

**REPORT ON WB6 CIF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2021
WITHIN THE EU FUNDED PROJECT
„SUPPORT TO THE WB6 CIF“**

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In 2021, WB6 CIF has implemented planned activities within the EU funded project “Support to the WB6 CIF” and almost 5000 Western Balkans companies participated in different events or initiatives launched by WB6 CIF - free online seminars, consultative meetings, promotional events, etc.

WP1: Supporting WB6 CIF in taking up its role in the public-private dialogue related to the establishment of REA

- [Activity 1.1. Increasing capacities of the WB6 CIF in advocating the interests of the business community](#)

Deliverable 1 - Mapping of suppliers from the WB, as part of the activities in the Supplier Development Program (point 8.2 of the CRM AP)

In 2021, more than 2100 Western Balkans companies-investors and potential suppliers, have been mapped and included in the Market Access Database (Activity 3.1) in order to foster creation of new regional supply chains and include them in the WB6 CIF activities related to the Regional Supplier Development Program.

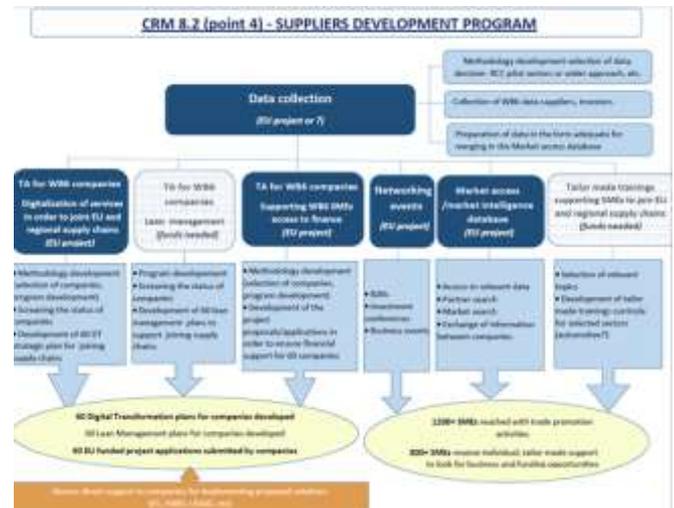
The database contains the relevant data about potential suppliers in four sectors:

- light manufacturing (including electrical and electronic systems and elements of electronic and electrical systems) – in total 1140 companies
- automotive industry (including devices and components for the automotive industry-plastics, rubber, machinery/equipment) – in total 264 companies
- agrofood – in total 700 companies
- circular economy (as a horizontal topic);

Data that have been collected are: basic company data, data on production capacities (key products, key applied technologies, applied certificates, position in the supply chain, countries in which they export, etc), financial data, product capacity (for each HS code), specific product details, etc. Additionally, 38 clusters in the same sectors have been mapped.

This database will be used for further development and implementation of services for companies/potential suppliers (within Regional Supplier Development Program), such as:

- Technical assistance - Digitalization of services to enable 60 selected companies from the database to join EU and regional supply chains.
- Technical assistance - Supporting WB6 SMEs access to finance
- Participation in different networking events, etc



o **Deliverable 2 - Measurement of CRM AP Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

In order to contribute to the successful realization of the Action Plan 2021-2024 for the Common Regional Market (CRM AP), WB6 CIF and its Business Council committed to monitoring and documenting the tangible progress as felt by the business community of the region through annual progress reports. The reports present an analysis of the state of implementation of the CRM AP and look at the way the common market functions in practice, in particular in key areas and for key market actors, from the viewpoint of the business community. This will help all stakeholders and policy makers – at regional and national level – to assess the effects of policy actions already undertaken, and to identify the right priorities and better respond to the needs of businesses.

KPI is based on two available sources of data – economic analysis of key economic indicators and information gathered from the WB6 business community, whilst the evaluation is carried out as a two-level assessment, with level 1 assessing the status of the regulatory reform actions (adopted regulation, law, procedure, decision...) and level 2 whether, and to what degree, the new legislative framework (in the action points where regulatory actions have been implemented) is translated into benefits for business. As part of the preparatory actions, ahead of the different regulatory reform actions set out in the CRM AP and in anticipation of progress in implementing the set deliverables, WB6 CIF has prepared a short overview of the status of play in the Western Balkans 6 economies, in three aspects:

- I. Short analysis of the key economic indicators of WB6 economies, in the time frame 2014-2020;
- II. Baseline Indicators for the Overall Key Performance Indicators for the Regional Trade Area Segment of the Common Regional Market Action Plan;
- III. Results of the initial survey of the WB6 business community, offering main company insights in three KPI fields, related to the issues having the highest priority for the region’s business community;

The first progress report has been published at the beginning of July 2021 ahead of the Berlin Summit, while the second report in 2021 has been presented in the occasion of CEFTA week in December 2021.

