



JASPERS

10 years of support
for cohesion policy



JASPERS: 10 years of support for cohesion policy

Werner Hoyer

President of the European Investment Bank



As part of its *Lending Blending Advising* strategy, the EIB Group provides advisory services to its clients and to public stakeholders in order to support project preparation and implementation, strengthen capacity building and disseminate best practices in fields relevant to EU policies. Advisory services constitute a key component of the Bank's value added. They complement lending and blending activities and enhance the Bank's impact on the real economy.

After ten years of activity, JASPERS has become a leading EIB-EC joint programme and a key part of the joint EIB-EC advisory offer with important synergies with other EC-funded advisory facilities. JASPERS has been chosen by DG REGIO as the main instrument for the bulk of its centrally funded technical assistance services in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

EC cohesion policy will make available up to EUR 325bn during the 2014-2020 MFF for the delivery of the EU 2020 goals in terms of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The EIB will be the natural co-financier for most of the projects financed through EU Cohesion Funds, due to its role as the EU bank and its proven technical expertise in these sectors.

Since its establishment in 1958, the European Investment Bank's main priority has been to support projects that promote balanced economic development across the Union, particularly in less developed regions. During almost sixty years of operations, the Bank has gained significant knowledge and experience in financing investment projects across a wide range of sectors. In doing so, it has often co-funded projects receiving Cohesion and Structural Funds, forging a very close working relationship with the Commission.

In its first ten years of existence, JASPERS has provided the EIB, working closely with the Commission, the EBRD and, between 2008 and 2013, also KfW, with another route to share its expertise for the benefit of the Member States which joined the EU after 2004.

Recently, JASPERS has enlarged its geographical scope to the benefit of the so-called old Member States and three Candidate Countries. The Knowledge and Competence Centre is accessible to all Member States and Candidate Countries. JASPERS is active in those Member States which have requested assistance (France, Greece and Italy) for the development of all categories of projects assisted by European Structural and Investment Funds. Other countries, such as Portugal or Spain, have expressed an interest and may follow soon. As the Independent Quality Reviewer of projects to be submitted to the Commission for grant finance, JASPERS makes its assistance available to all Member States and to the Commission for post-submission appraisal of all major projects after they have been directly presented to the EC for grant finance.

The EIB has also gained important benefits from the existence of JASPERS. For projects co-financed by the Bank and the EU budget, there is less resource-intensive appraisal required because the JASPERS preparation work is shared. A significant proportion of the projects supported by JASPERS are co-financed by the EIB. During the 2007-2013 MFF, the investment cost of projects co-financed by the Bank represented about half the cost of all major projects prepared with JASPERS support and approved by the EC (EUR 30bn out of a total of EUR 56bn).

The Commission and the EIB took an important strategic decision a decade ago to work more closely together for the benefit of the Member States, and JASPERS was one of the most important outcomes of this strengthened cooperation.

The partners in JASPERS are now building on its past achievements, and offering a wider range of services to the Member States. I have no doubt that JASPERS will adapt and continue to provide the same high quality service to the Member States and to the Commission as it has in the past.

Corina Crețu

European Commissioner for Regional Policy



Ten years have already elapsed since JASPERS was first established, during which time this brand has become for us all a familiar component of cohesion policy. I first began to learn about JASPERS when I was a member of the European Parliament. Being from one of the countries that benefited from JASPERS assistance, I was particularly interested in its activities. Many of us in the Parliament shared the view of the Commission and the partners in JASPERS that not all national administrations had the same long experience of developing major projects and that specialist assistance from experts could make a real difference to the quality of the investment which was urgently needed. JASPERS made sense then and it still does today.

From modest beginnings nearly a decade ago, JASPERS has become a key instrument of cohesion policy. Developing large infrastructure projects involves considerable complexity over a long period. The mix of skills and experience, and independence of judgement, that JASPERS brings is a unique resource which has made a real difference to the quality and also the speed with which new investment is implemented.

JASPERS will play a wider and more ambitious role in cohesion policy in the future. It will continue to act as an advisor to the Member States, increasingly starting from sectoral strategies to guide the choice of projects for development. This approach of "strategy first" and delivering higher value investment is completely in keeping with the Commission's priorities, so that Member States can obtain the greatest benefit from the Structural and Investment Funds.

Building on its successful experience, the Commission trusts JASPERS to take on new tasks in the future. For example, JASPERS can act as an independent appraisal body for major projects, providing expert reports on project proposals which the Commission can rely on. We expect JASPERS to work in more regions in more Member States than before and also to evaluate investment proposals on behalf of DG REGIO.

However, JASPERS has not only helped to deliver new projects, it has changed the way of doing things in many countries. Staff from national administrations and JASPERS experts have worked side by side on many major projects. This process of building up capacity within the Member States to handle the demands of large projects is an important part of JASPERS' work.

I have no doubt that JASPERS will meet the challenges ahead and will continue to make a major contribution to delivering projects that change people's lives. We should not forget that our policy is and will be judged on its ability to meet the needs of the people we are serving.

I wish JASPERS a happy birthday and good luck!

Jan Vapaavuori

Vice-President, EIB



JASPERS has had a huge impact on delivering better EU projects. It has spearheaded close to 1 000 completed projects as of today and widened the scope of advisory support over its ten years of existence to better cater for needs on the ground. Vast networks have been developed, and experience is shared amongst all its stakeholders.

However, the needs in terms of EU cohesion are enormous and we are still reminded every day of the regional disparities and the economic and social challenges around the corner. JASPERS therefore remains more than ever an important tool to assist EU projects.

If we look ahead into JASPERS' future, competitiveness and growth will remain key elements when assisting projects promoting the EU's economic recovery and thus contributing to a better standard of living for European citizens. In order to support the EU's recovery and to achieve the reduction of regional disparities as set out by the EU Treaty, the new architecture of JASPERS, with its advisory, project review and competence strands, will contribute to meeting the requirements of the current 2014-2020 programming period.

The JASPERS of tomorrow will continue to deliver in key sectors and will deepen and enhance its expertise in core sectors such as transport and the environment – taking into account horizontal activities like climate change, state aid and other transverse issues. At the same time, JASPERS will develop those sectors of activity that are amongst the younger ones in the portfolio – energy and smart development, which include: (i) education, training and health, (ii) research, development and innovation, (iii) information and communication technology/ICT (including broadband) and contributing to the digital agenda, and (iv) urban development, regeneration and smart cities.

I believe that JASPERS is ready to embrace the future and to deliver quality advisory services. It has evolved over the ten years of its existence in order to remain relevant to its stakeholders. It is now looking at further evolution over the next ten years in order to continue boosting competitiveness and growth.

