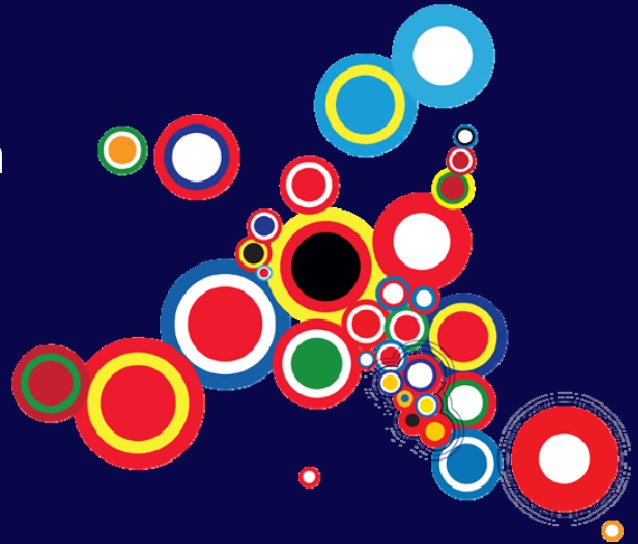




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU support to the Western
Balkans Investment
Framework for Technical
Assistance for 2018



Action summary

The action will provide technical assistance, under the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), for the successful preparation and implementation of major infrastructure investment projects. It will, in particular, support investment projects identified in the Single Project Pipelines with a regional dimension, which are priorities for the IPA II beneficiaries in the Western Balkans.

The action will contribute to bring the Beneficiaries' priority infrastructure investment projects to maturity by preparing all documentation for implementation, making the projects eligible for Financial Institutions' loans and/or further EU financing. The action will also offer technical assistance during the implementation phase, providing support throughout the project cycle.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2018		
Action Title	EU support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework for Technical Assistance for 2018		
Action ID	IPA 2018/040-113.10/MC/WBIF TA		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	43010 - multi-sector aid		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 50 million		
EU contribution	EUR 50 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401 – Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation		
Management and Implementation			
Management mode	Direct management		
European Commission	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Unit D.5		
Implementation responsibilities	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Unit D.5		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia)		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	At the latest by 31 December 2019		
Final date for operational implementation	At the latest by 31 December 2025		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not	Significant	Main

* 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.

	targeted	objective	objective
Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

A large gap still exists, in the Western Balkans region, between the infrastructure available and what is needed to ensure a sustainable development. Insufficient maintenance and development in the past, interruption of investments and slow reform linked to some serious social implications compound the problem.

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) has proven a successful instrument to provide technical assistance for the successful preparation and implementation of high priority infrastructure investment projects¹.

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Regional cooperation in the infrastructure sector is essential for successfully tackling trans-boundary issues and key common challenges in the Western Balkans such as connectivity, integrated water resources management, climate change, energy shortages or flood events.

However, a large gap still exists between the infrastructure available and what is needed to ensure a sustainable development. Insufficient maintenance and development in the past, interruption of investments and slow reform linked to some serious social implications compound the problem.

Amongst the many challenges faced by the Beneficiaries, the mains ones are:

- insufficient and even deteriorating financing opportunities for the development of infrastructure caused by the economic and financial crises;
- insufficient public support to infrastructure reform and development;
- delays in implementation of EU infrastructure norms and ensuring the enforcement of relevant legal acts;
- preparing feasible and attractive projects for funding;
- slow and lengthy administrative procedures, for example for construction permits;
- a lack of fair, transparent and diligent public tendering procedures;
- tariffs for infrastructure products and services that are not affordable or do not reflect the real costs of the investment;
- insufficient mechanisms in attracting private sector participation in financing infrastructure development.

The WBIF, launched in December 2009, is a joint initiative of the European Commission, the partner International Financial Institutions (the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), and the World Bank Group, as a participating International Financial Institution) and bilateral donors. With the objective of enhancing the socio-economic development of the region by developing a common pipeline of priority projects in the framework of the EU pre-accession process, the WBIF blends available grant and loan resources from above mentioned stakeholders and channels them on the priority infrastructure investment projects for the region.

