

The World Bank Group said on Wednesday its board of executive directors has endorsed a new 2016-2020 Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Bosnia to support faster implementation of reforms in the country.

The strategic framework builds on twenty years of strong partnership between Bosnia and the World Bank Group and envisions around \$750 million (686.8 million euro) of new lending in the next four years, depending on the scope and pace of reform implementation, the lender said in a press release distributed by its office in Bosnia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is made up of two autonomous entities, the Serb Republic and the Muslim-Croat Federation.

The CPF comes at a critical time for Bosnia when the Council of Ministers, the government of the Serb Republic and the government of the Federation have launched implementation of a jointly agreed reform agenda. The country has also re-energized progress towards EU accession in the past year, which serves as a natural anchor for consolidated support from the international community, the World Bank said.

Through the strategic framework the World Bank Group will support reforms in three areas. One is increasing public sector efficiency and effectiveness. A second one is creating conditions for accelerated private sector growth while the third one is building resilience to natural shocks.

“The overarching objective of this new strategy is to put Bosnia and Herzegovina on a better growth path, and to support job creation in the private sector,” Tatiana Proskuryakova, World Bank country manager for Bosnia and the main author of the CPF, said.

Private investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina may also receive funding from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank, in the range of \$70-120 million, depending on demand and market conditions, as well as guarantees from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

“IFC will be engaged in efforts to improve the business environment, attract private sector participation in infrastructure projects and help to improve access to finance and resolution of non-performing loans,” Thomas Lubeck, IFC regional manager for the Western Balkans, said.

The World Bank has an on-going portfolio of 12 operations in Bosnia for a total amount of \$576 million. The IFC has eight private investments for a total outstanding portfolio of \$69 million. MIGA is currently supporting six projects with gross exposure of \$285 million.

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