JASPERS is a partnership, and as such it builds on an integrated approach, on synergies and on making the best use of the joint stakeholders' resources. This has been a winning concept and it must be maintained. In this context, JASPERS will continue to count on all your support to make this initiative thrive for at least another ten years.

Agustin Auria

Head of JASPERS



I heard of JASPERS for the first time in the middle of 2005, when Michel Deleau and Andreas Verykios told me about the creation of a new unit based on a partnership agreement between the EC, the EIB and the EBRD.

I immediately understood that this time it was something different: the assignment, setup and modus operandi of JASPERS wouldn't be business as usual. It was an opportunity for me to contribute to something new and innovative. For a person like me, vocationally oriented towards innovation, and with long-standing experience as a manager of innovation before joining the EIB, the new unit represented a unique opportunity to give the best of my skills, contributing to something unprecedented and deeply innovative. Needless to say this prospect made me enthusiastic, so I immediately made Michel and Andreas aware of my interest in working for JASPERS.

To be fair, I think I wasn't the only enthusiastic person in the small team of JASPERS pioneers. Patrick, Eckart, Steve, Mark, Brendan, Gerry, Agnes and Karin were also highly motivated. The high motivation of these colleagues, combined with a setup allowing JASPERS to enjoy a high degree of independence from the partners and autonomy in its relations with the beneficiary countries, enabled JASPERS to take off quickly and effectively. Fortunately the motivation of the staff, independence from the partners, and autonomy in the relations with the beneficiary countries that were the key to success, still remain at the heart of JASPERS today.

The start of JASPERS was rich in experiences for the core team. The negotiation, not always easy, of the Contribution Agreement, and the recruitment and integration of the staff, were unique opportunities for us

to demonstrate our flexibility and openness of mind, and contributed to increasing the cohesion of the core team. In Warsaw, Bucharest, Vienna and Luxembourg we had very intensive and pleasant working days, interviewing hundreds of candidates pre-selected from thousands of applications with the inestimable support of Patrick Everaerts. The opening of the offices in Warsaw, Bucharest and Vienna were the milestones for the effective launch of JASPERS operations. The positive performance evaluations of JASPERS confirmed its *raison d'être* and consolidated JASPERS as a world-class brand in the field of technical assistance. Credit is due to many people, most of whom will share their views with you in the pages of this publication. I would personally like to seize this opportunity to thank and recognise the invaluable contributions of Graham Meadows, Dirk Ahner, Walter Deffaa, Rudolf Niessler, Dorota Zaliwska, Antonio Gonçalves, Stefan Appel and Brendan Smyth of DG REGIO. I would also like to thank Michel Deleau for his good understanding and excellent setup of JASPERS, Vice-President Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen and the Presidents of the EIB Philippe Maystadt and Werner Hoyer for their continuous support and trust, and for appointing and confirming me as Director of JASPERS.

Many more things that are worth remembering rather than forgetting happened during the first ten years of JASPERS. The mutual trust and empathy between the management and the staff, as well as the geographical and human diversity of JASPERS, will stay in my memory as among the most inspirational and positive experiences of my life.



The EIB and the European Commission (DG REGIO) signed a "Contribution Agreement" on 18 July 2006 for JASPERS, the Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions programme.



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Graham Meadows

Special Advisor to the European Commission

The more policy becomes evidence-based, the more difficult it is to implement and administer. This is true everywhere, including the European Union.

Before JASPERS was born, EU cohesion policy and EIB investment policies were becoming characterised by delay, as national and regional administrations and investors wrestled with “unfamiliar” requirements like the priorities or measures in EU operational programmes, environmental impact assessments, EU regulatory requirements, and so on.

They were required to know and understand EU legislation and procedures and make necessary decisions within stringent timetables. This was proving difficult and was causing logjams.

Ten years ago, in the newly-enlarged Union – with two more countries about to join – EU and EIB policies were in danger of under-performing, their potential for transformative change and improved welfare of not being realised.

JASPERS was a simple idea. It said to member countries, regions and investors, “We can help you to save time in bringing your project to life and delivering its benefits to

people. We can take over your hassle with EU programmes, regulations, and requirements, so that you can devote more attention to the quality of your overall development effort. And you can trust us. We are as vitally concerned as you with what you are trying to achieve.”

And, since then, JASPERS has lifted the load off administrations – helping EU cohesion policy and the EIB to achieve more of their potential.

JASPERS has also helped to change the climate that surrounded the EU’s and EIB’s policies. There are still pressures for greater flexibility and simplification, rightly so. But there is also greater understanding that the administrative task of delivering evidence-based policy is complicated. And that a key part of success is to help administrators to develop and improve their talents and capacities.

But the success of JASPERS was by no means assured. It was born under a lucky star. A Commissioner, Danuta Hübner, who instinctively knew that people’s welfare would be improved quicker and further by more effective policy implementation. Presidents of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and of the European Investment Bank, Philippe Maystadt, who instantly recognised that two institutions working together could have a bigger impact than if they worked separately. And teams of devoted officials in the Bank and the Commission who brought the baby into the world, nursed it and helped it grow. And are still doing so.

Experience shows that the birth of an instrument like JASPERS is only one of the acts of creation that is required if it is to succeed. For it to function and evolve effectively, acts of creation are required every day, whenever and wherever the instrument is being used. JASPERS may have started life ten years ago but it is being reinvented today and will be reinvented again tomorrow. This is how it guarantees its utility to policy makers and, above all, to the people who are intended to benefit from the investments it helps to advance.



Bratislava wastewater treatment plant, Slovakia



Ronald Hall

Principal Advisor to the Director General,
Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy,
European Commission

JASPERS is now widely regarded as an unqualified success. From humble beginnings it has emerged to play a major role in reinforcing the administrative capacity of Member States in the management of large, often complex, investment projects. JASPERS has meant that many millions of EU citizens benefit from new infrastructure services in transport or the environment through the delivery on time of quality projects.

JASPERS started in the context of moves to bring together, into closer cooperation, the resources of the Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission (REGIO) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Another key player, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) came on board a little later.

The idea of JASPERS germinated in the course of a REGIO-EIB meeting in Brussels in 2005, in which I was leading for REGIO as Director. The meeting had been convened, somewhat bizarrely with hindsight, to talk about something completely different: it was called to discuss a new priority for the EU regional development programmes, 2007-2013: that of how to secure the aid of the EIB in order to increase the use of EU funds to establish non-grant, revolving funds rather than disbursing everything through grant aid (this idea later emerged in the form of the Jeremie, Jessica and Jasmine schemes).

