



DIGITAL FUTURE



Universal access to fast and secure broadband



Western Balkans Investment Framework **WBIF** **BLENDING PUBLIC PRIVATE**
BUILDING THE EUROPEAN FUTURE TOGETHER **GUARANTEES**

Digital infrastructure was incorporated as a standalone sector of the WBIF in December 2017, as a response to the adoption of the Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans. In December 2019, the WBIF extended its area of assistance to the interconnection of administration, research and education networks and high-performance computing. The new sector was developed in line with the European Commission's policies and strategies, the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans, the South-East Europe 2020 strategy, as well as the infrastructure needs of beneficiaries identified in the Single Project Pipeline. The WBIF supports the deployment of broadband connectivity, setting up of secure, energy-efficient and trustworthy data centres, edge and cloud infrastructures aligned with EU rules and fundamental values, and synergies with initiatives for infrastructure sharing, such as the World Bank Balkans Digital Highway.

The WBIF digital projects are financed under the **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans: FLAGSHIP 8 - Digital infrastructure**

2009-2021

Projects

11

Estimated project value

€506m

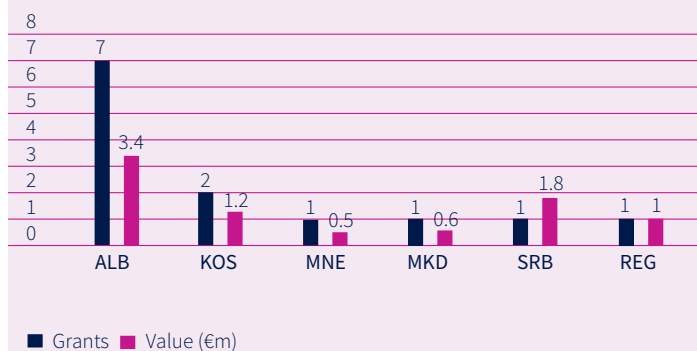
Projects with loans signed

2 / €22.3m signed loans

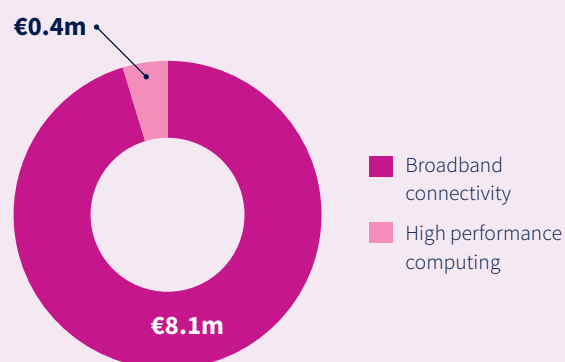
WBIF grants

€8.5m

DISTRIBUTION BY BENEFICIARY



WBIF GRANTS BY SUBSECTOR



EXPECTED RESULTS (2021 - 2028)



70% of households connected to broadband in rural areas in Albania



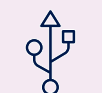
724 healthcare facilities and 2,155 schools connected to broadband in Albania



136,500 students and teachers in 500 schools with access to high-speed broadband in Kosovo*



48,700 people with access to next-generation networks in 'white zones' in Montenegro



Ultrafast internet for 174,600 people in 'white' & 'grey zones' in North Macedonia



Broadband for 1,500 schools and 225,000 households in rural areas in Serbia

*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.

FLAGSHIP PROJECT EXAMPLES

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FLAGSHIP 8 - Digital infrastructure

Balkans Digital Highway

This initiative aims to improve regional interconnectivity in the Western Balkans and increase Internet access for people by establishing a regional broadband network over transmission grids of state-owned energy companies (infrastructure sharing).



WORLD BANK GROUP



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Estimated total project cost

€16.6m

WBIF grant

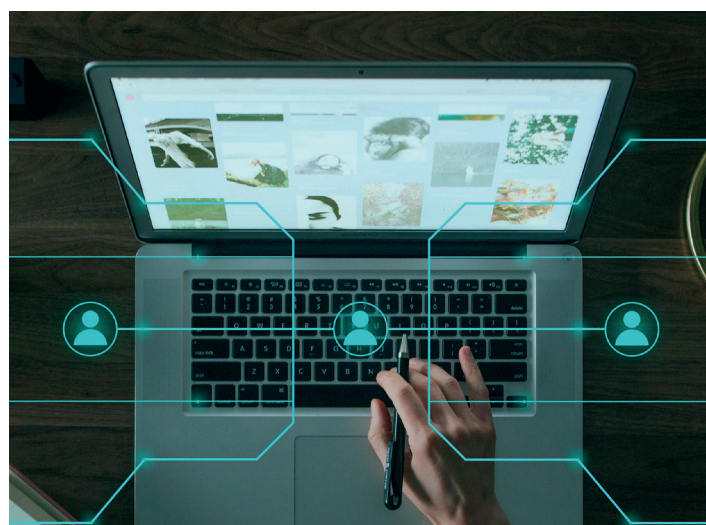
€1m

WBG and EBRD loans

€4.3m

Expected completion

2028



Digital infrastructure improvement in the pre-university system in Albania

Albania struggles with obsolete hardware, inadequate connectivity coverage, missing IT resources, and lack of broadband access in primary and secondary schools. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for digital infrastructure and distance learning solutions. The WBIF supports the preparation of a pre-feasibility study which will determine the best solution for developing the education network backbone in Albania (including fibre optic cables and network equipment) and an online learning platform for pre-university education. The project is expected to improve connectivity for over 2,000 pre-university institutions and benefit nearly 300,000 pupils as well as 38,500 teachers.



Estimated total project cost

€48m

WBIF grant

€0.5m

AFD loan (est.)

€28.4m

Expected completion

2024

