

WBIF INV Round 14 Guidelines for Applicants



Introduction

The European Commission and the Bilateral Donors launched a WBIF call for applications on 3 July 2026 to provide investment co-financing for public sector projects. The call is organised into the following round:

- **INV Round 14 for investment grants** to co-finance public sector investment projects in the WBIF's **environment and climate intervention area**. Funding for this round is provided by IPA III and Bilateral Donor contributions to the EWBIF

These Guidelines have been prepared in support of the WBIF INV Round 14 call for applications. Their primary purpose is to assist beneficiaries and financial institutions in preparing applications for this call. The document sets out the eligibility criteria applicable to project proposals, describes the submission process, and specifies the information required for applications to the WBIF Project Financiers' Group.

1. General eligibility provisions

1.1 Geographical coverage

Projects may be eligible for financing under the WBIF if they will be implemented for the benefit of one or more of the following Beneficiaries: The Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, and the Republic of Serbia.

The legal entity benefiting from a public sector WBIF contribution to investments shall be registered within a Beneficiary. For transnational or regional projects that also involve non-eligible countries, the institution or body in charge of the investment may be based in a non-eligible country, but the support provided through the WBIF will cover only the portion of the investment implemented on the territory of the participating Beneficiary.

1.2 Eligible entities for WBIF support

Public sector projects for financing under the WBIF may benefit (depending on the type of project and/or the intervention area addressed):

- (a) public entities;
- (b) private entities, such as, for example, without limitation, entities established within the context of public-private partnerships (PPPs), joint ventures or mutual joint ventures; or
- (c) other entities with mixed public-private capital, in each case responsible for the management, construction and provision of public utilities and services.

2. INV Round 14 eligibility criteria

This is a call for applications for investment grants to co-finance public sector investment projects in the Environment and Climate intervention area under the WBIF. Funding for this round is available through **IPA III** and **Bilateral Donor contributions** to the EWBIF.

The table below presents the eligibility criteria for WBIF investment grants in the Environment and Climate intervention area, according to their funding sources (IPA III or Bilateral Donors).

Bilateral Donors funding can support **small-scale, high-impact investment projects** in all the subsectors described below, without any financial thresholds.

Subsector	Bilateral Donors	IPA III and Bilateral Donors
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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services/ works/ equipment * 	
Nature protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of natural resources, resource protection (deployment of reservoirs, irrigation, green and blue infrastructures, ecosystem restoration and resilience, restoration of carbon-rich habitats, 	
Subsector	Bilateral Donors	IPA III and Bilateral Donors
	water retention)*	
Industrial pollution/chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services (studies) Cleaning/remediation of local waste dumpsites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated industrial decarbonisation and depollution solutions

* Priority area(s) for Sector Operational Programmes.

2.1 Additional eligibility conditions

The Beneficiary institutions must have an **adequate capacity** to define their investment plans and to procure and implement the project, possibly with specific technical assistance.

The relevant beneficiary entity must demonstrate commitment and project ownership for the whole project duration and ensure that a **Project Implementation Unit** is in place with appropriate skills and relevant experience acceptable to the IFIs.

In addition, a monitoring and coordination structure (e.g. Project Steering Committee) should be in place to effectively monitor progress in the implementation of the project. This structure must include all relevant stakeholders, including

the beneficiary entity, the Lead IFI, the Delegation/Office of the EU, etc., and should convene regularly at least twice a year, as well as on an ad-hoc basis whenever significant issues arise.

Project proposals for investment co-financing must be **mature**:

- Only projects that demonstrate that the relevant preparatory work has been completed and is up to date, and for which the **signature of the (first) works contract will occur within 24 months of the approval of the WBIF contribution**, shall be eligible for WBIF support.
- The **detailed design (or the preliminary design for design-build projects)** and the tender documentation (if part of project preparation TA) must be completed and approved by the beneficiary by the time of the WBIF contribution's approval.
- The **ESIA** must be completed and approved by the IFIs at the time of application submission.
- The project's **financing plan** must be in place; the **financing should be confirmed** by co-financiers, and the Beneficiary's Ministry of Finance and the **Lead IFI's project appraisal/loan preparation should be ongoing** at the time of application submission.
- All necessary **approvals or pre-approvals**, as applicable, from beneficiary stakeholders should be obtained by the time the applications are submitted, i.e. **EIA approval** (national EIA positive decision) and **land acquisition** (siting decision "freezing the land" under the project and preventing the granting of approvals for other developments).

Applicants are required to demonstrate the maturity of their project proposals **in Section 17 of the application form**.

2.2 Maximum co-financing rate for WBIF contribution

The maximum co-financing rate is 70%.

3. Requirements for the submission of application forms

The applications must be pre-notified and submitted via the WBIF MIS platform by National IPA Coordinators in the prescribed application form and in accordance with the deadlines communicated at the launch of the call.

Project proposals must be supported by a Lead Financial Institution (LFI), namely the AFD, CEB, EBRD, EIB, KfW, or the World Bank.

The applicants must submit a duly completed application form. All sections of the application form must be completed as clearly and concisely as possible, while adhering to the suggested maximum character limits and avoiding repetition.

The application forms must be submitted together with an accompanying letter signed by the NIPAC, which confirms the Beneficiary's commitment to the submitted projects, confirms that the Lead Financial Institution has been consulted and is in agreement with the content of the application form, and, in the case of an investment grant, acknowledges that there is adequate fiscal space for its implementation.

The Beneficiaries shall prepare the project proposals under the supervision of the NIPACs and in close cooperation with the LFI. Consultations and coordination with the EU Delegations must be ensured before the submission of the application.