

Article – Olivér Várhelyi (Hungary)



Current language: EN – English

Malawi: EIB partners with FDH Bank to expand private sector financing and confirms new agriculture investment scheme

- Private sector investment across Malawi to benefit from new EUR 7 million lending programme
- FDH Bank agree first joint credit line with European Investment Bank
- First partnership with EIB agreed at Africa Investment Forum
- EIB confirms new scheme to transform agricultural investment in Malawi

The European Investment Bank and FDH Bank today formally agreed their first loan agreement that will support private sector investment across Malawi. Entrepreneurs and private business across the country will benefit from a new EUR 7 million credit line managed by the leading local financial services provider and backed a EUR 3.5 million loan from the long-term lending institution of the European Union. Plans for a pioneering financing programme to promote sustainable agriculture investment across Malawi have also been confirmed.

The EUR 3.5 million European Investment Bank loan to support the FDH Bank

credit line was formally signed at the Africa Investment Forum in Johannesburg by Ambroise Fayolle, European Investment Bank Vice President and Patricia Hamisi, Senior Manager Treasury and Trade Finance at FDH Bank.

“Ensuring access to finance by small business and agriculture are key for economic growth, job creation and sustainable development across Africa. The European Investment Bank is committed to supporting private sector investment in Malawi and pleased to agree our first joint lending programme with FDH Bank that is available from today. Looking ahead I can confirm that early next year we will launch an innovative initiative to tackle barriers holding back agricultural investment in Malawi and that has already been recognised as a model for high-impact private sector financing elsewhere in Africa.” said Ambroise Fayolle, European Investment Bank Vice President.

“The European Investment Bank has a unique technical and financial experience of supporting private sector investment across Africa and worldwide. FDH Bank is pleased to partner with the EIB to strengthen financing for business and entrepreneurial investment across Malawi. The EUR 3.5 million EIB support for the new EUR 7 million credit line demonstrates a vote of confidence for FDH and Malawi. We look forward to expanding our cooperation to benefit small holders, agriculture and agribusiness in rural districts across our country under a new scheme to be launched next year.” said Thomson Mpinganjira, Executive board member and Managing Director of FDH Bank Limited.

Ensuring access to finance for sustainable development

The new EUR 7 million credit line will support new private sector investment across a range of sectors and be provided through the FDH Branch network across Malawi.

The new Malawi credit line is part of a EUR 100 million private sector financing programme across Southern Africa supported by the European Investment Bank.

Kulima initiative to transform agriculture and smallholder investment confirmed

Economic opportunities for thousands of small holders across Malawi are expected to be transformed under a new initiative to ensure dedicated support for long-term investment by agriculture companies in the country.

FDH Bank has been selected as the first bank in Malawi that will finance smallholder, agriculture and agribusiness investment under a new scheme that is currently being finalised and expected to be launched early next year. Other financial institutions are expected to join later.

The new Kulima programme will help agriculture companies to modernise and harness the full economic, employment and export potential of agriculture as well as expand business with local smallholders. The new agriculture financing initiative will address the gap of long-term funding in the agricultural sector identified as a key barrier to economic growth in Malawi.

European Union support for agricultural and sustainable development in Malawi

The agricultural financing scheme has been designed to tackle specific investment gaps currently hindering expansion in the sector. This is part of a broader European Commission programme to promote farming in Malawi and promote sustainable agricultural growth.

This is expected to strengthen agriculture in Malawi and increase income, employment and food security in the context of a changing climate.

Unlocking long-term investment to strengthen agriculture across Malawi

Agriculture is the leading source of economic activity, employment and exports in Malawi. Agriculture contributes directly and indirectly to 65% of all jobs in the country.

The new initiative is designed to increase investment activity by agricultural companies and by making available funding in Malawi Kwacha will mitigate against exposure to foreign exchange risks that currently hinder agriculture investment.

Improving specialist banking support for agriculture in Malawi

The impact of the new Kulima Agriculture Value Chain Facility will be strengthened by a dedicated technical assistance programme.

This will improve financial assessment and monitoring of long-term agriculture investment by local banks.

Article – Adina Vălean (Romania)



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Guinea: USD 30 million EIB backing for telecom project

- **More reliable communications for 7.5 million Orange Guinée customers in West African country**
- **Mobile phone access to be expanded to previously unconnected remote rural areas**
- **1500 telecom towers to use solar power and battery storage to reduce significantly diesel consumption and 1700 new jobs to be created**

The European Investment Bank today confirmed its support to transformational telecom investment across Guinea. A new USD 30 million long-term loan with IPT Powertech Guinea represents the first ever support for an energy services company in Africa by Europe's long-term lending institution and the first EIB investment to reduce use of diesel generators by energy-efficient sources for telecom infrastructure.