The WBIF has proven a successful instrument, with, in 2016, a total of 144 projects supported by grants of a total value of more than EUR 600 million for investments estimated at EUR 15.3 billion. The projects with a clear regional dimension, strengthening connectivity, are particularly targeted by the WBIF.

¹ <http://www.wbif.eu/>

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

In this context, the first and main component of the action will allow to continue offering technical assistance for the successful execution of priority infrastructure investment projects identified by the WBIF Steering Committee in the transport, energy, digital, environment and social infrastructure sectors.

Technical assistance is available to the Beneficiaries for all projects in the single project pipelines, with specific conditions applying to certain sectors. As a result, projects with a central or local dimension may be eligible for support.

The technical assistance provided under the action will help preparing the project making it eligible for Financial Institutions and EU financing and will support their implementation. Specific results will include pre-feasibility studies, conceptual designs, feasibility studies, cost-benefit analyses, environmental impact assessments, preliminary designs, financing plans, tariffs plans, detailed designs, tender dossiers, supervision of works, etc. It will also comprise the transfer of know-how in project management and project development².

The action will provide technical assistance to:

- the Beneficiaries' central and local authorities where the infrastructure investments will be implemented;
- public utilities which will be responsible of the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure;
- also possibly to private companies which may enter into public-private partnerships in the framework of the projects to be implemented;
- international or regional organisations.

Technical assistance will be provided to projects presented to the WBIF and approved by its Steering Committee. Technical assistance activities will then be implemented in line with the project application and its subsequent terms of reference and within agreed budget limits.

Assistance will either be directly implemented via an Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF), composed of teams of international technical experts managed by EIB, or by the International Financial Institution entrusted with the implementation of the project. In some exceptional cases, an IPF may be asked to provide ad-hoc advisory and technical assistance upon request of one of the WBIF stakeholders, subject to approval of the Steering Committee.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The revised Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020³ (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy paper) set socio-economic and regional development as one of its main objectives and clearly underlines the importance to support investments in infrastructure in the Western Balkans where cross-border networks are underdeveloped.

The Strategy paper also stresses the need to seek coherence and complementarity with other donors, in particular in the context of the WBIF to build a common pipeline of projects. In this context, the importance of a constructive cooperation with International Financial Institutions ensuring a balanced and equitable socio-economic development in the IPA region is crucial. In addition, efficient coordination with International Financial Institutions, other donors as well as with IPA bilateral programmes is necessary especially at the strategic and sectoral level.

Technical assistance will be provided in line with the priorities identified in the Strategy paper but also in line with relevant EU policies and EU macro-regional strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) endorsed in April 2011 and the future EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) launched in November 2014.

² The transfer of know-how within the context of WBIF technical assistance will be defined to be complementary with JASPERS' services to avoid any overlap of activities.

³ C(2018) 3442, 31.05.2018

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In a context of immense investments needs and restricted budgets, projects prioritisation is essential in order to ensure that the projects that are most relevant for growth, stability and accession are prepared to the highest standards and successfully implemented. The development of single pipeline of projects by the "National Investment Committees" (NICs) will play a key role in identifying these priority projects and will be offering to the WBIF a first selection of projects.

The central and local borrowing institutions in the Beneficiaries generally lack the knowledge, expertise and experience to produce infrastructure project planning and design documentation to the standard required by the EU and the International Financial Institutions. The action is a response to the Beneficiaries' technical assistance needs. Technical assistance grants (TA grants) represent the vast majority of the WBIF support with to date 187 TA grants. Within the economic context mentioned above, this support particularly and the overall cooperation and coordination among the Beneficiaries, European Commission, International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors need to be continued and intensified.

To date, TA grants have been implemented either directly by the lead International Financial Institution, through the European Western Balkans Joint Fund, or by one of the IPFs that have been successively deployed.

