



European Commission launches €3.2 billion investment package in the Western Balkans

On 25 February 2022 the European Commission unveiled a substantial €3.2 billion investment package to support 21 transport, digital, climate and energy connectivity projects in the Western Balkans. This is the first major package of projects under the EU's ambitious Economic and Investment Plan 2021-2027, adopted in October 2020. Over the next years, the Plan is set to mobilise up to €30 billion of investments, as a combination of grants, preferential loans and guarantees. The implementation of the package has already started with the European Commission's [call for proposals](#) for blending operations opened to international financial institutions to support public and private sector investments through the WBIF. Additionally, the Joint Meeting of the EFSD+ Operational Board on Guarantees, which includes the WBIF Western Balkans Guarantee Facility (EFSD+ guarantee), endorsed the eligible Investment Windows for the upcoming call for proposals for guarantees.

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Economic and Investment Plan: Flagship projects update



EU-funded solar plant starts operating in North Macedonia

On 5 April, the first large-scale solar plant in North Macedonia – financed with the support of the European Union, WBIF bilateral donors and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was officially connected to the power grid and is already producing clean electricity..

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Modernisation of Brčko Port is progressing

The construction works on the WBIF project 'Reconstruction and Modernisation of the River Port of Brčko Phase 1' are progressing, with port plateau completed in March 2022. This is the first step in the implementation of the project, that started in June 2021. The works will continue with the purchase of a new crane, the reconstruction of the access road as well as the industrial railway connecting port and Brčko railway station.

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Progress made on North Macedonia's largest environmental project

On 1 March, a key step in the implementation of the €136 million EU-supported project was made with the announcement of the opening of bids for construction of North Macedonia's largest environmental project - the Skopje wastewater plant. The Skopje wastewater treatment plant is one of the 21 flagship projects, selected for EU financing in 2022 through the WBIF.

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Start of works on the EU-supported North Macedonia - Albania transmission line

On 17 February, works commenced on the 400 kV transmission line that starts from the transformer station "Bitola 2" and connects the power transmission systems of North Macedonia and Albania. The project has exceptional regional value, as it connects North Macedonia to neighbouring beneficiaries, adding to already operational networks with Greece, Serbia, Kosovo* and Bulgaria.

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Start of works on the EU-supported Serbia - Bulgaria gas interconnector

On 1 February, construction works started on the Serbian section of the 171 km natural gas interconnector that will connect Niš (Serbia) and Sofia (Bulgaria), thus supporting the regional energy security. Citizens of Bela Palanka, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad in Southeast Serbia, as well as the industry and other areas of the economy, will thus get a source of cleaner and cheaper energy for heating than before.

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Preparing Flagship investments: Technical Assistance update



EU funded study for the improvement of the digital infrastructure in Montenegro

The development of Digital Infrastructure in Western Balkan beneficiaries constitutes a Flagship for European Union's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. The European Union, through the WBIF in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), funds the project to investigate the feasibility of the improvement and expansion of broadband infrastructure in Montenegro with €550,000.

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WBIF Partner initiatives



Western Balkans prime ministers attend EBRD investment summit

The EBRD welcomed on 28 February, the heads of government of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia to its Western Balkans Investment Summit 2022. In his address, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi outlined the EU's plans to increase economic support to €30 billion. Implemented in partnership with the EBRD and other institutional and private investors, the financing aims to speed up the region's social and economic convergence with the EU.

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The EU in Montenegro launches campaign 'Our friendship is a success story'

The European Union in Montenegro has launched a new campaign entitled "Our friendship is a success story", which is dedicated to the promotion of EU-funded projects that helped make the quality of life better for all of us. You can find out more by visiting the EU Info Centre website, with the database of the most successful projects implemented in Montenegro.

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WBIF Feature stories



Trans-Balkan electric connectivity

Today the world is connected by hundreds of thousands of kilometres of transmission lines that supply every corner of the planet with alternating current. Serbia and the other Western Balkan partners are not lagging behind. They are now connecting and building the 371.3 km long Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor, for which the WBIF provides €32.1 million of non-refundable EU funds.

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Female led agricultural and recycling company improves efficiency

With the support of GEFF Serbia Leasing, the Arum Deč company has improved its business with new and more efficient equipment. Arum Deč is a family business that has been operating successfully in the agriculture, food trade and related sectors for almost 30 years. Green Energy Financing Facility (GEFF) is part of the WBIF project Regional Energy Efficiency Programme (REEP/REEP Plus).

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WBIF Publications



WBIF Endorsed Flagship projects 2022

Booklet on Flagship projects, endorsed in 2022.

[Download here >>](#)



Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor in Serbia

Factsheet on Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor in Serbia.

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Guidelines for applicants 2022

Guidelines for the preparation of project proposals for WBIF blending in the public and private sectors.

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