



## JASPERS technical assistance extended to Croatia ahead of EU accession

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JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions), the technical assistance partnership between the European Investment Bank, the European Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, will assist Croatia in the identification and preparation of projects eligible for grant assistance under the EU Structural Funds and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA).

The objective of the JASPERS initiative is to increase the quantity and quality of projects financed by the EU Structural Funds so that investment supported by the Funds can be used more quickly and effectively.

The terms and conditions of this assistance, which was specifically requested by Croatia, were formalised in a Contribution Agreement between the Commission and the EIB that was signed on 22 December.

EIB President Werner Hoyer commented: "I very much welcome the fact that JASPERS has started to become operational in Croatia. The preparation of projects that meet the requirements for EU grant financing requires time and both the EIB and the Commission recognise the importance of preparing a pipeline of good quality projects well in advance of Croatia's full EU membership, which is scheduled for 2013."

In 2011 JASPERS began its work in Croatia, providing input for the preparation of infrastructure projects. The main focus is on environmental and transport projects but the support may cover projects in other areas, such as the knowledge economy and the fight against climate change, which become eligible for support after accession to the EU and are a priority for the EU 2020 strategy.

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