- IPF 1 was launched in June 2008 and its activities ended in March 2015. With a total budget of EUR 30 million, IPF 1 implemented 37 grants.
- IPF 2 was launched in November 2009 and ended its activities in June 2014. It had a total budget of EUR 30 million and implemented 36 grants.
- IPF 3 was launched in June 2012 and will end its activities in June 2018. With a total budget of EUR 22.5 million, IPF 3 will have implemented 26 grants and prepared two sector development studies.
- IPF 4 is the first IPF managed by the EIB. The contract was signed in June 2014. With a total budget of EUR 23 million, IPF 4 is implementing 16 grants and completed one sector development study.
- IPF 5, also managed by the EIB, was contracted in June 2016. Its total budget will amount to EUR 25.5 million. IPF 5 is regularly assigned new grants to implement, as soon as new terms of reference are completed.
- IPF 6, again managed by the EIB, was contracted in February 2017. Its total budget will amount to EUR 25 million. IPF 6 is regularly assigned new grants to implement, as soon as new terms of reference are completed.
- The tender procedure for IPF 7 is on-going. The EIB should sign the contract in the first semester 2018. IPF 7 total budget will amount to EUR 34.5 million.

The action is to finance IPF 8 and IPF 9, with first activities starting mid-2019.

Committing additional funds for the IPFs is urgently needed as the WBIF Steering Committee can only approve grants when EU funds have been formally adopted through a Commission Financing Decision. Funds previously committed have been fully allocated and new funds are necessary to continue the technical assistance provided by the IPFs – instrumental for the preparation and development of infrastructure projects in the region.

The first three IPFs were directly managed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Unit D.5 being the contracting authority.

- IPF 1 – CARDS 2005, part I and part II, DN 017-628 and DN 017-886; CARDS 2006, DN 018-474; Multi-beneficiary Programme 2010, DN 022-028
- IPF 2 – Multi-beneficiary Programme 2008, DN 020-300; Multi-beneficiary Programme 2011, DN 022-964
- IPF 3 – Multi-beneficiary Programme 2011, DN 022-964; Multi-beneficiary Programme 2012, DN 022-966

However, to minimise the administrative weight on the European Commission, it was decided that the EIB would manage IPF 4 and further Facilities.

- EC contribution to the Joint Fund including IPF 4 part I – Multi-beneficiary Programme 2012, DN 022-966
- Grant Agreement with the EIB for IPF 4 part II and IPF 5 – Multi-country Programme 2014, DN 031-603
- Grant Agreement with the EIB for IPF 6 – Multi-country Programme 2015, DN 031-609
- Grant Agreement with the EIB for IPF 7 – Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2016, part II, DN 039-401

The WBIF Secretariat is attentive to improve the IPFs and, over the years, adjusted their functioning for a higher efficiency.

In view of a more in depth review of the IPFs, the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations initiated an evaluation of the Facilities in February 2018. The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide:

- an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the IPFs, paying particular attention to its results measured against its objectives;
- key lessons and recommendations in order to improve current and future Actions.

The evaluation questions will include the following main areas of analysis:

- the quality of the technical assistance provided by the IPFs, historically but also in the context of the recent evolution of the WBIF (in particular the attention given to transport and energy projects in the context of the connectivity agenda set with the WB6 within the so called Berlin process);
- the efficiency of the technical assistance implementation process (e.g. preparation of the terms of reference, initiation of the activities, liaison with the beneficiaries, the International Financial Institutions, the EU Delegations, the WBIF Secretariat and IFI-CO);
- the evolution of the IPFs towards a more technical role in a more political context;
- the complementarity of the IPFs with other technical assistance instruments (in particular IFI-CO, CONNECTA – technical assistance instrument for the implementation of transport reform measures and for the revision and completion of project documentation for connectivity investments, JASPERS – technical assistance instrument for the quality review of project documentation);
- the procurement of the new IPFs and how the tender documents could open further the access of the IPFs to new companies while preserving experience requirements;
- the management of the IPFs by the EIB.

The evaluation is expected to last nine months. It should therefore be completed by the end of October, allowing for its findings to be presented at the autumn WBIF Project Financiers' Group meeting in November in Brussels.