The Director General of REGIO at the time, Graham Meadows, joined the meeting and with his first intervention more or less said, "I have another idea". He then proceeded to outline the problem of under-absorption of EU funds, an important part of which was linked to lack of administrative capacity in Member States to plan and implement big investment projects within an acceptable timeframe, and which conformed to all the EU and national legislation in force. There was no possible in-house solution to this challenge, which we estimated would require the equivalent of an extra Directorate in REGIO, unthinkable in the context of the human resource situation of the Commission at the time.

The rest, as they say, is history. The initial negotiations had something of a stop-start nature, and we in the REGIO negotiating team thought at one point that the EIB was unsure about JASPERS' prospects. But eventually the white smoke of an agreement emerged, with REGIO contributing funding for expert posts and the EIB contributing offices and qualified manpower. The JASPERS cooperation agreement was signed in 2005 by the European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, and EIB President, Philippe Maystadt. Both played a key role.

We learned later that Mr Maystadt had been a major force in re-energising the initial REGIO-EIB negotiations when they were moving too slowly. President Barroso, apart from offering his full support to the concept, should also be remembered as the person who, with a touch of genius, added the "S" to the end of JASPERS (it had been known as JASPER throughout the negotiations), in order to create an allusion to Karl Jaspers, a German philosopher who, among other things, is famous for a 1958 work calling for world political union, a confederation, in which the various entities could live and communicate in freedom and peace, precisely the aim of the European Union itself.

10 YEARS



Margret Bridge, Budapest, Hungary



Brendan Smyth

JASPERS Coordinator, DG Regional and Urban Policy,
European Commission

In Spring 2005 I was working on a major regional programme in Poland and also working part time on projects in DG AidCo. I was invited to work as a coordinator in DG REGIO to set up a joint initiative with the EIB. It was then no more than an idea and I was rather sceptical at first. However, I soon became convinced of the need for this initiative. Following the accession of ten countries in 2004, those of us who had worked on pre-accession support knew that it had produced encouraging results but we were also aware that there was a major challenge for the national administrations to make the best use of the greatly increased investment funds which were becoming available after accession. The complexity and scale of operations was about to jump to another level.

The idea of closer cooperation between the institutions involved in cohesion policy to assist what we then called the "new Member States" began to crystallise in 2005 into the radical and imaginative idea of long-term joint structures to go beyond the level of cooperation which existed before. We concluded that support for the development of major projects, a large and visible part of EU assistance, was a clear and practical way of increasing the effectiveness of cohesion policy. This was only one of a family of joint actions that reflected the new thinking about how EU institutions and others could work together.

The jump to a long-term structure involving several partner institutions was unprecedented and highly ambitious but do-able. The basic concept was clear but all of the details had to be worked out from scratch to make it operational. For example, the legal agreement required was derived from an AidCo model. In fact, JASPERS did not even have a name at the start. It started rather

vaguely as "joint initiative" then became "jasper", one of a group of "j-for-joint" actions, and later after a discussion between Presidents Barroso and Maystadt it became "JASPERS", named after the philosopher Karl Jaspers.

Technical assistance of the kind we envisaged requires an enormous hands-on effort, working closely with the national administrations. Finding and recruiting highly skilled and experienced staff for this task was one of the most rewarding parts of the initial work.

The next step was to convince the Member States that JASPERS would be genuinely useful to them. However, once JASPERS began to produce its first specialist reports, they became convinced of its value and a close and enduring working relationship developed.

The aim of the founders of JASPERS was to create an instrument which was practical and met a real need. JASPERS as it is today has succeeded far beyond what we had expected in the early days. JASPERS has grown and developed enormously over the last ten years and is a valuable resource for the future.





Jurbarkas, Lithuania

Thomas E. Hackett



Honorary Director General, European Lending, EIB

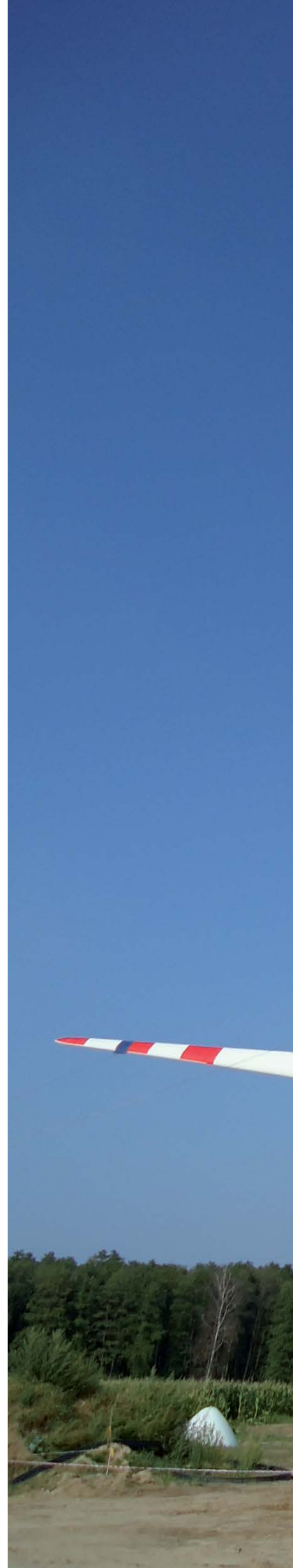
“Success has many fathers while failure is an orphan”

If any idea can demonstrate that saying's truth, it must be JASPERS. Despite a laborious birth and childhood, the struggling infant developed into sturdy adulthood in the short space of a decade, and found itself with a flourishing family tree. JASPERS has thrived, while its siblings, the other “Js” have been subsumed into the anonymity of “Financial Instruments”.

At the start, a group of colleagues from the Commission comprising Graham Meadows, Ronnie Hall, Brendan Smyth and George Kolivas faced Andreas Verykios, Dominique de Crayencour and myself. It took a while for us from the EIB to understand that the Commission side was asking the Bank to do something for which it was willing to pay. Nevertheless, the Commission wasn't prepared to pay for all the party and felt that since the Bank might be getting some benefit from being in on the ground floor, it too should contribute to the initiative.

And so the discussions started warily about what was being asked of whom and who was going to pay for what. In the background, the EBRD also seemed prepared, in the eyes of some of the Commission team, to respond more readily to this request. All the while back in Luxembourg, also among the Bank's decision-makers, the lengthy JASPERS negotiations with the Commission were seen with some scepticism. It took all Philippe Maystadt's negotiating skill and diplomacy to convince these doubters that JASPERS was worth the effort.

