

22ND MEETING OF THE WBIF PROJECT FINANCIERS' GROUP (PFG)

SWISS DIAMOND HOTEL PRISHTINA,

TUESDAY 8 AND WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2016

Draft Minutes of Meeting

Day 1: Project Related (closed) Session

Welcoming

The **PFG Co-chairs** (W Schläger, DG NEAR and H Muent, EBRD) welcomed the participants to the 22nd PFG in Pristina, Kosovo*. Much progress has been made in the past period following the signature of the new WBIF governing documents at the 14th WBIF SC meeting in Oslo. A number of documents have been prepared following the adoption of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) and General Conditions (GC) including a revised template for the Investment Grant Co-financing Application Form (INV GAF), a new Technical Assistance Application Form (TA GAF) and the Vademecum, all of which are to be finalised by the WBIF SC meeting in London (15 Dec 2016). The agenda was presented to the participants together with an update on recent developments, such as the increased importance of coordinating joint visibility events, the extraordinary screening of the Bosnia and Herzegovina INV Round 1 GAF (following the adoption of a national transport strategy by BiH), as well as the need to further work on and advance the transposition of the last elements of the NIC framework.

Screening and Assessment - TA Round 16 Projects

DG NEAR (W Schläger) reminded the participants of the TA Round 16 eligibility criteria, (a) unblocking of existing projects, (b) high priority and high quality of the TA GAFs and (c) transport projects must relate to the Core Network. Against this background, the following grant requests were received:

- Number of applications received: 11
- Total grant amount requested: € 16.4 M
- Applications per country: ALB 3, BiH 1, KOS 1, MKD 2, MNE 1, SRB 1, REG 2
- Applications per sector: TRA 7, ENE 2, ENV 0, SOC 2

One (1) project was not endorsed by the IFI (CEB) and therefore not included in screening.

Positive Conclusion					
#	Grant Code	Title	IFI	Amount	Expected TA Agent
1	WB16-ALB-TRA-001	Detailed Design for rehabilitation of railway line Vora-Hani Hotit	EBRD	4.500.000	TBD
2	WB16-ALB-TRA-002	Detailed Design for the Tirana By-pass (Kashar-Vaqarr-Mullet)	EBRD	1.450.000	IPF
3	WB16-KOS-TRA-001	N9 Prishtinë - Pejë (SEETO Route 6 B) section from Kijevë - Klina to Zahaq (30 Km)	EIB	1.900.000	IPF
4	WB16-MNE-TRA-001	Rehabilitation of the Vrbnica-Bar railway line in Montenegro along the Main Belgrade-Bar Railway (SEETO Rail Route 4)	EIB	1.500.000	IPF
5	WB16-SRB-TRA-001	Preparation of the Design for the building permit for modernization of the railway line Niš – Dimitrovgrad and preparation of the tender documents.	EIB	1.200.000	IPF
Total				10.550.000	
Negative Conclusion					
#	Grant Code	Title	IFI	Amount	
1	WB16-ALB-SOC-001	National Pre-Feasibility study for social housing in Albania	CEB	300.000	
2	WB16-BIH-TRA-001	Technical Assistance to the Project Brcko Bypass Road	EBRD	200.000	
3	WB16-MKD-ENE-003	Strategy for revitalization/reconstruction of 110 kV transmission lines	EBRD	2.000.000	
4	WB16-MKD-TRA-001	“Technical assistance for preparation of Infrastructure design and Detailed design for motorway section Interchange Stenkovec - Border crossing Blace in length of 14km, as part of State road A4”.	EBRD	1.200.000	
5	WB16-REG-ENE-001	Feasibility Study and ESIA for Albania to Kosovo Gas Pipeline	EBRD	1.450.000	
6	WB16-REG-SOC-001	Regional Public Investment Capacity Building Scheme	EIB	700.000	
Total				5.850.000	

Total per country	Total		Positive	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
ALB	3	6,250,000	2	5,950,000
BIH	1	200,000	0	0
KOS	1	1,900,000	1	1,900,000
MKD	2	3,200,000	0	0
MNE	1	1,500,000	1	1,500,000
SRB	1	1,200,000	1	1,200,000
REG	2	2,150,000	0	0
Total per country	11	16,400,000	5	10,550,000

Total per sector	Total		Positive	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
ENE	2	3,450,000	0	0

ENV	0	0	0	0
SOC	2	1,000,000	0	0
TRA	7	11,950,000	5	10,550,000
Total per country	11	16,400,000	5	10,550,000

EBRD (D Mishaxhiu) reported that ALB has adopted a national transport strategy.