The recommendations of the evaluation will be considered and implemented for the on-going activities. If advised by the evaluation, the terms of reference for IPF 8 and IPF 9 will be adjusted.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To support the sustainable socio-economic growth of the Western Balkans by developing infrastructure through the WBIF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sector investment GDP growth Human development index Total value of all investment projects (private and public) made in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "National/Central Banks" reports "National Statistical Offices" Eurostat 	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To support the preparation and implementation of priority infrastructure investment projects, at regional and central levels, in transport, environment, energy, digital and social sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of projects prepared which found financing (signed loans) Number of projects under construction Number of projects completed and operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBIF's online Management Information System (MIS) International Financial Institutions reports WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports Government budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to borrow from Beneficiaries remains Recovery from the crisis allows further development and creates further loans demand Political stability in the region
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of quality priority infrastructure investment projects ready for implementation and successfully implemented in transport, environment, energy, digital, and social sectors increased. Cooperation and coordination between International Financial Institutions, Beneficiaries, bilateral donors and regional organisations enhanced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of TA grants implemented (completion of all activities foreseen in the terms of reference) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Financial Institutions reports IPFs bi-monthly and progress reports WBIF's online MIS WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBIF continues to receive support from the different partners "National IPA Coordinators" (NIPACs) present multiple good projects for financing. International Financial Institutions' availability to provide loans remains high in the region

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Technical assistance is most largely requested for the preparation of project documentation (such as pre-feasibility studies, conceptual designs, feasibility studies, cost-benefit analyses, environmental impact assessments, preliminary designs, financing plans, tariffs plans, detailed designs, tender dossiers, supervision of works, etc.), thus bringing infrastructure projects to maturity for investment co-financing.

Technical assistance may also be provided during the implementation phase, for the preparation of tender dossiers and for the supervision of works, providing therefore support throughout the project cycle.

In some exceptional cases, IPFs may be asked to provide ad-hoc technical assistance, as for the Gap Analysis on Floods Prevention and Management in the Western Balkans, commissioned following the dramatic floods of May 2014 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and presented at the regional conference in Sarajevo on 28 September 2015.

RISKS

The success of the action will depend in particular on the following aspects:

- agreement with the Beneficiaries on the priorities to address;
- unchanging priorities of the Beneficiaries;
- political commitment from the central and local Beneficiaries, in particular to engage in policy reforms;
- administrative capacity, in particular to uphold sustainable policy reforms;
- local ownership of the project's outputs;
- financial sustainability for an efficient operation and maintenance of the infrastructure;
- land acquisition or expropriation issues;
- level of communication among the project's stakeholders;
- cross border cooperation and support in regional projects;
- influence of agreements with other stakeholders (Russia, China, etc.).

Past experience showed that, with strong project leadership from all stakeholders, the risks of poor implementation can be minimised. The project monitoring mechanisms will be designed to mitigate such risks.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the action will be subject to the projects presented to and endorsed by the WBIF Steering Committee.

Failure to comply with the requirements set above may lead to a recovery of funds under this programme and/or the re-allocation of future funding.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Main actors

A previously mentioned, to minimise the administrative weight on the European Commission, it was decided that the **EIB** would manage IPF 4 and further Facilities.

The EIB manages the IPFs' service contracts by organising tendering and contracting, managing and monitoring the use of resources, processing payments and reporting to the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

The technical assistance activities implemented by the IPFs are however organised and monitored by the WBIF Secretariat in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. Any operational problems occurring during the implementation of the technical assistance services are addressed by the WBIF Secretariat.

The **IPFs** are service contracts with international consulting companies organised in consortia, which implement the technical assistance activities approved by the WBIF Steering Committee. In this context, they are directly interacting with the final beneficiaries (e.g. line ministries, utilities or municipalities) and the International Financial Institutions.

Secondary actors

The **eligible Beneficiaries** of the WBIF are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

The **WBIF financiers** are the European Commission, the EBRD, the EIB, the CEB, KfW, the World Bank Group and bilateral donors.

