



Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans - 2 NEAR/2022/EA-RP/0081

SERBIA

Gap assessment and preparation of WBIF investment application package and design & build tender documents for the project “Reconstruction and Modernisation of railway line Valjevo – Vrbnica - state border, Section: Valjevo - Požega”

The subject sub-project is still ongoing. The description that follows is for information purposes only and subject to the sub-project's completion.

Partners:

- Serbian Railways Infrastructure (SRI)
- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure
- Ministry of European Integration
- European Investment Bank (EIB)

Budget of Technical Assistance:

- Euro 1,000,000

EU contribution¹:

- As above (100%)

Technical Assistance provided by:

- CONNECTA 2 (Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans - 2)

Transport

The Valjevo - Vrbnica railway line, part of the Belgrade - Bar route on the TEN-T Core Network (along the Western Balkans - Eastern Mediterranean Corridor), is a strategic component of Serbia's transport system. Linking central Serbia with Montenegro's Port of Bar, it supports trade, multimodal connectivity and regional integration.

The Technical Assistance (TA) focuses on the Valjevo - Požega section, with preparatory work for the Požega - Vrbnica extension. The goal is to deliver WBIF-compliant investment documentation and procurement-ready design & build (D&B) tender packages, aligned with EU and IFI requirements.

The line features over 50 historic stone bridges, several tunnels and complex terrain. While conceptual designs and location permits exist, current documentation lacks full compliance with TSI, TEN-T, and ESPOO Convention standards. Gaps also remain in climate risk integration and environmental and social safeguards.

The corridor's position enhances connectivity to the Adriatic Sea and strengthens interoperability with Montenegro's network. It is among Serbia's highest-priority infrastructure projects.

The CONNECTA 2 assistance is structured in two phases:

- Phase 1: Gap assessment of the full Valjevo - Vrbnica line, identifying deficiencies and regulatory needs.
- Phase 2: Preparation of updated technical and tender documentation for Valjevo - Požega, including ESIA, climate resilience and procurement strategy.



This structured approach ensures alignment with EU standards, reduces implementation risks and supports investment-readiness. CONNECTA 2's output will help unlock WBIF and IFI financing, enable faster implementation and reinforce Serbia's role in regional transport.

Results to be achieved:

- Detailed gap assessment for the Valjevo - Vrbnica line
- Feasibility study and cost benefit analysis for the full corridor
- Updated E(S)IA and environmental & social management plans
- Resettlement policy framework and action plan for Valjevo - Požega
- Updated preliminary designs and Employer's Requirements for Valjevo - Požega
- Design & build tender documentation in line with FIDIC and EU PRAG
- Risk analysis and procurement strategy aligned with IFI standards
- Climate change vulnerability assessment and mitigation planning

¹EU contribution concerns only Technical Assistance services for project development

Start date: June, 2025

Duration: 12 months



Key recommendations – further actions:

(to be updated after the sub-project is completed)

Benefits expected due to Technical Assistance:

- **Strategic Alignment:**
 - Supports connectivity between Serbia and Montenegro
 - Contributes to regional integration and port access (Bar)
- **Procurement and Design Efficiency:**
 - Delivery of procurement-ready documentation
 - Compliant and detailed tender design for D&B contract
- **Cost and Risk Optimization:**
 - Improved costing via updated economic analysis
 - Early identification and mitigation of implementation risks
- **Regulatory and Environmental Compliance:**
 - Full alignment with TSI, TEN-T, ESPOO and EU E&S standards
 - Improved transparency and eligibility for WBIF/IFI funding

Impacts anticipated:

- **Enhanced Infrastructure Readiness:**
 - Accelerated preparation for investment and tendering
 - Clear documentation aligned with EU and IFI standards
- **Reduced Project Delays:**
 - Early resolution of compliance and design gaps
 - Improved phasing through a two-step implementation
- **Economic and Operational Clarity:**
 - Stronger procurement strategy and risk mitigation
 - Better coordination with Montenegro for uninterrupted operations
- **Regulatory and Financial Alignment:**
 - Compliance with TSI, TEN-T, and ESPOO requirements
 - Improved eligibility for WBIF and IFI co-financing