EIB (M Cingolani) commented on the capacity building project presented by BiH in the name of all 6 NIPACs for which EIB was indicated as Lead IFI (WB16-REG-SOC-001). He clarified that the proposal intends to reinforce the capacity of the NIPACs and NICs and to prepare pipelines of projects relevant for the WBIF, particularly for what concerns the use of IFI loans. NIPACs and NICs are required to prepare these pipelines by the IPA II implementing regulation and by the Enlargement Strategy. The proposal includes three different modules (secondments to IFIs, IFI workshops and support to investment programming by NIPACs), none of which is mandatory for any of the IFIs or the NIPAC. Its estimated budget should thus be calculated once the interested IFI and NIPACs confirm their interest in a particular module. **Norway** (O Reinertsen) agreed on the importance of capacity building, but voiced doubts about the suitability of this initiative, since NOR undertakes capacity building bilaterally. **Germany** (S Brabetz) raised doubts to which extent this initiative would fit into the overall character of WBIF projects. **EBRD** (H Muent) questioned to which extent this project would address pertinent bottlenecks. **DG NEAR** (W Schlaeger) stated that there are already tools and instruments available to support the beneficiaries and suggested that this initiative be re-thought and possibly re-submitted in the next round. In doing this, due account should be taken of an assignment commissioned by DG NEAR to IFICO to review the past, ongoing and planned future capacity building initiatives under/outside the WBIF and to submit this report ahead of the next (23rd) PFG in May 2017, in Brussels.

Availability of Funds

DG NEAR (W Schläger) reported on the remaining funds available for WBIF at the present time and the present round.

Source	Amount € M
IPF 3	Funds not entirely exhausted, but reserved
IPF 4	Funds not entirely exhausted, but reserved
IPF 5	Project pipeline tbc, funds exhausted
IPF 6	11.8 M remaining
EWBJF status	650k
Total IPF	11.8 M
Total	12.45 M

Status update - INV Round 1

DG NEAR (W Schläger) recalled the 1st official call for investment grant co-financing which was launched at the 13th WBIF SC meeting in Paris (Dec 2015), with a deadline for the beneficiaries to submit their respective INV GAFs by 31 March 2016. Altogether 10 applications were received, one in the energy sector, one in the

environmental sector and 8 transport sector projects. Four projects submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina did not pass the screening and assessment phase, since Bosnia and Herzegovina – at that time – did not have its national transport strategy adopted. Following the screening & assessment which lasted until the 14th WBIF SC meeting in Oslo (Jun 2016), 3 projects were presented to the WB6 summit in Paris in July 2016 and endorsed. These 3 projects will be part of an indicative long list included in the COM Financing Decision, which will be presented for approval to the EC IPA Committee on 17 November 2016. This would secure financing, in principle, as long as all other conditions (e.g. "soft measures") are met.

All stakeholders were reminded that the INV GAFs will need to be included in the MIS, for which IFICO will be assisting.

Grant Code	Project title	Lead IFI	Grant requested [€M]
WB-IG01-ALB-TRA-01	Rehabilitation of railway Durres-Tirana and construction of the new railway to Rinas Branch	EBRD	36,423,700
WB-IG01-KOS-TRA-01	General Rehabilitation of the Railway Route 10 (Border with Serbia - Leshak - Mitrovica - Fushe Kosove - Hani i Elezit - Border with The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Phase 2: Fushe Kosove – Mitrovica	EBRD	17,584,000
WB-IG01-SRB-TRA-01	Modernization of the single-track railway line Nis - Dimitrovgrad - Bulgarian border, Section Sicevo - Stanicenje – Dimitrovgrad	EIB	43,640,000

Furthermore, the participants were informed that Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a national transport strategy in July. In response to this positive development, the COM launched in September an extraordinary (second) screening & assessment of the 4 Bosnia and Herzegovina projects.