The main bodies in the Governance of the WBIF are the following:

- The **WBIF Steering Committee** which provides strategic guidance for the WBIF and takes all decisions related to project approvals. The WBIF Steering Committee brings together representatives of the Beneficiaries, the European Commission, partner International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors and meets every six months. It is co-chaired by the European Commission (on a permanent basis) and one of the bilateral donors (on an annual rotating basis).
- The **Project Financiers' Group** (PFG) which is responsible for screening and assessing requests for financial support with the objective of establishing a pipeline of priority projects to be presented to the WBIF Steering Committee for approval. It is also responsible for the coordination of approved grant operations. The PFG is composed of representatives of the European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations coordinates the participation of all relevant European Commission services), International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors. It is co-chaired by the European Commission (on a permanent basis) and a partner International Financial Institution (on a rotating basis every 6 months).

Applications for grant support under the WBIF must be formally submitted by the **NIPACs** of the respective Beneficiaries. In the case of regional sectoral projects, the application can be made by the relevant sectoral organisation but must be accompanied by official letters of support from relevant NIPACs. Each application identifies the project implementing entity(ies) which will be the direct counterpart(s) of the IPFs when implementing the WBIF technical assistance (for example line ministries, municipalities or public utilities).

The **WBIF Secretariat** in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations is responsible for the day to day management, coordination and administration of the WBIF with the support of the IFI Coordination Office (IFI-CO). The Secretariat, in particular, issues calls for proposals for projects and manages the screening and assessment process. On the ground, the WBIF Secretariat is represented in each eligible Beneficiary by "WBIF Country Managers", who monitor the WBIF operations and facilitate liaisons with the relevant central authorities.

In addition, the **WBIF Coordinators**, established in each EU Delegations, play an instrumental role throughout the WBIF action cycle, from the assessment of the grant applications presented by the Beneficiaries to the monitoring of grants' implementation.

To ensure the successful implementation of the WBIF technical assistance, it is crucial to maintain a constant flow of communication between its numerous stakeholders and actors – through a large circulation of the reports but also through regular direct contacts.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING

The action will be managed directly by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Unit D.5 through a Grant Agreement with the EIB. It will be implemented in accordance with Article 125 (7) of the Financial Regulation which stipulates that grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to the European Investment Bank or the European Investment Fund for actions of technical assistance. In such cases Articles 131(2) to (5) and 132(1) shall not apply.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The monitoring of the action will be carried out by the WBIF Secretariat, and more specifically by the Task Manager in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations with the support of IFI-CO. In the perspective of this exercise, they will use the WBIF Management Information System (MIS) database, the bi-monthly and progress reports produced by the IPFs, the reports produced by the implementing body, the EIB, and the reports produced by the other International Financial Institutions when they will implement the TA grants approved by the WBIF Steering Committee.

The WBIF PFG and Steering Committee meetings will offer all WBIF stakeholders, in particular the Beneficiaries represented by their NIPACs, the opportunity to share their experience and evaluation of the WBIF technical assistance support. Adjustments of the action may be considered and decided on these occasions.

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (value + year) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2026) (4)	Source of information
<p>Number of projects prepared which found financing (signed loans)</p> <p><i>This target will depend on the technical assistance provided under the action. If the action provides technical assistance at the stage of detailed design, these projects may find financing by 2026. However, if the action provides technical assistance at earlier stages, the financing will only be secured later in time.</i></p>	N/A	0	12	WBIF online MIS WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports
<p>Number of projects under construction</p> <p><i>This target will depend on the technical assistance provided under the action. If the action provides technical assistance at the stage of detailed design, these projects may already be under construction in 2026. However, if the action provides technical assistance at earlier stages, construction will only start later in time.</i></p>	N/A	0	8	WBIF online MIS WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports
<p>Number of projects completed and operational</p> <p><i>The WBIF provides technical assistance to major infrastructure projects for which the completion of the construction works usually takes several years after the finalisation of the project documentation.</i></p>	N/A	0	0	WBIF online MIS WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports
<p>Number of TA grants implemented (completion of all activities foreseen in the terms of reference)</p> <p><i>Based on the assumption that 30 TA grants will be implemented by the action</i></p>	N/A	4	30	WBIF online MIS WBIF IPF bi-monthly and progress reports WBIF annual reports WBIF bi-annual monitoring reports

