



# Youth Education Sector Study in Western Balkans Update

11 November 2020, Virtual meeting





# Youth Education Sector Study

## Objectives

- Overview of the current status of the Youth Education Sector (YES) in Western Balkans
- Identify potential infrastructure YES projects for WBIF investment co-financing and
- Stemming from discussions at the Stockholm SC in June 2017.

## Methodology

- Analysis of statistical data and related documents (Reports, Concept Notes, etc.)
- Consultation with beneficiaries, various stakeholders, EU delegations and offices, IFIs, other financing bodies and
- Analysis of YES potential projects and their maturity status.



# Youth Education Study – main findings

## General output

- Positive perception in the region on WBIF co-financing for YES projects, following the Connectivity Agenda
- Target group (15 to 24 years old) for YES : approximately 600,000 people in Western Balkans
- 20 projects were identified; 3 potentially mature investment projects; several projects in BiH were added to the pipeline since the 27th PFG in Tirana.

## Main observations:

- The focus of national authorities has shifted away from social sector projects including education, due to the to the Connectivity Agenda over the past seven years
- Regional education system shows a mismatch between the training quality/programme and the skills demanded by the labour market
- Public investment in education - both in physical infrastructure improvement and human resources – is well below average EU levels
- There is a lack of proper planning capacities on all levels in the YES. This includes missing strategies and the inclusion of relevant projects in the Single Sector Project Pipelines and
- Limited fiscal space; availability of substantive Investment would be an incentive to national authorities and rekindle interest in education sector projects.



## Youth Education Sector Study – identified gaps

### Financial gaps

- Estimated investment €280M
- Local funds limited
- Connectivity Agenda demand shift.

### Administrative gaps

- Missing SOC Single Sector Project Pipelines
- Low strategic priority
- Partnership not defined
- Unclear land availability
- Projects not mature (technical documentation unprepared); around half at concept/idea stage.

### Communication gaps

- Lack of coherence among stakeholders in YES
- Projects promoted in parallel by several bodies
- Low visibility of YES projects.



# Youth Education Sector Study – conclusion & priority actions

## Conclusion

- **Substantial Investments in human capital are required in the Western Balkans; the sector needs greater emphasis and support, and potentially a dedicated YES cooperation platform**
- **Links with Commissioner Varhelyi’s narrative on the EIP Flagship 10--Youth Guarantee--an activation scheme to ensure that all young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education**
- **The Youth Guarantee flagship should be implemented by Western Balkan governments in line with the EU Youth Guarantee. It is proposed to implement it in four phases, which could all potentially benefit from EU support.**

## Priority actions

- **Set the YES investment as priority in the Western Balkans**
- **Strengthen the YES planning and project development capacity for project promoters**
- **Award WBIF TA Grants for YES project identification & preparation & management support**
- **Promote YES projects with higher impact and visibility, to attract various financial resources**
- **Increase the interest of IFIs and Bilateral Donors for YES projects and**
- **INV of substantive amount as incentives to national authorities.**



**Thank you**