- **March 19th 2021 – Meeting with representatives of Montenegrin Government**

After the MB session held in Podgorica, CIF representatives held a meeting with the Montenegrin Government Minister of Finance and Social Welfare, Mr. Miloško Spajić and Minister of Economic Development, Mr. Jacob Milatović.



“The Government of Montenegro is committed to improve cooperation with the private sector, in the part related to the creation of trade policy, identification of economic priorities and understanding of its commercial interests in the process of formulating and implementing reforms. It is very important that we, as representatives of the Government, understand how Montenegro and the Montenegrin market are perceived by businessmen from the region.”, said Minister Spajić.

- **April 2021 – Support for the establishment of Green Corridors between CEFTA (WB6) and EU Member States**



WB6 CIF addressed to the Prime Ministers of neighboring countries including Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Greece and Romania bringing to their personal attention the joint proposal by the Transport Community and CEFTA Secretariat to establish green corridors/lanes between CEFTA/Western Balkans 6 and the EU Member States, supporting trade and transport facilitation and ensuring fast flow of goods in time of pandemics and beyond. WB6 CIF also addressed to the Western Balkans Prime Ministers and expressed the joint view of six chambers of commerce concerning the strengthening of the legal and institutional framework in order to make the implementation of the common market more efficient and effective. Being the representative of the regional business community, WB6 CIF is actively advocating for the establishment of four freedoms in the Western Balkans including free movement of people,

goods, services and capital.

- WB6 CIF Managing Board followed the situation related to COVID-19 outbreak and **proposed concrete measures to governments** in order to avoid additional delays or burden on companies (for example - The measure introduced by Germany, which applies to all persons entering this country which introduces the obligation to register and submit a negative COVID-19 test (in some cases referral to quarantine) starting from February 14, 2021, in practice has led to extremely complicated situations and great delays in the transport of goods and this question has been raised by the Managing Board in an open letter.)

- Latest information regarding the **current situation at border crossings** is published on WB6 CIF web site twice a day in cooperation with Milsped company.
 - [Activity 1.2. Establishing Platform for EU-WB6 business dialogue](#)

European Commission and the WB6 CIF launched the ‘WB6-EU Business Platform’ on a joint event held on **16 June 2021**, as a forum that brings together representatives of the Western Balkans’ business community and the European Commission to discuss challenges and opportunities for the region’s private sector. Such dialogue will help the business community to better understand the European Union, its laws and policies and help them prepare for the integration in the Single Market.

On the behalf of EC, Mr Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, stressed the importance of the initiative in order to enhance strategic cooperation and engagement with the business community of the Western Balkans. Members of the WB6 CIF Managing Board and Business Council raised several important issues related to the untapped opportunities for businesses in the region and called the EU to:

- Facilitate transport in order to ensure a fast flow of goods, eliminating excessive waiting times at the border crossing points between the Western Balkans and the EU, bringing the region closer to better managed borders and a ‘one-stop-go’ approach at border crossings;
- Support companies in implementing the Western Balkan Green Agenda and support their efforts towards greening their operations, for instance by introducing energy-efficiency improvements and extended use of hydrogen and biomass;
- Enhance support for the transfer of knowledge and know-how from the EU to the region. For instance, by creating more opportunities for partnerships, supporting the innovation and development efforts of local companies and contributing to stop the brain drain from the region;
- The Western Balkans business community underlines the importance of including the region into the implementation of the EU industrial strategy, as well as, the EU SME strategy to deepen integration with EU value chains.



April 19th 2021 – Consultative meeting on Steel Safeguard measures

WB6 CIF organized an online consultative meeting between representatives of the European Commission

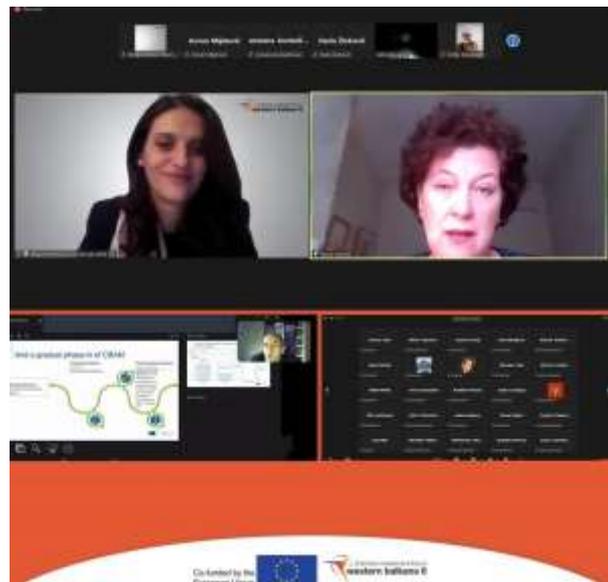


and more than 30 representatives of the main steel companies from the region. Companies had a chance to directly approach European Commission and present the consequences that proposed regulation will bring to the WB6 and EU companies. Based on the inputs received from companies, main conclusions and recommendations have been shared with decision makers in the European Commission in order to support WB6 companies endeavors to be exempted from the safeguard measures, in case they are extended after 30 June 2021.