It was he who suggested passing the responsibility to PJ and Michel Deleau, so that JASPERS could survive sheltered from the sceptical scrutiny of his colleagues. During that transition, Pat Walsh took on the day-to-day care of this “Sorgenkind” to give it the better start that seemed unlikely at its birth and then Agustin Auria oversaw its transition into robust maturity. I may have telescoped events and have surely omitted significant players or parents but I hope they will forgive me and be justly proud of the achievements of JASPERS, to which they contributed, and which without them wouldn't have materialised.





Danuta Hübner

MEP, Chair of the Committee on Institutional Affairs,
European Parliament



The impact of an investment fund on growth depends not only on its scale but also on the efficiency of its use. This has always been true for cohesion policy investment. That is why the European Commission has been constantly looking for new, innovative, cooperative and sustainable approaches to the way the policy operates.

This approach has led the Commission to develop a number of new investment instruments in close cooperation with European financial institutions, and in particular with the European Investment Bank.

The EIB has brought additional experience and expertise into a series of new policy tools of particular relevance for the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and later. One of them, JASPERS, responded to the great challenge of overcoming the lack of experience of public administrations in preparing large infrastructure projects to be cofinanced under the cohesion policy. This challenge has been aggravated by a lack of capacity to facilitate public private partnerships in infrastructure or, indeed, to prepare environmental impact assessments, mandatory for large infrastructure projects.

It is true that the Member States that joined the EU in and after 2004 had some experience with the pre-accession funding instruments, in particular ISPA. But the Commission was aware of the fact that the greatly increased amount of assistance made available after accession represented a challenge of a different order and required additional technical support. It was also clear that developing public private partnerships was complex and that environmental impact assessment required a unique approach.

The need to address these gaps led the Commission and the EIB, supported by the EBRD and KfW, to launch jointly the Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions initiative – JASPERS.

JASPERS came as the first sibling of an entire "J" family of facilitating tools which made it possible, during the crisis and on the way to recovery, to better exploit the investment potential of the cohesion policy and speed up the implementation of its programmes on the ground. JASPERS helped to create confidence in the capacity of the new Member States to generate growth through Structural and Cohesion Funds in particular in the EU 12.

JASPERS has provided technical assistance but it delivered much more – by being a joint effort, it led to the shared commitment of all those involved to deliver an effective and efficient cohesion policy.





The decision on where the offices of JASPERS should be located proved not to be an easy one; neither was it clear at the beginning whether 58 experts was the right number to start with. Rather quickly, as soon as 2009, the need to expand the capacity of JASPERS, increasing it to 70 experts, proved that the technical assistance was useful and necessary.

As the Commissioner who introduced these new "J" tools to European cohesion policy, JASPERS has for me always been an example of how much more effective we, the European institutions, can be in achieving policy goals if we work together, sharing capacities and approaches. JASPERS pools contributions from the Commission and European financial institutions. Ten years of its functioning has also facilitated changes in public investment toward a culture of efficiency and cost effectiveness. It has encouraged those in charge of public investment to think in terms of bankable investment projects. JASPERS has certainly been a tool that brings to cohesion policy projects a business culture oriented towards efficiency, quality and economic viability. This means greater efficiency in the use of the EU budget.

JASPERS is an example of key elements of the 2006 reform of cohesion policy, aimed at using to a greater extent the experience and competence of the banking and private sectors in preparing and implementing big infrastructure projects. It has contributed in a sustainable way to developing competences and skills at national, regional and local level. It has operated in the areas of transport, energy and the environment. Today this makes us better prepared to implement the EFSI initiative.



Electrification and reconstruction of the Svilengrad-Turkish border railway project, Bulgaria



Guy Clausse

Dean of the EIB Institute



In late 2004 or early in 2005 Patrice Géraud and I had one of our regular EIB-DG REGIO cooperation meetings in Brussels and we met Graham Meadows, the then Director General. We discussed the ongoing cooperation scheme whereby EIB/PJ had been appraising (since 2000) a limited number of project applications for ERDF, even if the investments were not to be co-financed by EIB loans. Graham then outlined the surging needs with Eastern enlargement which meant that both the number of “large projects” to be appraised and the depth of such appraisals would increase strongly, without DG REGIO commanding the necessary resources. He therefore proposed that the EIB undertake this on behalf of DG REGIO.

Upon our return we discussed the basic idea with Michel Deleau, our DG of PJ, as well as Tom Hackett, DG of EU Lending Operations. The proposal implied nothing less than a quantum leap in the ongoing cooperation and the need to mobilise a multiple of the efforts so far deployed by the EIB in favour of DG REGIO. Various structures were tossed around and it rapidly became clear that we would need to create a dedicated group of experts to cope with the additional workload. Tom suggested “Jasper” as a name for the new initiative, and it seems that José Manuel Barroso, when briefed on the idea, added an “s” to it, given his esteem for the philosopher Karl Jaspers. When I made a first tentative calculation of how many people the EIB would need to delegate or recruit for Jaspers, I arrived at 27 for the launch and 40 for when it got up to speed. My colleagues looked in disbelief at what at that time seemed absurdly high staff figures...

As it turned out, JASPERS (by now with capital letters and a meaning for each one) gave rise to a family of “J-activities” (JESSICA, JEREMIE...); the EBRD and KfW were also brought on board and when the first formal JASPERS team was constituted in 2006, it numbered 16 staff members, to be increased the following year to 56.



Patrick Walsh

Director, Global Partners Department, EIB

Following that now famous restaurant meeting in Brussels between Tom Hackett and Graham in mid-2005, when the idea of JASPERS was allegedly formulated, I was asked that September by President Maystadt if I would be interested in heading up the new creature.

I of course said yes, and so began, for me, an almost four-year long journey, till I was then asked to return to my first love at the EIB, financing operations outside the EU, in May 2009.

Looking back now, I can say it was probably the most satisfying, if challenging, four years that I have spent in the EIB, since I decided to join the Bank (like most people) "for two years" back in 1983...

Starting off in October 2005 with a small team of some five colleagues (Agustín, Steve, Eckhart, Ann-Louise and myself, helped by others soon after-

wards), we rolled up our sleeves and got to work with our good friends in DG REGIO, Brendan, Ronnie, Graham and many others, and, luckily for us, Gerry Muscat, who was then working for the EBRD in London.

Over a period of two years, we installed ourselves in a new building near Luxembourg Airport. In this respect, I believe that being away from EIB headquarters helped us to establish a "JASPERS identity and brand" – which gave us a certain independence and autonomy needed at that time. Following numerous meetings with our in-house legal and other colleagues, both in Luxembourg and in Brussels, and our counterparts from DG REGIO, the EBRD (and also KfW, which also came on board at that time) we managed to get JASPERS on the road, by recruiting some 50 experts from around the EU, by opening regional offices in Warsaw, Vienna and Bucharest (and a small satellite office in Sofia), and by putting in place a Steering Committee, composed of eminent representatives from the founding partners of JASPERS.

