



## Press Release

Luxembourg, 12 May 2020

# The European Investment Advisory Hub: yet to achieve its full investment-boosting potential, say auditors

Launched in 2015 as part of the Investment Plan for Europe, the European Investment Advisory Hub offers technical support to EU project promoters. According to a new report by the European Court of Auditors, beneficiaries are satisfied with the Hub's advisory services. However, it has not yet achieved its full potential to boost investment in the EU, mainly due to an insufficiently clear strategy for targeting support where it could add most value.

The European Investment Advisory Hub operates as a partnership between the Commission and the European Investment Bank and works in cooperation with national promotional banks or institutions (NPBIs) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Between 2015 and 2018, the Hub received 1091 requests for support – less than one request per day on average. These came directly from project promoters via the Hub's website or from other institutional sources (other EIB departments, the EBRD, NPBIs and the Commission). Only 285 (26%) of these requests led to allocations ('assignments') of Hub resources or advice to public and private sector beneficiaries. As a result, during its first three and a half years in operation, the Hub only used just over a quarter of its available funding from the EU budget. The auditors therefore concluded that, although beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the services provided, there had not been enough assignments to have a significant impact in boosting investment in EU projects. Furthermore, they found the Hub did not have a sufficiently clear strategy – nor effective criteria, priorities and procedures – for targeting support.

*"The European Investment Advisory Hub was one of the main measures taken following the economic crisis to boost investment in the EU, but it faced some strategy and implementation issues", said Annemie Turtelboom, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. "The new InvestEU advisory hub proposed for the 2021-2027 programme period should focus resources on clearly targeted and defined needs, improve outreach of its activities and ensure appropriate monitoring".*

*The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' special report. The full report is on [eca.europa.eu](https://eca.europa.eu).*

## ECA Press

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The auditors also examined the progress of cooperation with partners at local level, a key factor in enabling the Hub to address specific advisory needs in different Member States. Agreements with local partner institutions were slow to materialise, due to legal complexity and varying local capacity to collaborate. This led to uneven geographical coverage in both the demand for and the delivery of Hub services.

The report contains a number of recommendations for the remaining lifetime of the Hub, and for the transition to the new InvestEU initiative. In particular, it recommends:

- further developing cooperation with NPBI's to improve local access to Hub services;
- setting priorities and specific criteria for assessing the value of advisory support, including additionality (i.e. providing services not already available under other EU programmes), type of support, potential impact on investment, and sectors and geographical areas;
- enhancing screening procedures for assessing the value of potential assignments, to maximise the Hub's contribution; and
- building on the experience acquired over the 2015-2020 period to assess needs and demand for InvestEU, and to develop an appropriate performance monitoring framework covering the costs and benefits of providing advisory services.

The European Court of Auditors is holding a conference in October 2020 in Brussels on how to boost investment in the EU through financial instruments and technical assistance in times of crisis. More information will follow in due course.

### Notes to Editors

The European Investment Advisory Hub is the third largest source of EU technical assistance in the form of advisory services; the two largest are Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) and European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA). The EU budget covers 75 % of the Hub's annual budget, up to €20 million, with the EIB covering the remaining 25 % up to €6.6 million. Today's report presents findings on the Hub's activities from its launch in 2015 up until December 2018.

On a similar note, the auditors published the special report [European Fund for Strategic Investments: Action needed to make EFSI a full success](#) in 2019, and the special report [Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions \(JASPERS\) – time for better targeting](#) in 2018.

Special report 12/2020 "The European Investment Advisory Hub - Launched to boost investment in the EU, the Hub's impact remains limited" is available on the ECA's website in 23 languages.

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### **ECA measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

*The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has taken the necessary steps to be able to continue providing an effective public audit service in the EU, and to deliver timely audit reports, opinions and reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic, as far as this is possible in these challenging times. At the same time, we express our gratitude to all those who are working to save lives and fight the pandemic, in Luxembourg, in the EU and around the world. We also remain committed to supporting the Luxembourg government's policy on safeguarding public health. We are mitigating the effects of the ongoing health crisis on our staff and have taken precautions to minimise the risk to them and their families.*