



# Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans

The **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans** (EIP) is the long-term recovery plan of the region. It accelerates the twin green and digital transition, and fosters regional cooperation and convergence with the EU. The EIP identifies 10 investment flagships to support sustainable transport, clean energy, environment and climate, digital future, human capital and private sector.

In the next six years the European Commission will mobilise close to **€30 billion**, one-third of the current GDP of the Western Balkans. **€9 billion** will come in the form of EU grants from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and this is expected to leverage more than **€20 billion** additional investments through the Western Balkans Guarantee Facility.

The EIP is the main vehicle to implement the **Global Gateway** in the Western Balkans.

The **Western Balkans Investment Framework** (WBIF) is the main financial tool to implement the EIP's investment flagships. The EIP is also implemented via IPA bilateral funding to support national high priority projects.

The WBIF was established in 2009 as a joint financial platform of the European Commission, international financial institutions, EU Member States and Norway, and hence fully in line with the **Team Europe** approach. WBIF aims at enhancing cooperation in public and private sector investment for the socio-economic development of the region, accelerating the European perspective for the Western Balkans.

#TeamEurope

## Achieved results 2009 – 2022

- ⚡ 46.8 MW renewable energy generation capacity installed
- 🏗️ 70 km of transmission lines upgraded
- 🎓 Better schools for more than 78,000 students/year
- 🏥 Healthcare research and treatment facilities for 1.8 million people

## Expected results 2023 – 2030

- ⚡ 957 MW renewable energy generation capacity installed
- 🏗️ 107 km of future-proof gas pipelines built
- 🚆 205 km of railway lines rehabilitated
- ♻️ Efficient solid waste services for 1.4 million people

## Public sector

€462.4m WBIF grant

€2.6bn estimated investment

€529m regional guarantee coverage to support infrastructure projects

€1.5bn IPA bilateral funding  
*All figures since inception*

## Private sector

€311m estimated financing for SMEs  
*(incl. EDIF, EFSE, GGF, REEP)*

€408m regional guarantee coverage to support access to finance for SMEs  
*All figures since inception*



"WBIF investments are instrumental in connecting people, creating jobs and boosting economic development in North Macedonia and the entire Western Balkans. WBIF projects bring tangible benefits to the lives of people and accelerate the EU integration of the region."

**Ambassador David Geer**  
Head of EU Delegation to North Macedonia

## Implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans

**Flagship 2 Connecting North to South**  
The Rail Corridor VIII between Skopje and the Bulgarian border will be substantially advanced.

**Flagship 5 Transition from coal**  
North Macedonia – Kosovo\* Gas Inter-connection will start construction, and another stretch to Serbia will be prepared.

**Flagship 7 Waste and waste water management**  
The construction of the waste water treatment plant in Skopje will be completed and waste management systems will be established.

**Flagship 8 Digital infrastructure**  
The roll-out of national broadband infrastructure will continue – with the completion of first projects by 2024.

**Flagship 9 Competitiveness of the private sector**  
Increase of grant amount and guarantee capacity for the private sector, and assistance for rural development.

## WBIF project examples



**Flagship 1 Connecting East to West**  
**Corridor VIII: Kriva Palanka – Border with Bulgaria Railway Section**

€154.5m WBIF EU grant  
€418m estimated investment

Expected completion: 2028



**Flagship 4 Renewable energy**  
**Rehabilitation of Six Hydropower Plants Phase 3**

€11.1m WBIF EU grant  
€36.3m estimated investment

Expected completion: 2026



**Human capital development**  
**Physical Education Facilities for Primary and Secondary Schools**

€5.1m WBIF Bilateral Donors grant  
€50.1m estimated investment

Expected completion: 2025

## €1 billion Energy Support Package

The package addresses immediate, short- and medium-term needs in the Western Balkans to accelerate decarbonisation, and improve the energy security of the region.

The European Commission will provide up to **€500m** in immediate budget support to mitigate the impact of high energy prices for small and medium-sized enterprises, keep energy prices affordable for vulnerable households and support policy measures to accelerate the energy transition.

**An additional €500m** is channelled through the WBIF for the priority infrastructure projects, the Regional Energy Efficiency Programme and guarantees to crowd-in private investments in clean energy.

€80m in budget support to North Macedonia

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.