Nowadays, JASPERS has come of age and grown into a vital instrument for helping the then "new" Member States, and other countries that have in the meantime received help from JASPERS, now employing some 120 experts and still growing. Like any parent, one is happy to see what one regards as a child growing, developing and making a valuable contribution to the EU's social and economic well-being in this case.

Looking forward, I can only wish everyone involved continuing success in this venture called JASPERS – long may it live and prosper!



Eckart Tronnier



Head of Division Water and Wastewater, JASPERS

Life is a journey – you have to believe in destiny. This statement reflected my sentiments in September 2005 when Michel Deleau suggested that I join the core team of JASPERS as Sector Manager for “Environment, Energy and Knowledge Economy”. Already in the spring of 2005, Chris Hurst and José Frade had asked me to prepare a strategy paper on how to establish a dedicated advisory instrument to support project development in the then new Member States of the European Union, which would offer help to absorb a substantial volume of EU structural funds during the 2007-2013 programming period. My initial technical assistance delivery concept envisaged an evolutionary expansion of TA delivery for these countries, based on insights gained during ten years of water project development by the EIB under the framework agreements with the EC as well as the FEMIP and METAP instruments.

I was therefore puzzled when Michel Deleau sketched out a Big Bang approach, along with the establishment of a new facility called JASPERS, to be staffed with around 50 people. The JASPERS core team was expected to engineer a quantum leap in delivering advice: i) develop procedures from scratch in an unstructured environment and in uncharted territory; instead, a high-level political will was in place to offer project expertise to stakeholders in the new Member States; ii) recruit some 40 experts ready to deal with a broad sector spectrum; iii) establish three new regional offices from which these experts would work in teams to meet the expected demand from Europe’s new stakeholders; and iv) contract framework consultants to increase the resource pool of available expertise for advice delivery. After collecting my thoughts, I quickly realised that the JASPERS facility offered an invaluable opportunity to transfer TA experience previously gained in water project development to a much bigger multi-sector TA instrument.

The challenge to fully establish JASPERS was immense. The core team enjoyed substantial independence to make relevant decisions, which was essential to move the JASPERS facility towards full operationality. Stimulating discussions and effective cooperation among highly motivated JASPERS experts, as well as partnering with experts from the EIB and EBRD, provided the fuel for JASPERS to ensure take-off. Needless to say, fantastic ideas emerged about how JASPERS could be portrayed on the European scene. Hence, strong emphasis was placed on the precise definition and reliable delivery of JASPERS assignments (“say what you will do – and do what you have said”). We engaged in intensive brainstorming about how to close an assignment (which triggered the definition of a completion note), and were delighted when the first group of major projects benefiting from JASPERS’ support achieved EC grant approval. Satisfaction with the advice received and the gradual development of mutual trust thus became an important tool for effective management of the expectations of stakeholders in the NMS and at the EC.





The event celebrating 50 years of the EIB in Bratislava in 2008 was JASPERS' Woodstock, with our stakeholders describing the JASPERS offices as regional centres of sector and project expertise. Positive feedback bred expectations, and we took on the challenge of further developing the JASPERS brand. Apart from a reinforced supply of expertise for project development, we started to put more emphasis on the sharing of insights gained and the dissemination of good practice among JASPERS' stakeholders. A logical outcome of this effort was the establishment of the Networking Platform in 2013. The increasing recognition of JASPERS as an independent centre of expertise also triggered a gradual geographical expansion of JASPERS' services, with Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, FYROM, Greece and France having signed annual action plans with JASPERS. And it is possible that more countries will join.

Now, back to the future: the DNA of JASPERS is tailor-made to deliver not only the well-established advisory function, but also the IQR function under the 2014-2020 regulations. In this context, our experts will further expand and apply their skillsets to tasks originating from most EU countries, as well as in the effective collaboration with DG REGIO and other EC entities (DG ENV, DG NEAR, DG MOVE, et al.). Bring it on!



Steve Richards

Head of the Project Implementation Support Unit,
Advisory Services, EIB

My JASPERS story began in autumn 2005 when Michel Deleau, Director General of PJ, was looking for volunteers to join the team. At that time joining JASPERS was considered a leap of faith – few really knew how it would develop or how long it would survive. So the queue to join up was fairly short.

Nevertheless a few brave souls saw it as an exciting opportunity to do something which had never been done before. Though there were differences of opinion about how the problem should be addressed there was no dispute that the new Member States would need some assistance in ramping up their investment levels from those of PHARE and ISPA to those made possible by the new EU programmes for 2007-2013.

The small EIB team, ably supported by the EBRD and DG REGIO, spent 2006 simultaneously trying to both promote the JASPERS concept, in the New Member States and within DG REGIO, and to agree internally what that concept meant in practical

terms. My job as Sector Manager for Transport was to try to define and meet the needs in the transport sector. At the same time a big recruitment campaign was underway and during 2007 the four teams (based in Luxembourg, Warsaw, Vienna and Bucharest) started to take shape. The quality of those teams and the clarity of common purpose we managed to instil in them, despite the uncertainties of the new venture, are one of the foundations of the success of JASPERS and one I was proud to be a part of.

Many of the original team are still involved today and I have the pleasure of collaborating with them in my own advisory work. The size of the current JASPERS organisation and the breadth of its coverage are impressive when I think of its humble beginnings, and of course the pioneering spirit is not as strong today as in those early years. Nevertheless I still see signs of the original JASPERS ethos – the principles of applying consistent quality standards in a patient and supportive manner – in the work they do today. A definite cause for celebration.