December 16th 2021 - WB6 CIF – EU WORKING MEETING –The specificities of the proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism presented before WB private sector

The Western Balkan Six Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) in cooperation with the European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD)), successfully organized a working meeting on which the proposed outlines of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and its potential effects on the operations of WB private sector were discussed, with participation of more than 170 participants-representatives from WB companies.

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is part of the proposed measures under the “Fit for 55” package which will also directly affect the WB companies, which is designed with the idea to prevent the risk of carbon leakage and support the EU’s increased ambition on climate mitigation, while ensuring WTO compatibility. The proposal provides that the CBAM system will be phased in gradually and will initially apply only to a selected number of goods at high risk of carbon leakage: iron and steel, cement, fertilizers, aluminum and electricity generation. A reporting system will apply as from 2023 for those products with the objective of facilitating a smooth roll out and to facilitate dialogue with third countries, and importers will start paying a financial adjustment in 2026.



○ Activity 1.3-Organising trainings to support business community in yielding the benefits of the regional economic integration

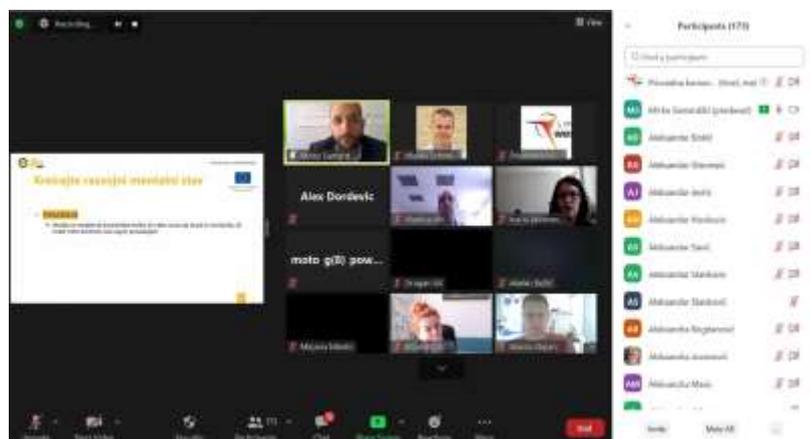
January 13th and 14th 2021 - The Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania has



successfully organized an online training on “**Access to Finance**”. Trainers presented: role of banks and financial institutions in overcoming COVID-19 crisis and supporting businesses with innovative products and services, new, support programs and mechanisms for SMEs in Albania, using electronic payment platforms to increase access to finance of companies, etc. More than 90 companies participated in the training.

April 26th and 27th 2021 – Companies showed big interest in the online seminar “**Conducting successful B2B business communication**” that has been organized by Chamber of Commerce and Industry of

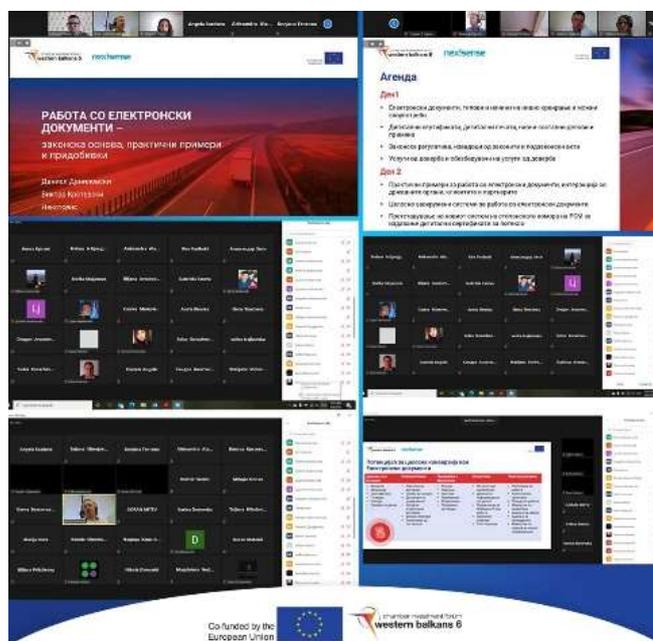
Serbia. More than 170 companies joined this two-day event. During the workshop, participants learned strategies and techniques that will help them to:



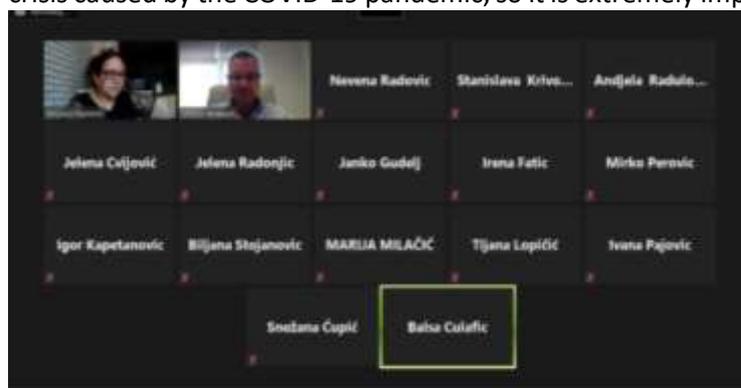
- be able to recognize the interlocutor’s communication style and how to adapt to it;
- learn how to prepare for an interview with a potential client and understand his needs;
- learn the elements of a successful business presentation
- understand what a developmental mental attitude is and how it is created;
- learn advanced communication techniques that will raise their credibility and create trust with the interlocutor;
- get useful tips for preparing and conducting B2B meetings in a virtual environment;

May 6th and 7th 2021 - The Economic Chamber of North Macedonia organized an online two-day seminar dedicated to the process of developing comprehensive digitalization – **“Working with electronic documents”**. Trainers presented complete electronic and paper-free operations by explaining the basic terms of electronic document, signature and seal, as well as time stamp, keeping and using electronic documents, and verification of the issued electronic documents. The training addressed the most important aspects of the latest regulations related to trust services, electronic documents, and electronic identifications.

The second day of the training was dedicated to the practical application of electronic documents in the everyday operation of the companies, including presentation of tools and technical solutions for creating and for signing electronic documents, as well as for electronic collaboration with partners or with state institutions. More than 70 companies actively participated in the seminar.



June 9th and 10th 2021 – Chamber of Economy of Montenegro organized free training **“Access to Finance for Small and Medium Companies and Start-Ups”** for approximately 30 interested companies. The problem with lack of information for access to finance was additionally expressed during the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, so it is extremely important to use all segments of support from



the state in order to overcome the problem companies face with during the crisis. This training is delivered to Montenegrin companies in order to identify all financing opportunities available in the domestic and international market that have not been adequately used by domestic SMEs or start-ups. Topics that have been presented are: Sources of funding with

special emphasis on credit sector, banks and investment and development fond of Montenegro, Models for support of overcoming the COVID-19 crisis, Potential sources of funding within new innovative legislation, Financial management and decision of investment activities and Growth of SMEs and startups with potential for funding it.

August 25th and 26th 2021 – Kosovo Chamber of Commerce organized free training „Export Procedures“ for more than 20 small and medium enterprises, self-employed and other persons who are in the process of implementation of creative ideas at the international market. Main discussion topics entitled for this training were related to Export potentials and importance for national economy, Main actors during customs procedures; Organization of export procedures, Steps in export procedures, Documentation needed for export, Actors to be engaged for export, etc.



○ **Activity 1.4- Facilitating the participation of the business representatives in the governance structure of the MAP REA**

WB6 CIF Secretary General, Tatjana Shterjova Duskovska, and delegated chambers' representatives participated in different CRM AP meetings and working groups organized by RCC, CEFTA and TCF. WB6 CIF took active role related to Regional Industrial and Innovation Area and Investments and presented deliverables within Regional Suppliers Development Program during the WB Berlin Summit. WB6 CIF presented achievements related to the CRM AP point 8.2 and plans during the three CRM AP coordinating meetings (on April 13th 2021, June 8th 2021 and November 30th 2021) to the national authorities present during the meetings.

Regular meetings with CEFTA, RCC, TCF and other stakeholders have been organized.

Preparation of the WB6 CIF inputs for the first Donor Coordination Meeting on the Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021-2024

The Donor Coordinating meeting on CRM 2021-2024 is convened with an objective to map and coordinate donor activities in WB6, as to facilitate the implementation of regional actions under CRM policy areas. The Donor Coordination meeting that was held on 7 May 2021, bringing together representatives of major donor organisations and international financial institutions, implementing agencies, regional initiatives, European Commission, beneficiaries and administrations from Western Balkans six economies. The meeting was organized with an objective



to map and coordinate donor activities in the Western Balkans, including current goals and objectives so

as to facilitate the implementation of regional actions under CRM policy areas as well as to help achieve a better alignment of regional government's priorities and donors' sectoral interventions.



