

Albania's EU membership dependent on infrastructure

By Joe Sargent 2 September 2019



Consortium's goal is to strengthen Albania's potential for eventual EU membership

Hill International, a US-based construction consultant, has been selected by the European Union (EU) to lead a consortium that boost Albania's capabilities in planning and implementing infrastructure projects.

Albania is not currently part of the EU, but the goal is to strengthen the government's major-project potential and improve accountability in preparation for eventual EU membership.

The consortium, headed up by Hill, consists of Deloitte Albania and LDK consultants.

It is hoped that the consortium will improve connectivity within the country and further reaches of the Western Balkan Region.

The scope of the project includes assisting State administration by maintaining a standard investment prioritisation methodology, including the process of selection, prioritisation, assessment of viability and sustainability, and development of infrastructure projects.

This includes the National Single Project Pipeline (NSPP) and Sector Single Project Pipelines (SSPP).

The program also intends to enhance the State's training for staff across ministries and agencies involved in feasibility assessments, planning, design, procurement, implementation, and monitoring of infrastructure projects.

EU member states are currently considering whether or not to open talks that would discuss the expansion of the EU to include Albania. Some EU countries, however, oppose the talks because of concern over organised crime and corruption.

Manolis Sigalas, Hill's vice president and managing director for southern Europe, believes in Albania's potential saying, "We share the vision to support the Republic of Albania to enter into a new era of development and sustainable growth, hence triggering several benefits to the Albanian economy as a whole and promoting regional cooperation.

"We are committed to working hard as a team with all stakeholders involved in this significant program, transferring international know-how, and, importantly, developing the local talent."