



Summary of the 3rd Meeting of the WBIF Steering Committee, 16 December 2010.

The Steering Committee (SC) of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) held its third meeting at the EBRD offices in London on 16 December 2010. The meeting gathered more than 70 participants including representatives of donors to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund (EWBJF), the beneficiaries, represented by the National IPA Coordinators (NIPACs), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the European Commission and several regional organisations.

The SC approved grant support in excess of EUR 2 million for three projects in the region. These include a feasibility study for an electricity interconnection (400 kV) between Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a feasibility study on the electricity production and irrigation of the "Zletovica" dam project in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the preparation of the rehabilitation of district heating systems in Serbia.

During the meeting, the annual report 2010 of the WBIF was presented to the SC members, the new website of the WBIF was formally launched and the work underway to update and upgrade the database on investment flows from the EC, IFIs and bilateral donors to the region was previewed. The initial findings and conclusions of the review of the operation of the Framework were extensively discussed by the participants, as was the potential to improve the implementation of such support to the Western Balkan. The resources and proposed work programme for 2011 as well as the next call for project submissions were presented.

In line with its mandate, the SC meeting also provided an opportunity to enhance further the coordination between donors, the EC and Beneficiaries in the area of policy and strategy. Participants were briefed on the latest developments in the area of transport policy in the region including the outcome of the recent meeting of Western Balkan transport ministers responsible for the South Eastern Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO).

Bilateral donors pledged new funding in excess of EUR 10 million for the WBIF and the European Commission announced that EUR 70 million of the IPA Multi-Beneficiary fund will be integrated into the WBIF in 2011.

The SC thanked the Czech Republic for its active co-chairing of the Committee in 2010 and welcomed Norway as the Co-Chair for 2011. EBRD was congratulated on its co-chairmanship of the Project Financiers' Group (PFG) in the second half of 2010 and the Council of Europe Development Bank will assume this role for the first half of 2011.

The next SC meeting will take place on 23 and 24 June 2011 and will be an opportunity to further monitor and review the achievements of the WBIF since its creation at the end of 2009. The social sector will be a topic of particular focus at this meeting.

More information on www.wbif.eu or elarg-wbif@ec.europa.eu