WP2: Promoting the benefits of regional economic integration in the context of REA to the regional and foreign business community

- Activity 2.1-Creating promotion and information material (printed, electronic, etc) to disseminate information on potential benefits of regional economic integration, namely Regional Economic Area
 - Promotional [Brochure on Common Regional Market Action Plan \(CRM AP\)](#) for WB6 business community has been prepared, translated in all WB languages and published on WB6 CIF and chambers' web sites; printed versions have been shared during the Info days organized in CCIS and FTC B&H.
 - Promotional [Leaflet on Supply Chain Module](#) created within the Regional Supplier Development Program has been created, translated in all WB languages, published on WB6 CIF web site, printed and shared with chambers and during the Tirana International Fair

- Activity 2.2.-Organizing info days to disseminate information on potential benefits of the regional economic integration, namely REA

March 22nd 2021 - Info day on the topic **“Implementation of the Common Regional Market Action Plan (CRM AP) – Benefits and challenges for the business in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**, has been organized by Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FTC B&H). The event was attended by about 60 participants, representatives of companies, institutions and other organizations. Speakers presented the expected changes in legislation and its impact on the operations of companies in B&H, the measures that will be proposed to reduce trade costs, as well as methodology for following Key Performance Indicators

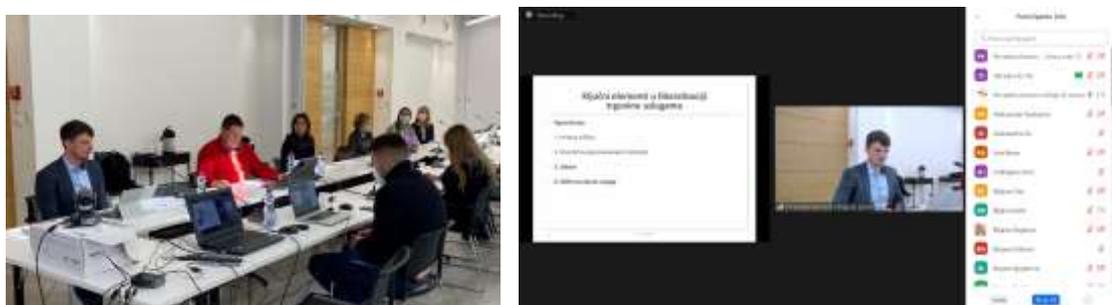
by the business community. Member of the WB6 CIF Business Council (Sarajevski Kiseljak) presented the expectations of the business sector.

May 12th 2021 – Info day on the topic “**WESTERN BALKANS AND SERBIA: Implementation of the Common Regional Market Action Plan: Benefits and Challenges**” will be organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia. The event will include representatives of the relevant regional organizations (RCC, CEFTA), national government officials and members of the WB6 Business Council (Elixir Group and Nelt Group)

June 3rd 2021 - Info day on the topic “**Western Balkans and Montenegro: Implementation of the Common Regional Market Action Plan: Benefits and Challenges**”, has been organized by Chamber of Economy of Montenegro. The event was attended by about 25 participants, representatives of companies, institutions and other organizations. Benefits of the CRM AP were presented by WB6 CIF and CEFTA representatives, as well as by representatives of the Fund for investments and development Montenegro, Ministry of economic development, and representative of the Pivara Trebjesa, member of teh WB6 CIF Business Council.



October 14th 2021 - Info day/presentation of the [CEFTA Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services](#) has been organized in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, in cooperation with WB6 CIF and the CEFTA Secretariat. More than 50 participants have joined the Workshop that was organized with the aim to



disseminate information about the progress in liberalization of services markets in CEFTA region. It is implemented as part of WB6 CIF efforts to reach out to businesses, SMEs in particular, with information that can help them either engage in cross-border business or improve their existing business experience while doing business in WB6.

October 25th 2021 - Info day/presentation of the [CEFTA Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services](#) has been organized in the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with WB6 CIF and CEFTA Secretariat. More than 60 representatives of the business community from Bosnia and Herzegovina joined this hybrid event and had a chance to raise questions and clarify open issues related to the implementation of the Protocol.



- [Activity 2.3- Organizing regional business competition](#)
To be implemented in year 2022

WP3: Delivering Chamber services that support regional business cooperation and investment

- [Activity 3.1. - Creating an on-line toolbox providing information on market access in the region](#)
 - ▶ **WB6 CIF Market Access Database**



In order to support intraregional and international trade and export of Western Balkans companies, WB6 CIF has developed a unique digital tool - Market Access database consisting of modules with different functions and roles which is available <https://www.market-access.wb6cif.eu/>.

Supply Chain Module, B2B, Event management and Supply and demand module within the database ensure future sustainability and companies/users are able to join Suppliers Development Program. Collected data about more than 2100 suppliers and investors from WB6 have been included as components within Supply Chain Module of the database. Supply Chain Module aims to connect the WB6 companies which are interested in participating in global and regional supply chains with multinational

corporations (MNC) looking for new suppliers from the Western Balkans region. Database enables partner search and exchange of data between companies. In the next period activities will be focused on further promotion of the database and each chamber is in charge for verification of companies from their economy.

