



SERBIA

Partners:

- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Serbia
- JSC Serbian Railways Infrastructure (Železnice Srbije Akcionarsko Društvo)

Estimated cost:

- €84.4 million

EU contribution:

- €43.6 million

Estimated EIB loan:

- €36.7 million

Beneficiary contribution:

- €4.1 million

2016 CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

Orient/East-Med Corridor: Serbia – Bulgaria CXc Rail Interconnection

The Orient/East-Med Corridor runs between Salzburg in Austria and Thessaloniki in Greece. In Serbia, the Corridor accounts for 872 km of track, i.e. approximately 23% of the entire Serbian railway network. It includes a 80 km-long Serbia – Bulgaria interconnection along the CXc route, in between Sicevo and Dimitrovgrad, which has not been electrified. Moreover, the signalling and train control system has been in use for more than 50 years, slowing travel speeds to 30 and 50 km/h and posing serious transport safety risks.

This investment project is part of the Core Network Corridors of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) extension into the Western Balkans and South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO)'s Core Network. It is thus included in the long-term sustainable development plans of the European Union and its partners. It concerns the rehabilitation of the Sicevo to Dimitrovgrad railway track, including preparatory works for electrification and signalling and telecommunication systems.



Existing Double-track Railway on Corridor X, Serbia.

Results:

- 80 km of CXc railway track upgraded, including preparatory works for electrification and signalling and telecommunication systems.
- Increase in passenger and freight travel speed from 30 km/h to 120 km/h, as well as in freight capacity to 22.9 tonnes axle load.



View of Non-electrified Railway Track on Corridor Xc, Serbia.

Previous EU assistance:

- €3.2 million (project preparation)

Estimated start date:

- Mid 2019

Estimated end date:

- End of 2021

Estimated loan repayment period:

- 15 years

Transport



Map of Sicevo to Dimitrovgrad Rail Interconnection.

The investment will be executed in two stages: a). Sicevo – Stanicenje (48 km); b). Stanicenje – Dimitrovgrad (32 km). Preliminary designs and other technical and financial documentation were prepared in 2008 and 2010 respectively; further revisions required by recent changes in Serbian Construction Law have been undertaken recently, in close cooperation with JASPERS.

The rehabilitation works will not have significant social or environmental impacts as the new facilities will be built on the route of the existing rail track.

The project is complemented by two other investments:

- Construction of the railway deviation around the City of Niš to the station in Sicevo, undertaken with assistance from 2011 IPA (EU) funding.
- Completion of electrification and signalling and communication works on the route from Niš to Sicevo and from there to Stanicenje and Dimitrovgrad, for which additional financial assistance has been obtained from the EU through the Western Balkans Investment Framework in 2017.

The Dimitrovgrad – border with Bulgaria section was completely

overhauled in 2001 with assistance from the European Investment Bank. The successful completion of proposed rehabilitation works on the Sicevo to Dimitrovgrad section as well as the execution of the two complementary investments will thus bring the entire CXc route to modern standards.

Benefits

- Approximately 550 new jobs created during construction as well as operation and maintenance periods.
- Direct access to modern means of transport for more than 340,000 people living along the railway route proposed for rehabilitation.
- Decrease in current pollution levels caused by diesel operations.
- Reduced operational and maintenance costs for railway operators.
- Better opportunities for socio-economic growth for one of the poorest regions in Serbia.
- Improved trade flows with countries in the region and thus a positive impact on the broader economy of Serbia.