10 YEARS



D1 Janovce-Jablonov road, Slovakia

Gerry Muscat



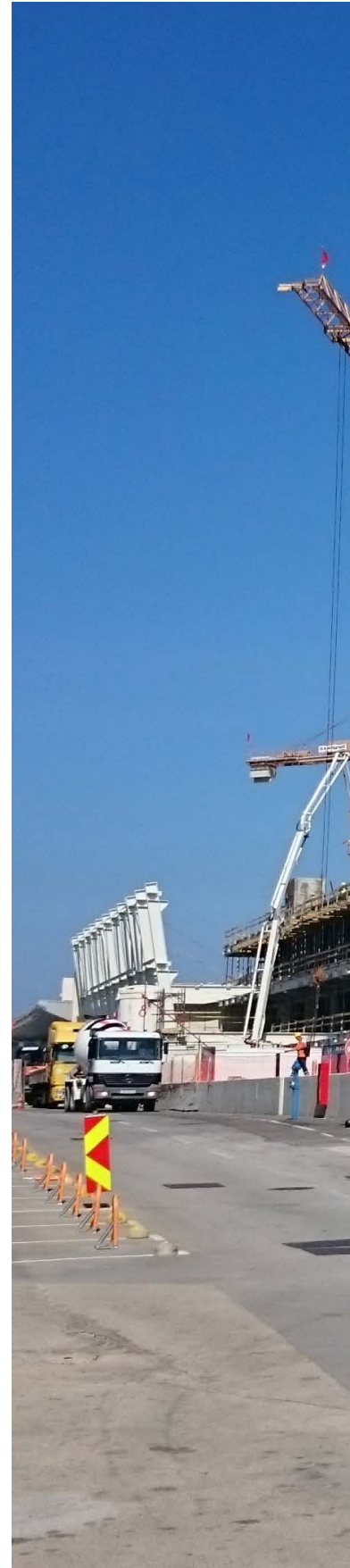
Head of Division, Regional and Urban Development
Division, Projects Directorate, EIB

When JASPERS was no more than a twinkle in the eye of Graham Meadows and Michel Deleau I was sitting in Warsaw, managing the urban and environmental project portfolio of the EBRD. I was in regular contact with Brendan Smyth at DG REGIO, and we had put together a number of memorable EU-EBRD co-financings, including the first ever ISPA water project in Bydgoszcz. I could immediately see the potential of a JASPERS instrument, especially when it came alive in Brendan's remarkably far-sighted position paper on JASPERS. On my next trip to London, I came to head of infrastructure Gavin Anderson with a "crazy" suggestion that the EBRD should become a partner in JASPERS and that I would be an eager volunteer to manage the EBRD's involvement. Fortunately, the "powers that be" also decided that an EU-EIB-EBRD collaboration made sense, and so I "self-selected" myself just at the right time.

When I joined JASPERS, there were about a handful of staff running the show – Pat, Agustin, Norbert, Steve, Eckart, and myself, in very close collaboration with Brendan at DG REGIO, and we pooled our collective wisdom to come up with the building blocks of JASPERS. What I remember from that time was that it was like setting up a small business – great teamwork, everyone doing everything, no one caring particularly about which institution we all came from, but with a common purpose: to help the Member States prepare better projects for EU funding.

I had a wonderful time in JASPERS. Initially I helped develop the ideas and templates for action plans, project fiches, completion notes, feedback forms, and the JASPERS database, while at the same time negotiating the contribution agreements and working on municipal and environmental projects and building up the JASPERS team. I remember fondly the crazy days of interview after interview, and review of thousands of CVs, to choose the great team which JASPERS has become.

I also remember going on the first whirlwind tour of the countries to present the Member States with JASPERS – at a time when we ourselves were still figuring it out: Were we working for the Member States or the Commission? How could we ensure our advice was unbiased? Would countries be able to sue us if we made a mistake? Would the DG REGIO country desks resent us as new kids on the block?



It is a testimony to Agustin Auria, and before him Pat Walsh, that they provided leadership which allowed ideas to flourish and compete; that they engendered a close, transparent and honest relationship with the Commission; and that they allowed the best solutions to come to the fore and become JASPERS policy. We were also blessed with having two other amazing individuals who guided JASPERS – and me – along: Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen, whose vision and ability to cut to the core are phenomenal, and Brendan Smyth, whose utter dedication, sheer common sense and Irish sense of humour have been essential to making JASPERS what it is today.

I had the privilege of coordinating and preparing the JASPERS strategy for 2014-20, and am proud to see JASPERS flourishing in 2015, taking on new roles in new geographies. JASPERS has created an unparalleled knowledge bank which is constantly being developed and enriched for the benefit of those it serves. JASPERS never stands still for long – may it continue to adapt and thrive in its evolving mission!

Dubrovnik Airport, Croatia

Emilio De La Guardia

Deputy Head, Banks and Corporates Division,
Iberia Department, Operations Directorate, EIB



When I came back to the Bank in Luxembourg from a five-year secondment to the Spanish Government's development agency COFIDES, Pat Walsh offered me the possibility of joining JASPERS. "JAS... what?", I asked. Then he guided me through the new initiative, one of the J babies being developed with the European Commission (JEREMIE, JESSICA, etc.) and told me about its "peculiar" objective: to act as a bridge between the new acceding Member States and the Commission in order to identify, set up and give the appropriate format to projects in such a way that they would be approved by the Commission and could thus benefit from the huge amount of Structural Funds available to them. However, in spite of the EIB's participation there would be no EIB financing for the identified projects (the famous Chinese walls). In addition, another detail that Pat related to me: it was not an OPS operation; instead JASPERS was going to be placed within the structure of the Projects Directorate, most of the team members being engineers. In fact, in JASPERS there were only going to be two or three people from OPS. Once JASPERS' mandate ended, I would return to OPS. Finally, the last surprise was that JASPERS was not going to be located within EIB's premises but in a rented building in Findel.

Everything was new to me: the activity, the structure and the location. But knowing Pat from previous years working together in the Mediterranean Department, I was confident about the positive outcome of the initiative and said to myself "Come on, this can't be so bad"... and joined JASPERS.

Luckily for me, JASPERS started from scratch and everything needed to be set up, the procedures to be established, the legal documentation concerning the Mandate to be negotiated with the Commission and the EBRD, the information to Member States to be prepared, and the action plans (a key term in JASPERS' early days) defined... Therefore, I was like all the other members of the team performing many different tasks, involved in countless meetings and working hard to roll out this new initiative.

Having a professional background in OPS, I was assigned the role of Country Manager for the Southern countries (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta), and later on I also took over responsibility for the management of the Central and Northern countries, with the dual objective of presenting JASPERS to the local governments and setting up National Action Plans for each new Member State. But first, we (EIB, Commission and EBRD) had to decide what the document called "action plan" was to include. Once we had reached agreement on this, a frenetic roadshow took off to present JASPERS to the local authorities and identify suitable projects to be packed into a National Action Plan.

Looking back on my experience in JASPERS, I can say that if JASPERS has become what it is today it is not only because there was an enormous need for such an instrument at the time but also because of the quality of the work produced and the commitment of the people that started it. Many congratulations to all of them and I wish JASPERS every success in its future endeavours!