The outcome was as follows: one project was screened and assessed positively (Brcko Port), for two projects clarifications are pending (TRA-01a / TRA-01b and TRA-03, all corridor V-C), and one was screened negatively (Mostar south) (premature, possibly to be resubmitted in the next round).

Overview Extraordinary Screening and Assessment:

Project	IFI	COM Screening	IFI Assessment
WB-IG01-BIH-TRA-01a	EIB	Pending clarification	Positive
WB-IG01-BIH-TRA-01b	EBRD	Pending clarification	Tbd
WB-IG01-BIH-TRA-02	EIB	Negative	Negative
WB-IG01-BIH-TRA-03	EBRD	Pending clarification	Positive
WB-IG01-BIH-TRA-04	EBRD	Positive	Positive

Further progress regarding these projects will depend on the status of the implementation of the "Connectivity Reform Measures (CRM)" (formerly known as "soft measures") by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina is invited to demonstrate their progress in the implementation of the CRMs and it is proposed to take stock at the "mid-term" WB6 summit foreseen in Skopje in Feb/Mar 2017.

Monitoring Report and Projects for cancellation

IFICO (S van der Touw) presented the WBIF cumulative figures including up to TA Round 15, the 2015 INV Round 00 and excluding all cancelled grants. The WBIF updated main facts and figures are as follows:

- 135 Investment Projects supported
- € 5 bn Signed Loans
- € 9 bn Total estimated Loans
- € 13 bn Estimated Investments
- 15 Rounds of TA Grants
- 1 Round for Investment Grants
- 212 Number of Grants
- € 488 m Grants value

The MIS has been largely updated and finalised, with a small uncertainty being the uniform definition of what is a “project”. For instance, Corridor 10 is “a project” with a large part where the loans are secured, while other corridors have smaller (20km) sections with loans secured and therefore also being “projects”. The question is thus, should the entire corridor be seen as “one project” or, should the sections financed by IFI loan packages be seen as individual projects; the second option is current practice.

A new analysis was presented, showing the leverage per sector (actual and potential loans), with the social sector showing the highest leverage (43), followed by transport (22), energy (17), environment (8) and private sector development with the lowest leverage (3).

EBRD (H Muent) inquired if there is a pattern of bottlenecks the MIS could identify and why certain projects are not advancing; he also noted that the leverage figures should identify the INV and TA grants. **EIB** (M Cingolani) asked why the social sector shows such a high leverage level. **EBRD** (M de Melo) recommended that definitions of “loan / implementing” should be used to improve the analysis, and further recommended that potential loans should not be used for the estimate of leverage, since potential loans and actual loans often differ considerably; and further inquired whether all or only WBIF grants were used for the analysis. **Sweden** (M Svensson) questioned why private sector development shows such a low leverage and it would be interesting to see trends of the sectors.

IFICO (S vd Touw) clarified that the reasons for project delays are often found in the projects themselves and no general pattern could be identified. The social sector is well performing and therefore shows such a high leverage; the recommendation of EBRD concerning the depth and methodology of the analysis can be taken into account (leveraging); further only WBIF grants have been used. A deeper analysis into the data has not been conducted at this moment, thus reasons for leverage figures (high/low) other than general statements cannot be given.

DG NEAR (W Schläger) reminded the participants that the deadline for comments to the draft Monitoring Report is 25 November 2016, COB.