○ [Activity 3.2.- Organising business-to-business or business-to-finance events](#)

Conference and B2B event on construction industry in WB6 (including green and circular economy)

September 15th and 16th 2021 - The Conference and B2B meetings “Construction and Infrastructure in the Western Balkan 6” has been organized by the WB6 CIF and Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with chambers in the region and Enterprise Europe Network, in hybrid form in Sarajevo. The event was organized with the aim to bring together companies in order to improve conditions for increasing business opportunities in the WB6 region. Moreover, this activity gathered together all relevant stakeholders in this field and emphasized the importance of the circular economy. More than 80 participants joined this event.



Panellists/experts in these fields of industry commented on challenges that local companies face, including their experience in posting workers, trade in construction materials and recognition of the certificates. They presented opportunities, benefits and implemented elements of circular economy in their business, sharing/presenting their positive examples and benefits.

Separate panel has been dedicated

to presentation of the current and upcoming Investment and Infrastructure projects in the WB6 Region (Road and Railway projects, Renewable energy projects, Industrial zones etc). Panelists were eminent experts and managers from R&T Group, Albania, GRANIT AD, North Macedonia, ADING AD Skopje, North Macedonia, Euro-asfalt, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Set (System Engineering Team) Serbia, C&M Albania, Civil Engineering Institute North Macedonia, InfraTrans Project Albania, Bosman Bosnia and Herzegovina, Public Enterprise Roads of Serbia, as well as representatives of the relevant Ministries from WB6 economies and chambers of commerce.



B2B event on food processing industry in WB6, Tirana International Fair

December 2nd and 3rd 2021 – During the International Trade Fair in Tirana WB6 CIF (Activity 4.1) has organized [B2B events with 30 SMEs from food processing industries and 6 big distributing chains.](#), jointly

with European Enterprise Network. Companies had more than 150 meetings among themselves and with other participants in the Fair. They have exchanged contacts and information about their products, while distribution chains and retailers presented the possibilities for further cooperation.



WP4: Setting up and delivering regional services seeking to support SME competitiveness and access to finance

○ **Activity 4.1. Joint stands in international fairs and/or business events**

a. WB6 CIF activities during Digital Summit in Podgorica - Regional Cooperation Program for IT Start-ups and small companies

October 11th - October 13th 2021 - WB6 CIF published an open call and selected 30 small companies (start-ups) from WB6 region that participated in tailor made Regional Cooperation program. Program has been organized as a side event during the 4th Western Balkans Digital Summit 2021 in Podgorica, Montenegro. Panel discussion “Financing opportunities – main pillar for building successful start-up ecosystem” gathered eminent speakers that presented funding possibilities from venture capital firms, loans, angel investors, grants and accelerator programs to 3Fs (friends, family and fools).



During the second panel “Smart Business Tools and Solutions for WB companies”, WB6 CIF presented potentials for IT companies related to the usage of Market access database, while chambers presented achievements in terms of available digital solutions.

Two trainings have been organized “Start-up Life Cycle – from idea to maturity” and “Start-up Life without filters” have been organized in order to present Example of successful IT start-up as well as Common mistakes, bad decisions, wrong partnerships.

As a follow up of the event IT solutions from companies have been gathered and included in the digital catalogue <https://ecatalogue.wb6cif.eu/regional-cooperation-program-for-it-startups/> that will be further promoted.



b. WB6 CIF activities during International Trade Fair in Tirana – Joint participation and program for food processing SMEs from Western Balkans

December 1st- December 4th 2021 – WB6 CIF has organized joint participation of 30 SMEs food processing companies and 6 large retail chains/distributors from the Western Balkans in the Tirana International Fair 2021, which is the most important fair event in Albania and one of the most important events of this kind in the region. Tirana International Fair gives participants a unique opportunity to generate new business contacts and potential contracts, to get in touch with both buyers and suppliers, and to have already arranged meetings with new business partners from the Western Balkans economies, as well with companies from other European countries.

Companies that participated in the event have been selected via open call that has been promoted by all six chambers of commerce.

At the opening ceremony Mr Branko Azeski President of the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia and Deputy-Chairman of the Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum and the President of the Union of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Albania, Ms. Ines Mucostepa, addressed the participants. Representatives of SMEs engaged in the food production process held two sessions B2B meetings and two sessions of presentations and networking with the large retail chains from the region.



The possibilities for cooperation were presented by ESSI Group, Eco Market, Domaca Trgovina, DIS, Royal Food and Dauti Komerc.

In order to exchange information and contacts about all participants joint e-catalogue has been prepared <https://ecatalogue.wb6cif.eu/agri-food-companies/> .

This event opens the door to new business arrangements, and strengthening the economies of the WB6 countries. There was a significant interest between food production SMEs and distributors and large retail chains for further business cooperation and seizing the opportunities.