Extension of underground gas storage in Wierchowice, Poland



Biomass-fired boiler in PKE SA Jaworzno III power plant, Poland



Alexander Auboeck

Senior Finance Expert, JASPERS



When in 2006 I returned from my assignment in Bratislava, where I was an EBRD Country Director for a couple of Central European Countries, I learned that the EBRD had decided to participate in JASPERS as a founding member and that I should represent the EBRD in the Steering Committee of JASPERS. Having seen the needs of new Member Countries in terms of professional development of big infrastructure projects, I was convinced of the merits of this initiative and happily accepted. In the Steering Committee I encountered a group of managers who were really committed to making JASPERS a success and who managed to overcome many hurdles on the way. I was received with open arms and in fact encouraged to be outspoken and to challenge agreed positions. I hope I did so in a constructive manner.

The EBRD experimented a lot with its commitment to provide professional staff to JASPERS and to bring its contribution to an acceptable level. We seconded EBRD staff, we tried the sharing of positions between the EBRD and JASPERS and we hired consultants and handed them over to JASPERS. The irony of my involvement in JASPERS is that I am now myself a consultant working for JASPERS hoping to complement the existing expertise within JASPERS.

The EBRD remains convinced of the significant contribution of JASPERS to the quality of projects benefiting from Structural Funds. On the other hand it has not seen many opportunities to get involved as a lender to such projects due to the typically high grant rates and the availability of other funding sources. However, it is hopeful that a stronger role for the EBRD will emerge as new sectors are opened up and new countries join.





Dobrinka Krasteva

Director of Programming of EU Funds Directorate,
Central Coordination Unit Council of Ministers, Bulgaria

A valuable support in the right place at the right time. That is the first thought that comes to my mind when talking about the JASPERS initiative. There are several key points that formed that feeling in me – partnership, trust and support.

My most vivid memory is from the beginning of the 2007-2013 programming period when Bulgaria took its first steps as an EU Member State and for the first time we were able to benefit from the funds available under the cohesion policy. It was then that JASPERS actively helped the newly created Bulgarian EU funds management and control structures to prepare and review almost all major infrastructure projects in the following sectors: the environment, transport and regional development.

Particularly valuable and sustained was the contribution to developing expertise and capacity building for managing and implementing major infrastructure projects in the railway sector. The models created for units to manage and implement railway projects funded by the European Union have been applied successfully for several years now. Detailed manuals were developed for the activities of these units that are used even now.

We wish you all the best and hope you'll be beside us in the 2014-2020 programming period.



Wastewater management in rural areas, Cyprus



Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen

Senator for Finance for the State Government of Berlin, Germany

I was the responsible MC member for JASPERS for a little bit more than half of the life of JASPERS, from autumn 2006 until the beginning of 2012. Graham Meadows as Director General of DG REGIO was just leaving office, Dirk Ahner was not there yet, the founding decisions for JASPERS had been completed, a special status inside the EIB had been defined, and the staff members to get it started were there. At the time, I saw two main challenges: (i) to make JASPERS operable as fast as possible; and (ii) to overcome certain reservations and criticisms.

From the very beginning, JASPERS operated in unknown territory, for the Commission and DG REGIO, but for the EIB as well. With a lot of enthusiasm, things which did not work at first were made to work.

For the first time, the EIB carried out substantial recruitment campaigns (until then, the organisation had been used to hiring new staff one by one) and had to set up rather large, operational external offices in which the vast majority of staff was placed. An unprecedented governance structure was put in place, with the Commission, the EIB, the EBRD and KfW (between 2008 and 2013) jointly sharing responsibility for the project.

All these moves into unknown territory were necessary to implement JASPERS. They turned out to be right, and to be useful for the further development of the EIB.

Still, reservations about JASPERS came from some "old" Member States that would have preferred to be eligible for JASPERS support as well – notably

Greece and also Italy informally enquired about being eligible. I think it would have been better to allow old Member States to benefit from JASPERS in exchange for a cost contribution which they were willing to make.

The second reservation derived from the fear that JASPERS might limit the room for national decision-making on the Structural Funds. Visiting, one-by-one, all of the countries worried by such concerns, I tried to make clear that this would not be the case, and that JASPERS would support the Member States in their preparations and negotiations with the Commission.

We at the EIB did a lot to develop the "soft powers" of JASPERS. The annual JASPERS stakeholder conference, open seminars and electronic correspondence helped a lot to establish a transnational peer group exchanging views, establishing benchmarks, learning from the successes and failures of others. The first conference in Bratislava, with Commissioner Hübner delivering a keynote speech, set the spirit and the format for the years to come.

The most important soft power of JASPERS was to form a kind of institutional memory. Many regions had already carried out studies on the projects they planned to implement. But from drawing board to implementation, it was a long and cumbersome way, and in the time "before JASPERS" it was often not possible to collect the experience and to preserve it during the whole process and for future projects. I think that all EIB advisory tools should focus on and be inspired by the institutional or collective memory created by JASPERS.





It took time to register the visible progress of JASPERS, which was normal as JASPERS deals with large projects having long implementation periods. At the end of the 2007-2013 financial framework, one could see that projects with JASPERS support moved faster through the challenging approval process and that the approval rate was higher than for projects without JASPERS support.

But again, the real path-breaking successes came from the soft power of JASPERS. To give you an example, one (new) Member State decided not to implement a tube system for its capital but to extend and improve the light rail (tram) system instead. A decision like this at the early stage of project development saved the Member State in question a three-digit figure of millions which could be redeployed for other urgently needed projects.

The new regulation on ESI Funds for 2014 to 2020 is not simpler than the previous one. New instruments and the need to avoid misspending contribute to increasing complexity. I think that the JASPERS system could help us overcome this difficulty. If we relied much more on instruments with soft powers and if we had an independent, but mandatory implementation adviser for projects beyond a certain volume threshold, the Commission would need less complex control systems. I am convinced that a simpler system is necessary to maintain and improve the acceptance of Europe.

Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of JASPERS and all the best for the future!

Dorota Kalina Zaliwska

Head of Unit, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy,
European Commission



I joined DG Regional Policy in December 2006 and was asked to lead the newly established Financial Engineering Unit. The unit had just been created and its mission was to develop financial instruments and the J(oint) initiatives: JASPERS, JEREMIE and JESSICA (JASMINE came in 2008). I accepted this proposal with great enthusiasm; I had heard of the three "Js" before joining DG REGIO and was personally convinced that they were very much needed. These were pioneering initiatives for DG REGIO and the European Commission as well as for our key partner, the EIB.

JASPERS was the most advanced among the "Js", with its core team in place and an intensive recruitment process on-going. We had very close cooperation with the JASPERS management team and held regular meetings to discuss all issues related to the JASPERS operations.