Presentation on the Joint Fund (incl. Account Statement)

EBRD (M de Melo) presented the JGF balance [€ m]:

- Total Contributions	(+) 235.0
- Net Interest, bank charges & management fee (-)	1.6
- Fees for IPF 1,2&3 projects	(-) 0.1
- Transfer for IPF 4	(-) 15.0
- Funds Returned to EWBJF	(+) 0.2
- Net of total Projects Approved (June 2016)	(-) 217.9
- Available Fund Balance	€ 0.65 M

Feedback and Discussion: Technical Assistance Grant Application Form (TA GAF)

DG NEAR (W Schläger) reminded the participants of the (tacit) adoption of the INV GAF via the written procedure (Nr. WBIFWP: 002_29/08/16). The background for this streamlining of the INV GAF, and now the TA GAF, is the EUBEC¹ template (and recommendations) with an adaptation of the GAFs to WBIF. Both the final INV GAF and the draft TA GAF and Guidelines were circulated prior to this PFG and disseminated as background documents. Comments were received and (partly) incorporated and will be subjected to a more detailed discussion at the workshop following the PFG on the 10th November 2016. Following this workshop, a final version of the TA GAF and Guidelines will be disseminated with deadline for comments on 25 November 2016, COB. The final TA GAF and Guidelines will be submitted to the 15th WBIF SC in London for adoption.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (N Marilovic) enquired whether the SPP principle outlined in the TA GAF Guidelines can be less strictly applied in the case of TA rounds, especially in the case of social sector. **Serbia** (P Spasic) stated that also private entities can now be supported by WBIF and that this would be a positive development. **CEB** (M Raguz) mentioned that “additionality and added value” are two different concepts and asked if this could be adjusted in the TA GAF. **EIB** (M Cingolani) recommended using the definition of “additionality” by the structural funds guidelines. **Albania** stated their satisfaction with the TA GAF and mentioned the importance of the NIC SPP. **KfW** (H Waelde) recommended that the MIS reporting template should be only one table.

DG NEAR (W Schläger) clarified that the SPP requirement for TA GAFs is, at this moment, only a soft requirement and that some logical link should be visible, such as a TA GAF supporting a maturing INV project. On the definitions of certain terms, the application form is not for EU structural funds and should not be overly complicated. The reporting template in the MIS is under development.

WBIF Vademecum

DG NEAR (B Banki) presented the outline of the draft Vademecum. In line with Section 5.02 (b) of the WBIF General Conditions adopted by the SC in June 2016, the Vademecum constitutes “written guidance on working arrangements” of the new governance structure and will act as a manual for newcomers to the WBIF.

A draft version of the Vademecum will be circulated ahead of the 15th WBIF SC, where it is expected to be adopted. The Vademecum will be a “live” document and updated in the future as needed. The Table of Contents of the current Vademecum was presented to the participants.

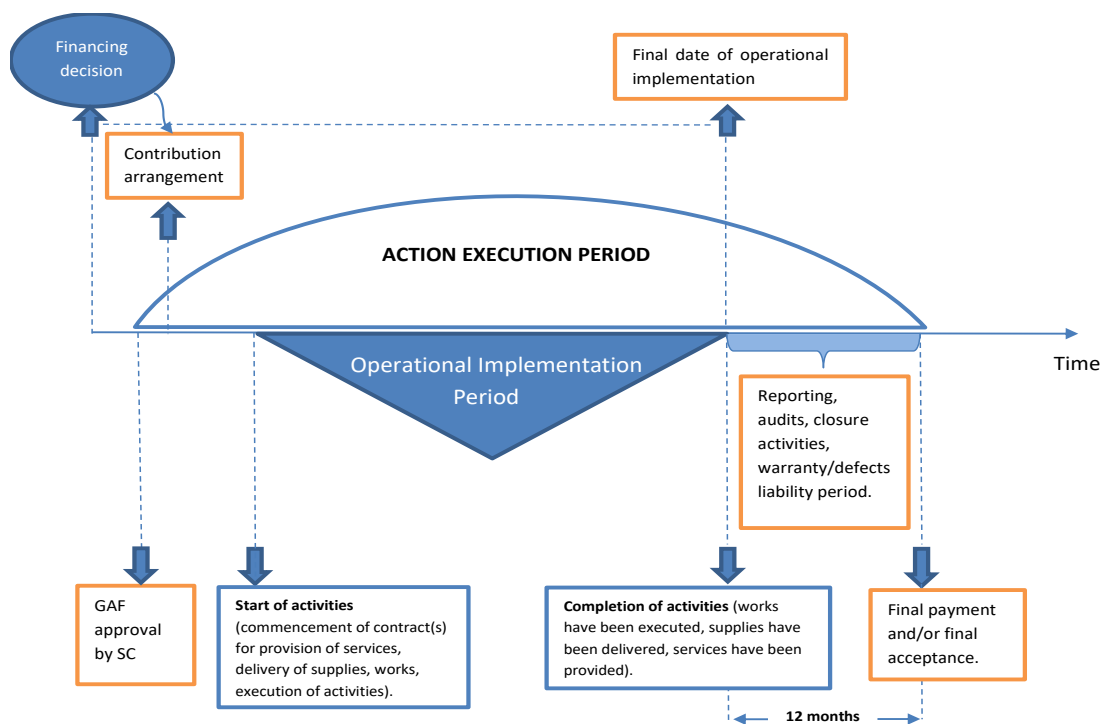
Discussion on additional chapters to the Vademecum