- (1) This is the related indicator as included in the Indicative Strategy Paper (for reference only)
- (2) The agreed baseline year is 2010 (to be inserted in brackets in the top row). If for the chosen indicator, there are no available data for 2010, it is advisable to refer to the following years – 2011, 2012. The year of reference may not be the same either for all indicators selected due to a lack of data availability; in this case, the year should then be inserted in each cell in brackets. The baseline value may be "0" (i.e. no reference values are available as the Action represents a novelty for the beneficiary) but cannot be left empty or include references such as "N/A" or "will be determined later".
- (3) The target year CANNOT be modified.
- (4) This will be a useful reference to continue measuring the outcome of IPA II support beyond the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial period. If the Action is completed before 2020 (year for the performance reward), this value and that in the 2020 target column must be the same.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Though it is not designed to address particularly this issue, the action may have an impact on gender equality. Women and girls can be differently affected by the implications of access to infrastructure than men and boys due to their gender roles and their responsibilities in households. The impact of the action will however not be significant enough to justify gender marking.

The development of the action will ensure equal opportunities for women and men to participate in its implementation and in the selection of experts.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal opportunities will be mainstreamed in all the relevant activities of the action.

The development of the action will require professional qualifications and competences guaranteeing equal opportunities for its implementation and selection of experts.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Infrastructure investment projects provide benefits to the population without distinction, including people belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups, such as refugees.

The action will pay particular attention, within its scope of activities, that the development of infrastructure does not affect disproportionately these groups and that equal access to the services are guaranteed.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

The preparation of investment projects is always accompanied by public consultation which requirements are set by national planning regulations and EU Directives, in particular the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU amended by Directive 2014/52/EU).

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Beneficiaries are invited to consider and argue, when preparing their applications, the environmental benefits of their projects as well as their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In June 2013, a Climate Change Window was introduced to the WBIF, in line with EU policies for blending facilities worldwide. The Window is focused on tracking financing allocated to investments supporting mitigation and adaptation objectives. Approximately 20% of the WBIF TA grants have been dedicated to the preparation of projects which will contribute to climate change mitigation and/or climate change adaptation. The WBIF is considering launching a precise assessment of these contributions.

These requirements contribute to raise awareness so environmental and climate considerations are incorporated in project design for strategic infrastructure.

The WBIF is also actively supporting disaster resilience with several TA grants related to flood prevention and management.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 10 million

6. SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure the sustainability of infrastructure investments projects, the Beneficiaries must thoroughly prepare their projects with the support, from the beginning, of a lead International Financial Institution

for the development of high quality project documentation. In this context, any TA grant provided by the WBIF is associated to a loan from an International Financial Institution.

Additionally, the performance of the utilities responsible for the infrastructure should be strengthened to ensure the sustainable maintenance and operation of the service (for example adjusting tariff plans, improving collection rates, etc.).

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

Communication and visibility activities will be the responsibility of the implementing body, the EIB, and the European Commission, as well as the EU Delegations, shall be fully informed of their planning and implementation.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU Financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations in the field. The European Commission and the EU Delegations should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities

The action targets the early stages of the project cycle, before any visible construction activities, making communication and visibility activities challenging. It will therefore be essential to ensure that the EU technical assistance contribution to the infrastructure project is publicised throughout the rest of the project cycle (e.g. on boards on construction sites, at the inauguration, in press releases, etc.). This visibility shall be implemented by the final beneficiary as well as by the International Financial Institution implementing the infrastructure project, under the European Commission's (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) monitoring. The continuation of EU's support to some of the investment projects through co-financing shall ease this monitoring.