

WBIF Guidelines for Applicants: INV Round 12



2. WBIF INV Round 12

This is a call for applications for investment grants to co-finance public sector investment projects in the area of intervention of Environment and Climate under the WBIF. Funding for this round is available through IPA III and Bilateral Donor contributions to the EWBIF. The latter may support small-scale, high-impact projects in this intervention area.

Applications under the call must address the WBIF Blending Investment Priorities as presented at the 1st Strategic and Operational Board meetings (16 and 17 December 2021) for the environment and climate intervention area.

2.1. Eligibility criteria

Rationale

The key priorities of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans (EIP), now integrated in the Global Gateway, guide the eligibility criteria of the current round.

The Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, together with the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, set out that significant investment should be directed towards greening the Western Balkans and mainstreaming environmental and climate requirements in other sectors. WBIF support focuses on implementing the Plan's flagship for waste and wastewater management.

One of the main goals of the Green Agenda is to reduce water pollution and to address water conservation and flood protection across the region. A high share of the population lives in rural areas (30 to 50%), with only basic sanitary facilities and wastewater collection, while urban areas with wastewater collection via sewer networks discharge mostly untreated wastewater.

Although there have been improvements in waste management through the adoption of circular economy principles, much progress remains to be made in the Western Balkans.

Moving to a circular economy, addressing waste management, recycling, sustainable production, and efficient use of resources will play a significant role in lowering the carbon footprint.

Investments to be implemented under a Public Private Partnership approach are strongly encouraged under the current round.

Key areas of intervention

- Water and wastewater treatment: Support will be provided to upgrade basic infrastructure in line with relevant EU standards in the area of water and sanitation (including investments in drinking water treatment and supply and sewerage systems covering multiple agglomerations with a regional coverage or in the major cities) and pollution prevention measures. Actions that address water pollution and have co-benefits of improving resilience to extreme climate events or contributing to nature conservation and restoration, such as nature-based solutions or green infrastructure, will be prioritised.
- Circular economy: Support will be provided to waste management, recycling, sustainable production, and efficient use of resources for the green and climate-neutral economy.

2.2. Delineation of subsectors eligible for support by WBIF public sector investments and by IPA national programmes

Subsector	SOP / national IPA	WBIF
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Water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of existing and construction of new drinking water and wastewater treatment plants (\leq €15 million (\leq €30 million for Serbia))* • River basin management/flood prevention 	<input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation of existing and construction of new drinking water and wastewater treatment plants ($>$ €15 million ($>$ €30 million for Serbia))
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of existing and construction of new waste management centres (\leq €20 million (\leq €30 million for Serbia))* • Closure of non-compliant landfills • Equipment* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of existing and construction of new waste management centres ($>$ €20 million ($>$ €30 million for Serbia)) • Closure of non-compliant landfills, including rehabilitation according to EU standards (only if in association with waste management centres)
Air quality/noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Services/ works/ equipment *	
Nature protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Management of natural resources, resource protection (deployment of reservoirs, irrigation; green and blue infrastructures; ecosystem restoration and resilience; restoration of carbon rich habitats; water retention)*	
Industrial pollution/chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services (studies) • Cleaning/remediation of local waste dumpsites 	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated industrial decarbonisation and depollution solutions

* Priority area(s) for Sector Operational Programmes.

Note: The above table refers only to EU funding. In addition, Bilateral Donors can support small-scale investment projects in all the sectors described above, regardless of the division of subsectors into “SOP/national IPA” and “WBIF”, and without any financial thresholds.

2.3. Maximum co-financing rate for WBIF contribution The maximum co-financing rate is as follows:

Investment windows	max. co-financing rate (%)
Environment and climate	70