¹ EU PLATFORM FOR BLENDING IN EXTERNAL COOPERATION: The overall objective of the Platform will be to improve the quality and efficiency of EU development and external cooperation blending mechanisms, taking due account of the policy frameworks that govern the EU relations with the different partner countries, notably EU Development, Neighbourhood and Enlargement policies. This includes promoting cooperation and coordination between the EU, EIB and other relevant financial institutions (Fis) and other stakeholders, thereby increasing the impact and visibility of EU external cooperation.

IPF3 (G Lammond) recommended that the procedure for grant “conditionalities” should be regulated and ToR should be accompanied by binding for the beneficiaries timelines. **GER** (S Brabetz) recommended the rotation of Co-chairing to be explained and requested details to the Written Procedure as an exception to the “standard decision making”. **KfW** (H Waelde) requested a definition of “project closure” for the purpose of reporting in the MIS. **EIB** (M Cingolani) mentioned that the link between reporting and disbursement should be clarified, and was concerned that additional rules are introduced by the Vademecum without being discussed and approved beforehand. **Serbia** (P Spasic) requested clarity on the distribution of projects between the EWBJF and the IPFs. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (N Marilovic) underlined the importance of sections 1.1.2. “Roles of stakeholders” and 2.1.5 “Selection and appraisal Process”. Information flow including official communication between all parties involved in the screening and assessment phase should be reflected in the Vademecum. **Albania** (E Qaja) asked if the Connectivity Agenda should be covered. **Kosovo** (L Mita) mentioned that the Vademecum should be a guide- rather than a rulebook. **Norway** (O Reinersten) enquired if the Vademecum could cover the methodology for the Bilateral Donors to safeguard funds for INV co-financing. **Austria** (L Treppel) asked for a clarification of the roles of the NIPACs and NICs.

DG NEAR (B Banki and W Schläger) confirmed that some additional chapters on the “conditionalities” and the rotation of co-chairing will be added. In general, the Vademecum is to be seen as a guidebook, and should not be overloaded with too many chapters. The Vademecum could have a section with links to additional documentation and information.

DG NEAR (B Banki) continued with a presentation of the timeline of the implementation of an action / GAF in relation to the internal approval of EU funds within DG NEAR. This is shown below and will be discussed in further detail with the relevant IFIs.



Discussion of Timeline

EBRD (D Mishaxhiu) questioned the timeline end period, since physical completion differs from actual completion; an example is the defects liability period, triggering last payments. The **EWBJF** managers (EBRD and EIB) proposed to issue their view and report on the timeline (GAF Section 33) to the next WBIF SC meeting in London.