The number of companies from Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo at the fair in Tirana shows how much the companies are interested, and this event should make a great impact on the development of the WB6 economy.

The pavilion of WB6CIF – TIRANA INTERNATIONAL FAIR 2021 was visited by Mr. Fatmir Bytyqi – Deputy of the Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs, coordination of economic sectors and investments in the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. Mr. Bytyqi said that greater competitiveness in the Western Balkans, instead of creating competition between countries, means better cooperation, a stable and more attractive region, greater opportunities to attract investment and provide better jobs for all our citizens.



○ [Activity 4.2. TA to SMEs and the chambers for access to EU funds](#)

To be implemented in 2022

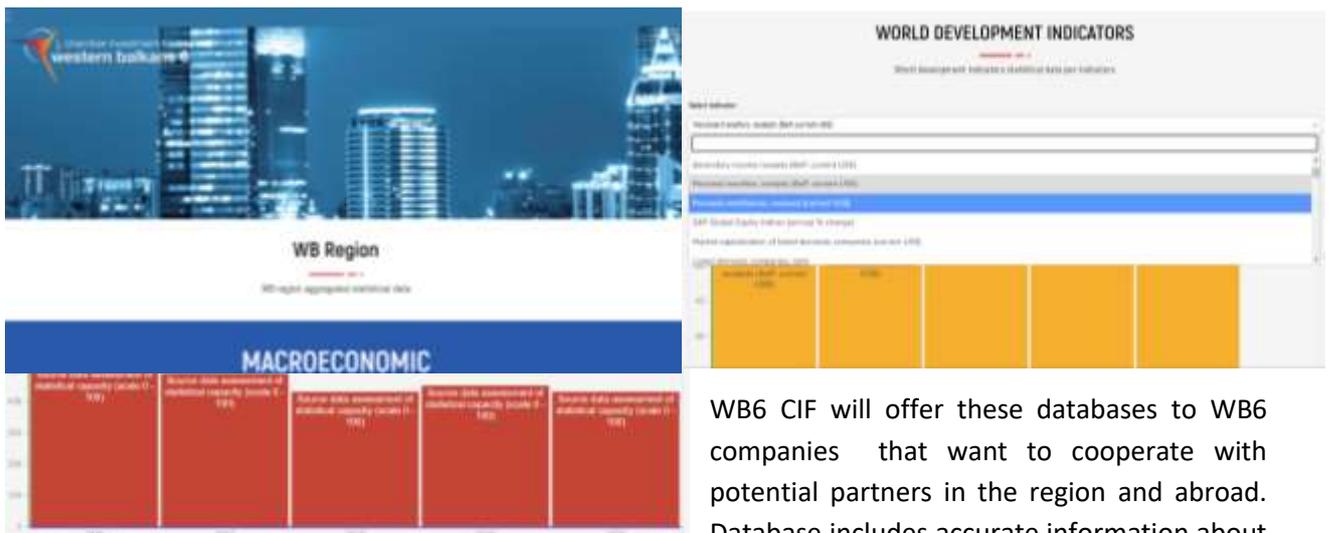
○ [Activity 4.3. Services to SMEs in European and global value chains](#)

To be implemented in 2022

○ [Activity 4.4. Creating market intelligence data-base for key product/market portfolios](#)

▶ **WB6 CIF Market Intelligence Database**

Market Intelligence Database will enable companies to analyze current export performance, evaluate the level of competition in the global market, assess the level of competition in a specific export market, identify new supplying markets, review opportunities for diversification in a specific market by comparing the demand for a set of similar or related products/services in the market under review, assess national trade performance and identify existing and potential bilateral trade with any partner country or region. This tool is in the final stage of testing.



WB6 CIF will offer these databases to WB6 companies that want to cooperate with potential partners in the region and abroad. Database includes accurate information about potential markets, will enable partner search and exchange of data between companies.

More concretely, the database provides the following information to companies and chambers in the region:

- list and description of all necessary documents and procedures for export / import per each individual WB country and per product
- basic information on rules of origin for exports / imports within the WB region and abroad
- information on general and specific requirements (only for certain products) for products traded within the WB6 region (sanitary, phytosanitary, veterinary, technical ...)
- list and value of internal taxes per each WB6 country and per product code.

The Market Intelligence Database enables companies to analyse current export performance, evaluate the level of competition in the global market, assess the level of competition in a specific export market, identify new supplying markets, review opportunities for diversification in a specific

market by comparing the demand for a set of similar or related products/services in the market under review, assess national trade performance and identify existing and potential bilateral trade with any partner country or region.

