

NOTICE OF COOPERATION

PLATFORM IN SUPPORT OF COAL REGIONS IN TRANSITION: WESTERN BALKANS AND UKRAINE

BACKGROUND

In September 2019, stakeholders gathered at the College of Europe in Natolin, to discuss preliminary ideas on supporting energy transition in coal regions of Western Balkans and Ukraine. The notion of a dedicated form of support to coal regions in these transitioning energy economies was well-received. Following this first meeting, [the College of Europe \(Natolin campus\)](#), [the Energy Community Secretariat](#), [the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#), [the European Commission](#), the Government of Poland, and [the World Bank](#) (collectively referred to as the “Principals”) worked on development of a platform to provide dedicated support to coal regions in Western Balkans and Ukraine.

Building on the membership in the Energy Community and lessons learned from the European Commission’s “Coal Regions in Transition Initiative,” the Platform in Support of Coal Regions in Transition in Western Balkans and Ukraine (henceforth referred to as “the Platform Initiative”) will have a wider scope, offering more opportunities outside physical platform meetings for stakeholders to exchange ideas and knowledge. In addition, due to COVID-19, knowledge offerings have been adjusted to reflect more online learning opportunities.

The notice serves to describe for the public and interested parties the basis of the Platform Initiative.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The Platform Initiative for Western Balkans and Ukraine is a joint effort of the Principals, who are working together on cooperation with partners in the Western Balkans and Ukraine to deliver knowledge to coal regions and governments, principally through face-to-face meetings and the Coal Regions in Transition Learning Academy. Knowledge to be delivered pertains to planning and preparing for transition.

In addition, the Platform Initiative will bring financial resources to assist selected regions in identifying and implementing pilot projects. The Platform Initiative will also support other forms of peer learning. The establishment of the Platform Initiative aims to facilitate the development of transition strategies and projects to kick start the transition process in the coal-dependent regions

The Platform Initiative has five areas of cooperation:

1. **Knowledge-sharing platform meetings** where stakeholders can come together to share and compare experience, receive formal and informal education in the design of comprehensive transition strategies and identification of pilot projects, prepare inter-regional project-consortia and participate in study tours.
2. **EU-Western Balkans and Ukraine coal regions twinning** will be based on formal twinning with the EC “Coal Regions in Transition Initiative” to ensure linkage between the two initiatives. In addition, regional twinning programs could be put in place to allow for peer-to-peer sharing of experience and knowledge.
3. **Coal Regions Learning Academy** will formalize the dissemination of good practices, better exchange of experience by means of case studies, as well as equip regional delegations with the institutional and professional capacities to better manage transition. Specialized learning

opportunities will be provided in non-degree e-learning courses spanning the full suite of issues such as: (a) Governance arrangements, (b) Assisting People and Communities, (c) Environmental Reclamation and Repurposing Land and Assets, and (d) Inclusiveness and Communication.

4. **Technical assistance for pilot coal regions** will support participating coal-regions that have decided to undertake transition. Country-level engagement will take place at planning, policy and project level. This could include “integrated” planning related to specific issues in target regions, such as Transition Road Maps, design of specific policy interventions or legislative changes, and project specific technical assistance to design and implement specific projects consistent with national energy and climate plans.
5. **Financing transition projects and programs** to facilitate the systematic collation and discussion of project proposals, especially in the context of funding/ financing needs and structuring aspects. This could be linked to required investment activities set out as a result of component 4; or independent projects presented by regions that meet specific criteria.

The Platform Initiative is built on the concepts of inclusion, stakeholder engagement and “Just Transition”, which depend upon wide stakeholder consultations and dialogue in coal regions, as well as with national government and private sector actors. Groups envisaged as key participants in the Platform Initiative include:

- State, regional and local authorities (ministries, chambers of commerce, development agencies and funds, regional authorities, municipalities);
- Coal and coal-based industry (including electricity production); energy-/GHG-intense industry in those regions,
- Relevant civil society and citizens’ associations;
- Trade unions/social partners;
- Academic institutions.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE PLATFORM INITIATIVE

The Platform Initiative is led by the World Bank, with the political leadership from the European Commission (DG ENER, DG NEAR) and conceptual support on economic transition from the Government of Poland, the former COP24 Presidency.

The Energy Community Secretariat will provide input and ensure consistency of the planned activities in the coal mining regions in Western Balkans and Ukraine with national plans related to coal use, if applicable, and reforms of the energy system.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will coordinate the work on, and provide financing for, transition projects and programs. This does not preclude other Principals from financing projects and programs as well.

The College of Europe in Natolin is the institutional host of the Learning Academy and alongside the other partners, define and execute the academy’s activities.

The Principals shall ensure structure, program and, where possible, funding necessary to implement the objectives of the initiative.

A Technical Secretariat will debut in January 2021 to run the day-to-day operations of the Platform Initiative. This will include forming an outreach group to consult and liaise with various stakeholders of interest to the Platform Initiative.



For further information with respect to the Platform Initiative, kindly reach out to:
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