Finally, the “changes/amendments” to the GAF, post WBIF Steering Committee approval were presented and discussed together with the procedure to be taken. Section 5.02 GC (b) regulates: “*The Steering Committee of the WBIF may adopt, from time to time, written guidance [here the Vademecum] on working arrangements relating to amendments to the GAF that will be submitted to the Steering Committee of the WBIF for approval and amendments to the GAF that will not require the approval of the Steering Committee of the WBIF*”.

Modification of an action can be substantial (needs SC approval) or minor (both to be defined). Always deemed substantial are:

- Overview of Project's financing plan (GAF Section 15)
- Main objectives of the Project (GAF Section 17)
- Project budget and financing plan (GAF Section 22)
- Costs to be funded from WBIF Grant (GAF Section 23)
- Expected results (GAF Section 26)

The Vademecum will be finalised and circulated ahead of the 15th WBIF SC in London.

Discussion of Amendments to GAF (and procedure)

EIB (M Cingolani) stated that loan and grant amounts do change frequently, a definition of “material or substantial” is thus required; as long as any change is within the objectives and budget of an action, changes should be acceptable. **DG NEAR** (D Kunc) replied that the grant amount is calculated as a percentage of the investment costs; therefore, any change to a GAF in excess of these thresholds is *per se* substantial. **EBRD** (D Mishaxhiu) mentioned that, following procurement, there will always be changes to the CAPEX, so loans and grants will need to be adjusted. **EBRD** (C Clarkson) suggested that changes between budget lines of up to 25% would constitute a material change of the financing plan and most likely be connected to changes in the scope.

EIB (M Cingolani) further stated that they will collect the project related reports from the other IFIs for the EWBJF statement, in line with General Conditions Sections 3.03 and 5.07 (a). To this end, EIB will send templates to the other IFIs and requests timely submissions.

Investment Grant Co-financing – INV Round 2

DG NEAR (W Schläger) updated the participants on the status of the INV Round 2. The second round for investment grant co-financing was launched by written procedure No. WBIFWP: 003_09/09/16 on the 9th September 2016, with the following milestones:

- Pre-registration deadline via the MIS by 30 November 2016
- Submission deadline of INV GAF via the MIS: 31 December 2016
- IFI endorsement: 31 January 2017
- Screening and Assessment until the 23rd PFG in May 2017
- The 16th WBIF SC meeting in June 2017 will recommend the projects to be submitted to the WB6 summit in summer 2017
- Political endorsement during the “Western Balkan 6” Summit 2017, and
- Approval by the WBIF SC in December 2017

All four sectors are eligible for this INV Round 2, with the restriction that the European Commission IPA funds can only be allocated to projects relevant to the connectivity agenda (transport and energy sectors). For the environment and social sectors sufficient funds should be available in the European Western Balkans Joint

Fund (EWBJF). The NIPACs are required to update their SPPs and submit a GAF by the deadline at the latest. The MIS is open for the pre-registration and submissions of GAFs for INV Round 2.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (N Marilovic) asked whether the applications from the INV Round 1 are uploaded in MIS and whether those will need re-submission.

Serbia (P Spasic) enquired if the deadlines could be relaxed, since the end of the calendar year is far from being an ideal deadline. **DG NEAR** (W Schläger) replied that this will not be possible for this round, but some deadlines can be re-thought for the next rounds.

Bilateral Donor's Perspective: Update

The **WBIF SC Co-chair NORWAY** (O Reinertsen) reported on the outcome of the last Bilateral Donor's (BDs) meeting. First, the WBIF SC Co-chair announced that Sweden will succeed Norway in 2017 as Co-chair. The main issue for the BDs is the lack of a methodology for safeguarding BD contributions for investment co-financing of suitable environment and social sector projects, without earmarking of funds. In addition the BD's questioned if and for how long the COM plans to exclusively co-finance energy and transport projects only. The BDs see an option in reserving funds for investment co-financing, by splitting contributions into sub-funds for investment grants co-financing and technical assistance. The BDs invited all other BDs and the COM for a respective discussion in February 2017, where further elaboration on this issue should lead to a proposal to the 16th WBIF SC meeting in Stockholm (June 2017), where this proposal should be endorsed. In addition, the BDs asked the COM to inform the 23rd PFG and / or the 16th WBIF SC about the IPA mid-term review and any potential consequences of this review for the INV co-financing of ENV and SOC projects.

