**INV GAF template & Guidelines review and improvement**

**Main changes overview**

This document explains the interventions to the second revised version of the INV GAF Package, in response to the comments received and following the discussions at the virtual meeting from 1st July 2020.

**INV GAF Template**

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| Change | Description |
| Key changes | The following new sections were introduced in the template:   * *Section 4: Flagship*; * *Section 9: Project code;* * *Section 16: Description of the Project and Action* * Sections 15 (Short description of the Project), 16 (Main objectives of the Project), 17 (Context of the Project) were reorganised as subsections; * New subsections: 16.2 Needs/demand analysis (current and forecast), 16.6 Description of the Action; * *Section 17: Indicative project status and planning* replaces section 12 (Project stage) and Annex 2 (Stages under the implementation phase); * *Section 31: Indicative calendar of the Action* replaces sections 32 (Indicative project calendar) and 33 (Description of procurement procedure and procurement calendar).   Other main changes:   * *Section 5: Sectors* – eligible sectors were amended to those included in “Doc 6 - Public blending - EU eligibility criteria aligned with the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans” * *Section 23: Calculation of the WBIF investment grant* – “Special evaluation/audit” was removed from the costs eligible for WBIF grant; * “The final date for contracting” and the “Final date of operational implementation of the Action [as per COM annual Financing decision]”were introduced under *Payment of the grant from the Joint Fund,* as these deadlines are not available of at the submission and screening of applications. |
| New section headings | The headings of the following sections were slightly changed, as follows:   * *Section 2: Grant code* instead of “Grant number/code”; * *Section 3: WBIF approval date* instead of “Date of Steering Committee”; * *Section 13: Total WBIF grant amount* instead of “Grant amount requested”; * *Section 18: Coherence with the WBIF objectives, EU policies, adopted national/sectoral strategies* instead of “Coherence with the WBIF objectives and EU policies”; * Section “Approval by the WBIF Steering Committee and by the EWBJF Assembly of Contributors” was changed to “Approval by the WBIF Operational Board and by the Assembly of Contributors”. The signatories were replaced with “Signature of the Chair of the Operational Board and Assembly of Contributors - the European Commission” |
| Improved/  restructured sections | * *Section 21: Project budget and financing plan:* * Tender documents were added to cost component 3 “Technical assistance for project preparation”; * A new cost component “Other (e.g. project design review/verification by review committee)” was introduced in the budget; * *Section 28: Project sustainability* was restructured into four subsections - economic/financial viability, environmental aspects, social aspects, institutional aspects; * *Section 29: Risk assessment categories* * “Socio-economic, equality/gender, minority/vulnerable groups risks” replaces “Social and gender equality”; * A new category “Operation risks” was introduced in the template. * *Section 30: Climate mitigation and adaptation aspects* – narrative description of climate change aspects was added to this section. |
| Annexes | * *Annex 1: Key requirements checklist* was updated; * *Annex 2: Communication and visibility plan template* was slightly revised in line with the “WBIF Communication and Visibility Guidelines”. |
| Instructions included in the template | * All the instructions included in the template were amended accordingly and drop-down lists were included in sections *4 (Flagship)*, *5 (Sector)*, *7 (Beneficiary country)*, *10 (Lead Financial Institution)*, *11 (Co-financiers)*, *17 (Indicative project status and planning).* |

**INV GAF Guidelines**

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| Change | Description |
| Structure | * The sections and subsections of the Guidelines reordered/reorganised according to the updated INV GAF template. |
| Maximum co-financing rates | * The maximum co-financing rates were amended to those specified in “Doc 7. WBIF public blending EU co-financing rates aligned with the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans” |
| Improved sections | * The instructions were revised for the sections; * Elaborate instructions, notes and or/examples were in included for the following sections: * Section 16: Main objectives of the Project in terms of outputs and outcomes, definition of the Project’s socio-economic objectives and needs/demand analysis (current and forecast) were explicitly introduced; * Section 17: Maturity requirements and the classification of projects based on the paper “Restricted Task Force 2015”, additional clarifications on environmental permit, land availability, procurement procedures, construction permit were included; * Section 31: Key expected milestones for the procurement and implementation of the Action were specified to ensure that planned activities are realistically implementable within the foreseen period and are logically sequenced; * Section 18: Additional instructions on how to demonstrate the Project’s coherence with the particularities of the WBIF objectives, EU policies, adopted national/sectoral strategies strategic frameworks, policies and plans; |
|  | * + Section 21: Additional clarifications for filling in the project budget and financing plan. The categories of eligible and non-eligible costs were updated: costs for evaluation and audit, as well as for technical review, check and verification of project design(s) as per the national legislation and other activities specific to urban planning and/or land ownership (e.g. preparation of urban plans, documentation for land expropriation, etc.) were moved under non-eligible costs;   + Sections 18, 25 and 29: Cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and equal opportunities, the rights of minorities and/or vulnerable groups were explicitly introduced as elements that should be considered to demonstrate compliance with EU social standards;   + Section 29: The instructions for risk assessment categories were updated;   + Section 27: Cross-sector indicators were revised to take account of gender equality and equal opportunities, and additional specific indicators were introduced;   + Annex 4: Additional indicators for the environment and social sectors;   + Annex 6: The WBIF screening and assessment grid was updated to the revised INV GAF template. |