- **Activity 4.5. Organising investment conferences**

Due to COVID-19 this activity could not be implemented and needs to be changed

WP5: Building capacities of the Chamber Investment Forum and its members to promote regional economic integration and the competitiveness of local economies

- **Activity 5.1. Support to smooth functioning of WB6 CIF**

- a. 15th WB6 CIF Managing Board Meeting in Belgrade**

February 3rd 2021 - In the working session of the Managing Board ongoing and planned activities have been presented and operational issues discussed by the members of the WB6 CIF Managing Board.

From this meeting, the businesspeople from the Western Balkans forwarded a joint urgent request to their governments and political structures in the region to make efforts to ensure that business operations are carried out in the simplest possible way, and to turn to the future and the common regional cooperation. "Give the future to the citizens of the region, not the past", is the joint message of all Presidents of the Western Balkan chambers of commerce and industry to the governments of their respective countries.

The representatives of the business community require urgent elimination of all barriers to business operations, and normalization of relationships to the benefit of all citizens in the region. It was required from Bosnia and Herzegovina to abolish the visas and all other restrictions to free movement of citizens of Kosovo, by which the conditions would be met for mutual abolition of the current barriers by both sides. In addition, the recognition of registration plates, motor vehicle insurance and all other documents was required, which would enable full freedom of movement.

The Western Balkan chambers of commerce and industry also sent a clear message to the European Union about the necessity of adopting the visa liberalization for Kosovo and reminded the European Union that the visa liberalization was a turning point, and the biggest incentive to the economic development of all Western Balkan countries. Since 2009, after introduction of the visa liberalization for the Western Balkan countries, the trade of the region with the EU increased almost two and a half times. Preventing citizens and businesspeople from travelling freely is in direct contradiction with the basic values of the European Union.

It was jointly assessed that the initiative to abolish PCR test for travelling of citizens to the countries in the region, which was adopted at the initiative of the chambers of commerce and industry, had a large impact on business operations of companies.

b. 16th WB6 CIF Managing Board Meeting in Podgorica

February 3rd 2021 - In the working session of the Managing Board ongoing and planned activities have been presented and operational issues discussed by the members of the WB6 CIF Managing Board. WB6 CIF appointed a new Secretary General, Tatjana Sterjova Duskovska from the Chamber of Commerce of Northern Macedonia. With a new strength and fresh energy, CIF will continue to fulfill its mission and act as a key representative of the region's economy.

After the session, CIF representatives held a meeting with the Montenegrin Government Minister of Finance and Social Welfare, Mr. Milojko Spajić and Minister of Economic Development, Mr. Jacob Milatović.

It has been concluded that WB6 CIF has been a strong voice of the economy for which a regional cooperation has no alternative. It will continue to support creation of the Common Regional Market in accordance with the Action Plan adopted in Sofia. The visibility of CIF is being achieved and that imposes additional obligation on us to be more efficient and functional for our members and to react quickly to their requests.



c. 17th Managing Board Meeting of the WB6 CIF held in Belgrade - WB's economy taking action to attract investments



May 14th 2021 - In the open part of the meeting, the meeting was attended by **Mr. Fatmir Bytyqi**, Deputy Prime Minister in the Charge of Economic Affairs in Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, who emphasized that the Western Balkans should work together to make economies competitive in the global market because all economies face problems caused by the pandemic. One of the conclusions of the meeting was that the private sector of the Western Balkans, led by the WB6 CIF is preparing the largest action to attract investment in order to make the best use of the region's six economies in the post-covid period. The six Chambers of Commerce of the Western Balkans are working hard to prepare the most intensive action so far to attract investment to our region, to promote the region as an investment destination and to promote the export of our products to important world markets.

d. 18th Managing Board Meeting of the WB6 CIF held in Budapest

November 3rd 2021 – Managing Board meeting has been organized on the margins of the Roundtable discussion “Perspectives of Regional Cooperation in the View of Economic Reopening”-Visegrad Group and Western Balkan with the participation of V4 and WB6 Chambers’ presidents and representatives. During the roundtable Joint Declaration has been signed between V4 chambers of commerce and WB6 CIF.

In the working session of the Managing Board ongoing and planned activities have been presented and operational issues discussed by the members of the WB6 CIF Managing Board.



○ **Activity 5.2. Secondment programme**

Secondment program has been implemented all year round. Andela Rajic (FTC B&H), Natasa Janevska (ECNM) and Vladimir Tomic (CEM) have been engaged as secondees in 2021.

○ **Activity 5.3. Eurochambres academies**

Due to COVID-19 this activity cannot be implemented with Eurochambres since their internal procedures restrict travelling. This activity will be proposed for change.

WP6: Providing support to inter-chamber dialogue between CCI Serbia and CCI Kosovo

○ **Activity 6.1-Organising meetings in the framework of the dialogue between CCI Serbia and CCI Kosovo**

This activity has not been implemented and will be proposed for change.

○ **Activity 6.2- Restoration and promotion of trade relations in the region**

This activity has not been implemented and will be proposed for change.