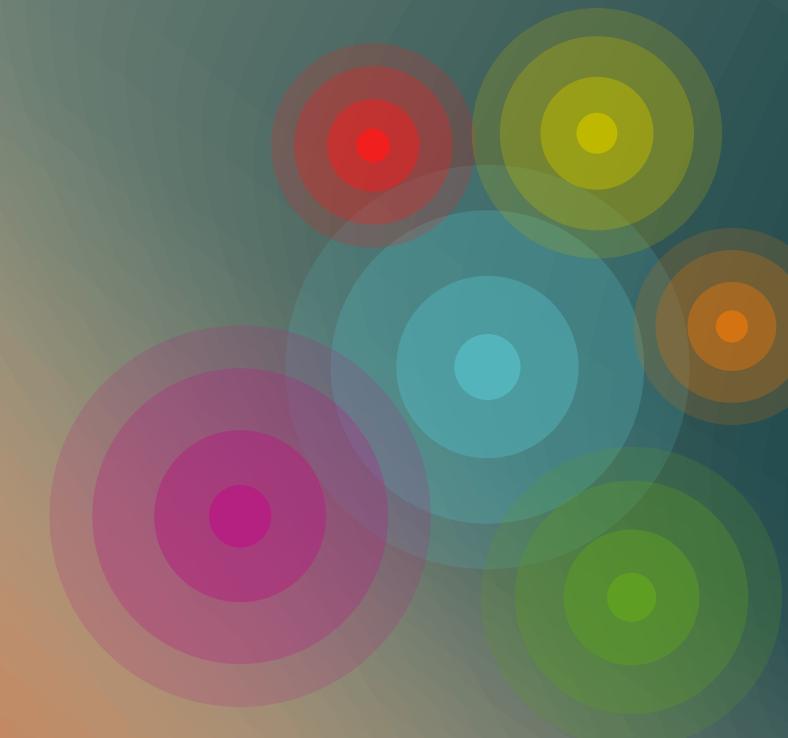
Not just conversations - structured pathways from dialogue to transactions, with follow-up mechanisms that work

Ready to Scale to Future Host Cities

The model is replicable, adaptable and designed to strengthen with each iteration across the Western Balkans

Balkonnect Festival Tirana 2026

represents the maturation of a regional platform - professionally designed, investor-focused and built for sustainable growth.



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