



# Digital infrastructure under the WBIF

State of play 2018 – 2020

Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans

*26 November, 2020*

*Enrica Chiozza, EU Commission, DG NEAR*



- Digital infrastructure under the WBIF 2018-2020 - State of play
- Next MFF
  - Policy context; Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans
  - Future assistance under WBIF

# State of play; digital infrastructure under the WBIF 2018-2020

- I. Opening up the WBIF for digital infrastructure projects (17th WBIF SC, December 2017)
- II. Launch of the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans (June 2018) with 4 main objectives. EU grants made available under WBIF to deploy broadband infrastructure to mobilise strategic investments.
  - ✓ **Investing in broadband connectivity**
  - ✓ Increasing cybersecurity, trust and digitalization of industry
  - ✓ Strengthening the digital economy and society
  - ✓ Boosting research and innovation
- III. Since 2018 WBIF SC opened five calls for technical assistance for digital infrastructure projects to finance project preparation of future large-scale investment projects.

# WBIF Digital portfolio 2018-2020

- ✓ 10 projects / € 310 million est. project value
- ✓ 11 grants / € 7.1 million WBIF grants approved
- ✓ Beneficiaries

Albania (5), MKD (1), MNE (1), SRB (1), KOS (2), Regional (1)



## ➤ Focus

High speed broadband coverage focused on rural area, broadband mapping and roll-out, HPC center, infrastructure sharing / Digital Highway, connectivity of education facilities

## ➤ Supported services

pre-feasibility study, needs assessment, feasibility study (incl. CBA), preliminary design, ESIA, detailed design and tender documents

# Next MFF – Policy context



SOTEU 2020

“ ... the future of the *whole* region lies in the EU. We share the same history, we share the same destiny.

**The Western Balkans are part of Europe ..”**



## Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans



*“The Plan offers a path for a successful regional economic integration to help accelerate convergence with the EU and close the development gap between our regions, ultimately speeding up the process of EU integration.”*

*EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and  
Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi*

# Pillars of the EIP

- Key areas for economic development – Investment flagships
- Regional Economic Integration - Common Regional Market
- Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

# Objectives

- Spur the **long-term recovery** and accelerate **green and digital transition**
- Foster regional cooperation and **convergence with the EU**
- **Up to €9 billion** of EU funding (*IPA III funding, subject to the adoption of the next MFF 2021-2027*)
- Attract public and private investments, backed by the **Western Balkan Guarantee Facility**, which has a potential to mobilize **up to €20 billion**
- **Sustainability of investments**: structural socio-economic reforms, reforms in rule of law and fight against corruption



# Six key areas for economic development

## 1. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- FLAGSHIP 1  
Connecting East to West;
- FLAGSHIP 2  
Connecting North to South;
- FLAGSHIP 3  
Connecting the coastal regions

## 2. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

- FLAGSHIP 7  
Waste and Waste water management

## 3. CLEAN ENERGY

- FLAGSHIP 4  
Renewable energy;
- FLAGSHIP 5  
Transition from coal;
- FLAGSHIP 6  
Renovation wave

## 4. DIGITAL FUTURE

- FLAGSHIP 8  
Digital infrastructure

## 5. PRIVATE SECTOR

- FLAGSHIP 9  
Investing in the competitiveness of the private sector

## 6. HUMAN CAPITAL

- FLAGSHIP 10  
YOUTH GUARANTEE

# Investment Flagships

- The EIP sets out a first set of projects articulated around 10 investment flagships
- Project suggestions based on the results of preliminary consultations with the governments of the region and their political and economic reform priorities. The first and most mature infrastructure project proposals – after appropriate assessment – could be frontloaded for funding in 2021-22;
- Expectation; the first flagships to be completed or substantially advanced by 2024.
- WBIF (including WB EDIF) and the Western Balkans Guarantee Facility, will be the main vehicle to ensure swift deployment of the investment package

# Flagship 8 – Digital infrastructure

Significant EU support for investments in digital infrastructure; the following concrete projects could be supported

- ✓ **The development and roll-out of ultra-fast and secure national broadband infrastructure** with a view to ensure universal access and promoting equality of access to digital education;
- ✓ **Setting up secure, energy-efficient and trustworthy data centres, edge and cloud infrastructures** while ensuring alignment with EU's rules and fundamental values, including data protection;
- ✓ **Linking to EU initiatives on high performance computers, digital incubators and innovation hubs;**
- ✓ **Building on ongoing initiatives such as the Balkan Digital Highway, synergies with other connectivity areas such as transport and energy should be fully explored in the context of infrastructure-sharing.**

# WBIF 6<sup>th</sup> Call for Investment Grant Proposals

- I. Current Investment Grant Call Round 6 already launched for transport and energy sectors. Recommendation for extending the deadline for submission of grant applications under the call until 26 February 2021 (to be formally approved by WBIF SC in December).
- II. WBIF SC in December 2020 will also take formal decision on extension of eligibility of the Investment Grant Call to Environment, Social and Digital Infrastructure sectors.
- III. Respective draft eligibility criteria consultation with WBIF stakeholders foreseen.
- IV. Possible endorsement of successful applications for EU grant support in the first meeting of the WBIF Boards in 2021, tentatively scheduled to be organised in June 2021.

# Thank you



© European Union 2020

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license. For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.



# More Information

**For info or further questions on this presentation please contact the JASPERS Networking and Competence Centre:**

**[jaspersnetwork@eib.org](mailto:jaspersnetwork@eib.org)**

**JASPERS Networking Platform:**

**[www.jaspersnetwork.org](http://www.jaspersnetwork.org)**

**JASPERS Website:**

**[jaspers.eib.org](http://jaspers.eib.org)**