The 8 year-loan that will enable renewable energy and battery power and reduce diesel consumption for Orange Guinée towers across Guinea was formally agreed at the Africa Investment Forum in Johannesburg by Ambroise Fayolle, Vice President of the European Investment Bank and Mohamad Khalad Al Haffar Al Habbal, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of IPT Powertech Group.

"Developing and improving ICT will contribute to accelerate results in the sustainable development of the education, health, agriculture and energy sectors, all crucial for a better future for Guinea. It is to be noted that this trend in digitalization and new technologies applies of course to all our continent, which will create more employment for young people and women." said H.E. Moustapha Mamy Diaby, Minister of Post, Telecommunications and the Digital Economy of the Republic of Guinea.

"Ensuring access to reliable mobile telecommunications is key for economic and social activity and this visionary project will contribute to sustainable development for millions of people across Guinea. The European Investment Bank is pleased to agree USD 30 million support for new telecom investment in West Africa that will transform reliability, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and expand mobile coverage. This new partnership between the EU Bank and IPT Powertech Guinea represents a model for high impact telecom investment in Africa." said Ambroise Fayolle, Vice President of the European Investment Bank.

"IPT Powertech is committed to improving telecommunications infrastructure. The USD 30 million backing confirmed today with the European Investment Bank will accelerate our contribution to ensuring more reliable and clean energy telecommunications across Guinea." Khaled Habbal, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of IPT Powertech Group.

"Orange works with the European Investment Bank around the world and we welcome their support in this important project for telecoms connectivity in

Guinea. Thanks to this investment, over 7.5 million customers stand to benefit from improved access to Orange's telecoms infrastructure with green energy in the entire country. In addition, this project will help us to achieve our sustainable development goals, clearly illustrating how energy efficiency can cut carbon emissions from the telecom sector," Aboubacar Sadikh Diop, CEO of Orange Guinée.

"This visionary telecommunications and energy efficiency project will improve the lives of people across Guinea and demonstrates the benefit of close cooperation between Guinean and European partners. I congratulate partners in Guinea and the European Investment Bank, as well as other European and international partners for their engagement." Ambassador Josep Coll, Head of the European Union Delegation to Guinea.

Ensuring and expanding reliable communications

The new project will ensure more reliable energy supply for 1,500 Orange Telecom towers across Guinea. At present mobile phone services can be unavailable for 4 hours a day due to power shortages.

New investment by IPT Powertech, backed by the EIB, will also support construction of 250 new energy efficient mobile communications towers that will enable telecom coverage to be provided for the first time to remote rural regions.

Cutting use of fossil fuels and risk of theft

Replacement of fossil-fuel diesel generators and air conditioning units with solar panels and battery technology will also reduce the risk of damage caused by diesel theft from telecom towers in remote locations.

The project is expected to enable energy saving of more than 75% to be achieved and contribute to a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Unlocking sustainable development, economic and social benefits

Across Africa and around the world mobile connectivity has transformed the lives of billions of people and quality of life improved as people gain access to mobile technology. In Guinea for many people mobile is the primary channel for accessing the internet and life-enhancing services.

This project will contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and help to reduce poverty, improve healthcare and education, and drive sustainable economic growth across Guinea.

European cooperation to strengthen high-impact telecom investment

Alongside the USD 30 million EIB loan financing the project will also be supported by DEG from Germany, Proparco from France and Finnfund from Finland.

Building on European Investment Bank telecom and energy efficiency engagement

across Africa

The European Investment Bank is the world's largest international public bank and last year provided more than EUR 3.3 billion for public and private sector investment across Africa.

In recent years the European Investment Bank has supported telecommunications investment in 14 Africa countries and financed telecom access between Africa and the rest of the world.

[Press release – Brexit: discussion on the state of play on Tuesday afternoon](#)



Parliament's Brexit coordinator [Guy Verhofstadt](#) (Renew Europe, BE) and [Antonio Tajani](#) (EPP, IT), Committee Chair and member of the Parliament's [Brexit Steering Group](#), will discuss the state of play on Brexit with [Constitutional Affairs Committee](#) MEPs.

This first debate on Brexit in the European Parliament following the recent "flexextension" decision forms part of the thorough and exhaustive scrutiny process that the text of the EU-UK deal requires. MEPs are expected to also discuss the latest developments in this regard.

Background

On 29 October 2019, the European Council accepted the request of the UK Prime Minister to extend the Article 50(3) TEU period until 31 January 2020, with the option that this period could end earlier should the ratification and consent procedure be completed earlier in both the United Kingdom and the European Parliament.

When: Tuesday 12 November – Around 15.00 – [meeting agenda](#)

Where: European Parliament, Brussels, Altiero Spinelli building, room 3G-3

You can watch the debate live [here](#)