



# ENVIRONMENT

## SECTOR SUMMARY

The environment in the region is marked by a poor legacy, including coal and lignite reliance, illegal waste dumping, accumulated industrial and mining waste, limited wastewater treatment and an energetically-inefficient building stock. Urban areas have sprawled just as the constructions for tourism have done along the coastlines. Economic development in the Western Balkans is putting an additional strain on the environment, affecting resource use, waste management and biodiversity. The European Environment Agency urges policy-makers to implement appropriate policies and take actions towards sustainable development. To shape an environmentally sustainable future, all actors in the region need to cooperate with each other and with their neighbours if key challenges such as pollution and health issues, climate change impacts and ecosystem threats are to be addressed efficiently. Today's choices will influence, in the coming decades, not only the region's environment but also that of other European countries.

## WBIF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

WBIF's priorities are water and wastewater, solid waste, as well as flood protection and river basin management in densely populated, industrialised, and environmentally sensitive areas. The sector has been allocated 74 grants for more than €120 million that finance 47 projects with an estimated value of €2.1 billion.

### Achieved results:

- Improved water/wastewater systems for 2.3 million people in the region;
- More than 500,000 people protected from floods;
- Better solid waste services for more than 180,000 people.

### Expected results:

- Improved water/wastewater systems for more than 4 million people;
- More than 1.8 million people protected from floods;
- Flood forecasting and warning system for 5.4 million people living in the Sava River Basin;
- Better solid waste services for 450,000 people.

### PROJECTS

**47**

Estimated project value

**€2.1bn**

Projects with loans signed

**30 / €727m signed loans**

WBIF grants

**€120.5m**

WBIF grants in 2018

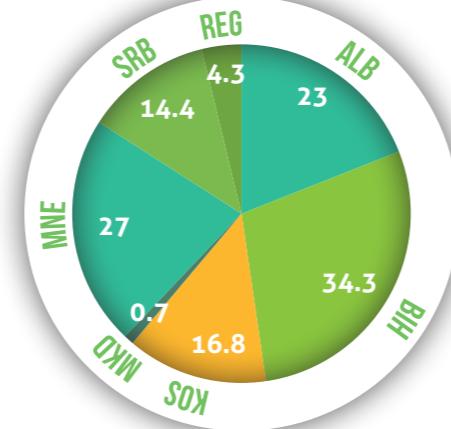
**€15.8m**

## DISTRIBUTION BY BENEFICIARY

### Nº of grants



### Value of grants (€m)



### Distribution by subsector (€m)

Water and wastewater	94.8
Flood protection	16.9
Waste management	4.8
Water resources conservation	2.8
River basin management	1.2

## Bijelo Polje Wastewater Treatment Plant in Montenegro



The wastewater collection and treatment system in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje is suboptimal. This, in turn, poses a threat to the local population due to the outflows of untreated wastewater into the Lim River and its tributaries and the pollution of groundwater. In order to improve this situation, this investment project's primary focus is to complete the infrastructure for collection, drainage, treatment and discharge of wastewater in these municipalities.

The WBIF is supporting the investments



with a €3.1 million grant contribution to construction works, which will ensure the implementation of the project.

Once completed, more than 45,000 people in Bijelo Polje will benefit from improved sanitation services, safeguarding of potable water resources and protection of the environment in downstream areas.

Estimated total project cost	€6.8m
WBIF grant	€3.1m (INV)
Estimated loan	€3.1m (EIB)
Expected completion	End of 2022



## Skopje Wastewater Treatment Plant in North Macedonia



The implementation of the legal requirements and standards of the EU environmental *acquis* is a significant challenge for North Macedonia. Only 15% of the country is serviced by wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), which provide mechanical and biological treatment only. Larger cities still discharge

untreated wastewater directly into water courses.

This investment project will construct a 650,000-population equivalent WWTP in Skopje, the capital and the largest city in the country. The future WWTP will serve 518,000 people and cover nine of the ten municipalities of Skopje.

The project is now at tender preparation, with feasibility, environmental impact assessment and design studies completed. The WBIF provides technical assistance to

bring the investment at the construction stage.

The investment is part of a larger EU-financed package, which includes improvement of the wastewater collection network and construction of a separate stormwater system in Skopje.

The new WWTP will ensure sustainable wastewater treatment services, protect water resources in the Vardar River and create more than 150 new jobs during construction and operation.

Estimated total project cost	€125.5m
WBIF grant	€0.4m (TA)
Estimated loans	€60m (EIB) €50m (EBRD)
Expected completion	End of 2021