All WBIF stakeholders expressed their appreciation to Norway for the Co-chairmanship 2016 and welcomed Sweden as WBIF SC Co-chair in 2017.

CEB (M Raguz) welcomed the proposal by the BDs to possibly ring-fence funds for SOC and ENV investment grants, along the lines already discussed, and recalled that DG NEAR had indicated earlier that it plans to review its investment grants policy focused only on the two connectivity sectors, while noting that the debate is often clouded by the high amounts envisioned for TRA and ENE, which are not needed for SOC and ENV. **DG NEAR** (W Schläger) confirmed that the COM will, for the foreseeable future, keep their IPA II related investment co-financing restrictions to the energy and transport sector. DG NEAR appreciates the idea of a BDs workshop in February 2017 to discuss the idea of reserving funds for investment co-financing of environment and social sector projects and offered to host such an event.

Follow up / update on Economic Reform Programmes (ERPS)

DG NEAR (O Klabunde) gave a presentation on the already existing overlaps between WBIF and ERPs. Based on preliminary findings, one out of five ERP reform measures is clearly characterised as an infrastructure project, one out of four addresses obstacles in the transport, energy or telecommunication sector and every third ERP measure is generally related to the facilitation and/or enhancement of infrastructure investments. Out of a total of 117 reform measures included in the six ERPs 2016-2018 of the WB countries (at least) 26 are supported by the IFIs and at least 33 are supported by the WBIF and/or IPA funds. Finally it should be noted that the EU and all enlargement countries agreed on ECOFIN² level on country-specific Joint conclusions, based on the ERP assessments. Among the six joint conclusions per country, there is one on public infrastructure development for each country, mainly regarding energy and transport markets development.

² Economic and Financial Affairs Council

It can be concluded that WBIF already plays an important role in the context of the annual ERP procedure. Unfortunately this seems to be based on coincidence, as the priorities of the ERP are not yet properly reflected in the decision-making process on WBIF investments. In order to address this weakness, in the meantime DG NEAR's Centre of thematic expertise on Economic governance and the WBIF Secretariat stepped up their information exchange and mutual procedural involvement. Taking into account the difficulties with the alignment of structural reforms and infrastructure investments, a tailor-made workshop for NIPAC staff could be organised by DG NEAR next year. In order to better explore the potential for joint action, DG NEAR might as well organise an information meeting with WBIF's IFI representatives timely after the ECOFIN meeting in May 2017. The first solid results of the current ERPs are expected in May 2017, so that a final update on the outcome can be presented at the 16th WBIF SC meeting in June 2017. An overview on the main findings of the COM's assessment of the ERPs can be conducted to the PFG before already.

EBRD (H Muent) pointed out that the Connectivity reform measures are of high importance for good results of any transport and energy sector investment. Therefore DG NEAR should step up its efforts to include stakeholders outside the DG in the process. **Serbia** (P Spasic) requested more feedback on the development of the quality of the ERPs over the years. **EIB** (M Cingolani) underlined the importance of linking projects with economic policy.

Visibility and Communication

The **WBIF Secretariat** (S Andresen) stressed the increased importance of visibility and mentioned CMR Hahn's request for suitable visibility events in the Western Balkans to be organized and demonstrate the concrete impact of WBIF co-financed actions on the ground for the citizens in the region. Additional resources and efforts have been allocated to the planning and coordination of visibility events. The WBIF Secretariat is working on a visibility tracker; for this tracker, close coordination and cooperation of key WBIF stakeholders is required, in particular the IFIs, EUDs, and the beneficiary organisations.

