



SERBIA

Partners:

- Ministry of Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure in Serbia
- JSC Serbian Railways Infrastructure (Železnice Srbije Akcionarsko Društvo)

Estimated investment:

- €56.4 million

EU contribution:

- €28.4 million

Estimated EIB loan:

- €24 million

Beneficiary contribution:

- €4 million

2017 CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

Orient/East-Med Corridor: Serbia – Bulgaria CXc Rail Interconnection (Niš – Dimitrovgrad – Border with Bulgaria)

The Orient/East-Med Corridor runs between Hamburg and Bremen in Germany and Thessaloniki in Greece. In Serbia, the Corridor accounts for 872 km of track, i.e. approximately 23% of the entire Serbian railway network. It includes a 97 km-long Serbia – Bulgaria interconnection along the CXc route between Niš and Dimitrovgrad, which has not been electrified. Moreover, the signalling and train control system has been in use for more than 50 years, slowing travel speeds to 30 km/h and 50 km/h and posing serious transport safety risks.

This investment project concerns the electrification of the entire railway line on the Niš – Dimitrovgrad – border with Bulgaria section along the Orient/East-Med Corridor in Serbia (i.e. Crveni Krst – Pantelej to Sićevo via the Niš bypass route). It also provides for the modernization of signalling-interlocking and telecommunication systems on the Sićevo to Dimitrovgrad route, in line with European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) standards.



Train station in Niš on Corridor X, Serbia.

Results:

- 97 km of CXc railway track upgraded to modern, ERTMS standards.
- 9 railway stations fitted with modern signalling – interlocking devices.
- Increase in passenger and freight travel speed from 30 km/h to 120 km/h, as well as in freight capacity, throughout the CXc Niš - Dimitrovgrad - border with Bulgaria section.



View of non-electrified railway track (as well as two-lane road) in Sićevo Gorge, on Corridor Xc, Serbia.

Previous EU assistance:

- €3.2 million (project preparation)

Estimated start date:

- Early 2020

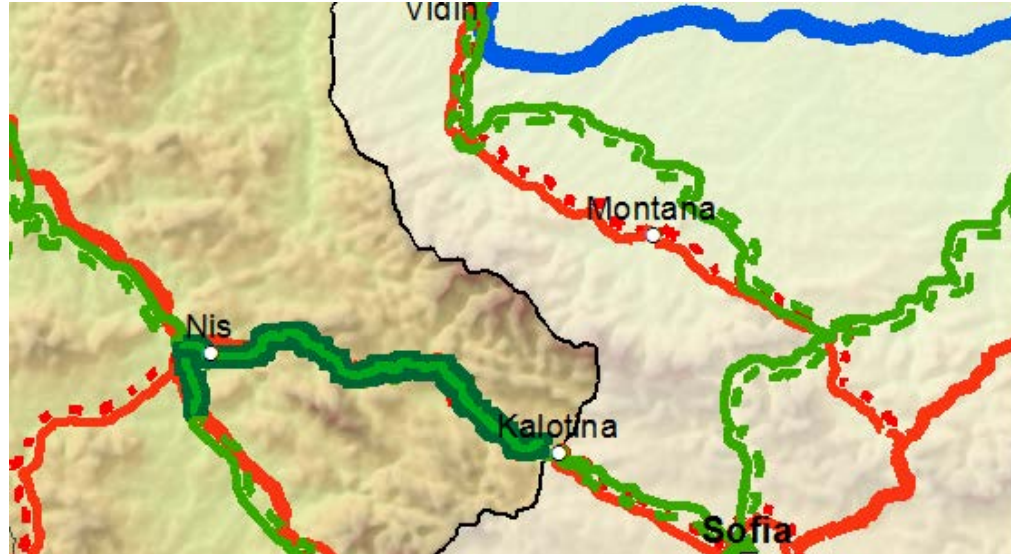
Estimated end date:

- End of 2022

Estimated loan repayment period:

- 15 years

Transport



Map of Niš – Dimitrovgrad – border with Bulgaria Rail Interconnection.

The investment will be executed in two stages:

- Electrification of the Crveni Krst – Pantelej - Sićevo section, via the Niš Bypass; and
- Electrification and modernisation of the signalling-interlocking and telecommunication systems on the Sićevo to Dimitrovgrad segment.

It complements previous financing allocated to the same route by the EU and the EIB, including by means of an EU/WBIF investment grant under the 2016 Connectivity Agenda.

Preliminary designs and other technical and financial documentation were prepared in 2008 and 2010 respectively; these are currently being reviewed against the new Serbian Construction Law. Work on the building permit design as well as on the land acquisition process is also under way.

The rehabilitation works will not have significant social or environmental impacts as the new facilities will be built on the route of the existing rail track.

The successful completion of proposed works on the Niš – Dimitrovgrad – border with Bulgaria section, together with the other ongoing investments on the same route, will bring the entire CXc route to modern standards.

Benefits

- Approximately 250 new jobs created during construction, operation, and maintenance periods.
- Direct access to modern means of transport for more than 340,000 people living along the railway route proposed for rehabilitation.
- Increase by 30% in annual freight volume, to more than 2.2 million tons / year.
- Decrease in travel time by 2 hours.
- Reduction of current air and noise pollution levels caused by diesel operations on the entire route.
- Reduced operational and maintenance costs for railway operators.
- Better opportunities for socio-economic growth for one of the poorest regions in Serbia.
- Improved trade flows with countries in the region and thus a positive impact on the broader economy of Serbia.