The WBIF website has been much improved, and many new features have been added. All projects are now visible and key data can be extracted from the website, including a "print to pdf" feature, allowing data, tables and pie charts to be converted into a report type flyer. New website features also include the sector pages and the registration link. In addition, the WBIF website now interacts with the MIS, and relevant updates in the MIS will automatically update the website. Forthcoming publications include a brochure "Financing Energy Efficiency Investments in the Western Balkans" and the WBIF 2016 Annual Report.

DG NEAR (W Schläger) indicated that geo-tracking and suitable maps would be desired feature for the website.

MIS update

The **WBIF Secretariat** (S Andresen) reported on the status of the new MIS which is now fully up and running. All projects / grants have been updated (with some minor issues remaining). Both INV and TA GAFs form part of the MIS and all applications are now exclusively submitted via the MIS. The MIS also serves as an information exchange platform. Work in progress covers the reporting module, improvements of history page, finalization of the new INV GAF submission modules, import of all screening and assessment comments from previous rounds and the monitoring module.

Gender mainstreaming in WBIF

EBRD (N Kurshitashvili) presented EBRD's approach to gender mainstreaming. EBRD's first comprehensive initiative to address gender equality was its Gender Action Plan in 2009, followed by the Strategic Gender Initiative 2013, and the approval the Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2016. EBRD concentrates on 3 main topics (1) Access to Finance and Entrepreneurship, (2) Access to Employment and Skills and (3) Access to Services. EBRD focuses specifically on two aspects of the Gender Strategy: (a) ensuring equal and fair access to the services which the EBRD finances and (b) improved equal opportunities within the workplace. In doing so, EBRD engages directly with the Clients including Municipalities and/or the related service provider/operator and then, subsequently, includes these conditionalities in the loan documentation. Case studies were presented followed by lessons learned. EBRD's gender policy can be accessed here: www.ebrd.com/gender

All IFIs affirmed the participants of the importance of gender equality and mentioned their respective gender policies in place. **Sweden** (M Svensson) stated the importance of gender equality for Sweden.

Update TA: CONNECTA, IPF 6

DG NEAR (W Schläger) updated the participants about the status of the CONNECTA bid. The submission deadline for CONNECTA was 15 October 2016, the COM received 8 bids, the evaluation is ongoing and the result is expected later this month (November). Formally CONNECTA is outside the scope of WBIF, but will be integrated to a certain extent under WBIF; it is expected to start activities in the first quarter of 2017. A follow-up TA workshop, including WBIF TAs, CONNECTA and JASPERS will be foreseen possibly in the frame of the next PFG in Brussels. **EIB** (M Mastrogeorgopoulos) reported on the status of the IPF 6 bid. The funds available for projects will be around € 17 M and EIB published the shortlist (7 consortia) on 24 September 2016 (11 applications received). IPF 6 should be active in January 2017.

Preparation of the 15th WBIF SC meeting: Succinct discussion

DG NEAR (W Schläger) updated the participants on the preparations for the 15th WBIF SC meeting in London. The draft agenda, invitation and logistics note have been disseminated and registration can be done via the WBIF website. The traditional background documents will be sent out in the next weeks. The 15th WBIF SC in London will approve applications from TA Round 16 and the investment grant applications from INV Round 1, as well as the adoption of the Vademecum and the new TA GAF. In addition news on the Energy Efficiency and the new PECE list in the WBs will be presented, the new WBIF SC Co-chair will be announced and last but not least, the Bilateral Donors will announce their pledges.

AOB

EIB (M Cingolani) summarized the discussion with IFIs and donors on the capacity building project presented by BiH in the name of all 6 NIPACs for which EIB was indicated as Lead IFI (WB16-REG-SOC-001) and requested the NIPACs to present their views. All NIPACs voiced their support for this project. **DG NEAR** (W Schläger) mentioned that IFICO will conduct an assessment of the past, ongoing and future capacity building initiatives under WBIF and that the outcome of this assessment should guide the WBIF stakeholders with their view on this project. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (N Marilovic) emphasised that the project was developed by BiH NIPAC Office based on the positive experiences of the pilot secondment in EIB and emphasised that the secondment component of the project is the crucial one and in line with assessed needs.

End of MoM.