The need for JASPERS' assistance was huge, so we had to deal with the rapid expansion of the JASPERS team and its activities. In addition to JASPERS headquarters in Luxembourg and the first regional office in Warsaw, we opened two new JASPERS regional offices in Vienna and Bucharest. We started organising JASPERS' annual stakeholders meetings. We also set up a JASPERS website to inform on JASPERS' activities more widely. This represents only a small proportion of the many activities we organised at that time.

As is often the case with any pioneering initiative, we faced various challenges while developing JASPERS. We were working in four different organisations (DG REGIO, EIB, EBRD and KfW) with different organisational cultures. We had to convince potential clients of JASPERS of its added value. We had to operate within a given regulatory framework which was not really set up for that kind of atypical activity.

Altogether, JASPERS has shown itself to be a successful initiative and I am very proud that I was part of this adventure for five years. In 2011, when I was leaving the unit, JASPERS had more than 80 experts; it had extended its assistance to Croatia and the partners in JASPERS agreed to continue in the 2014-2020 period. Many people have been involved in one way or another with JASPERS in the past ten years and have contributed to its success. One person in particular, whose contribution cannot be overestimated, is Brendan Smyth, the JASPERS Coordinator in DG REGIO, who has worked on the initiative since the start and played an instrumental role in what JASPERS has become.





10 YEARS

Szeged University, Hungary



Helena Papanau

Department for Infrastructural Programmes,
Managing Authority for OP Infrastructure and Environment, Poland

I have been working for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, which is the Managing Authority responsible for the implementation of the biggest operational programme in the history of the European Union, called "Infrastructure and Environment". The total budget of the programme for the 2007-2013 financial perspective was EUR 28.3bn.

My cooperation with JASPERS began in 2007, when the EIB opened its office in Warsaw.

Considering that Poland joined the European Union in 2004, we had to learn how to prepare projects effectively in order to get EU grants. Our objective was to support the development of infrastructure: the construction of motorways, modernisation of railway lines, expansion of the main airports, and building and upgrading of wastewater treatment plants and sewerage networks. As regards social infrastructure, our operational programme covered the construction and renovation of cultural and educational institutions and modernisation of healthcare centres.

JASPERS colleagues provided essential assistance to our institutions dealing with EU funds and beneficiaries. We needed JASPERS' advice, knowledge-sharing, guidance on good practice and the exchange of experiences. The competence and involvement of JASPERS experts are of great value to us.



In the 2007-2013 programming period, JASPERS completed over 300 assignments in Poland (including 284 individual projects and 46 horizontal tasks covering the R&D, transport, health, energy, cultural and environmental sectors).

At the beginning of 2007, we needed procedures for cooperation between JASPERS/Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries. We prepared a document which provided for such working arrangements.

The management of JASPERS projects in Poland was ensured by a Country Manager, who discussed progress across the range of JASPERS assignments with my Ministry on at least a quarterly basis and was the initial point of contact for the nomination, scope and performance of the JASPERS portfolio. A Task Manager was responsible for the delivery of project outputs. Project monitoring was provided through management of each project by the Task Manager backed up by regular progress meetings. At the end of each quarter, JASPERS and my Ministry held progress meetings with the participation of representatives from the European Commission, Managing Authorities, coordinating bodies and sectoral ministries.

Every year we sent to beneficiaries a request for proposals for new projects which could be supported by JASPERS.

Lublin Airport



Then my Ministry sent a list of proposed projects for comments and approval by JASPERS. An action plan, including a list of projects submitted for JASPERS assistance, was signed by the Head of JASPERS and the Undersecretary of State at my Ministry. During kick-off meetings, JASPERS experts were introduced to beneficiaries, who were required to deliver a presentation. Kick-off meetings on all projects were designed to bring together all relevant parties and result in agreed responsibilities and actions going forward.

Our Ministry has published on its website basic information on JASPERS' activities in Poland including some outputs of assistance provided (analysis, guidelines and expertise, especially for horizontal projects). We have also provided in our ministerial bulletin substantial information for potential beneficiaries about JASPERS in Poland, application procedures, etc.

We appreciate JASPERS' valuable contribution and support in Poland. We are looking forward to further effective cooperation with JASPERS within the 2014-2020 financial perspective.

Lublin Airport, Poland

Jonas Byström

Senior Engineer, Urban Development Division,
Projects Directorate EIB



My JASPERS story started in 2006 with an application for what appeared to be a very exciting JASPERS position following many years as an international consultant. After a recruitment visit to Luxembourg, and a relatively long waiting period, a positive response reached me while on mission in Belgrade – and having just got out of a taxi labelled Lux Taxi, a clear sign of where I was heading!

During my first period in Luxembourg I was busy trying to understand the role and mandate of JASPERS, memorising what the JASPERS acronym stood for, and getting to grips with all the subtleties of Structural Fund Regulations, funding gap calculations, state aid rules, etc. Following this, my JASPERS years were mainly dedicated to supporting the preparation of solid waste projects, and occasionally contaminated land projects. The cooperation with friendly and experienced colleagues from different countries helped to create a good working atmosphere. What also contributed to this was the fact that the JASPERS team was initially located in a satellite office in Findel. There we occupied an entire floor with a JASPERS kitchen, where, for some reason, the fridge was always properly equipped for impromptu celebrations. The location in Findel also facilitated the many missions, which in my case took me to Member States ranging from Lithuania in the north to Malta and Cyprus in the south.

The work in JASPERS required close dialogue and liaison with stakeholders on many different levels, including Managing Authority representatives, project promoters, consultants, desk officers and other EU representatives, and colleagues in the EIB. This was both challenging and rewarding, and provided many valuable experiences and possibilities for professional growth. It also made me realise that waste management is not a science but an art, with many different schools and types of artist. As a practising waste artist it became evident that projects could not be viewed in black or white, but instead required good judgement as to what shade of grey was acceptable in a given context.

The work in JASPERS gave a sense of achievement at having contributed to the much needed development of what was often very basic waste management systems, and helping promoters achieve the frequently challenging EU waste acquis targets. Sometimes there was also slight frustration at not having been involved at the early stage of project planning and preparation, when it would have been easier to ensure that project solutions were not unduly influenced by the EU grant opportunity.





My JASPERS story ended in February 2010 when I cleared my desk and shifted to an office in a neighbouring corridor, taking up a position as a Sector Engineer in the Projects Directorate of the EIB. I have, however, remained in contact with my former JASPERS colleagues for discussions both on common projects and on solid waste sector issues, something that has been facilitated by the quarterly Solid Waste Coordination Forum video conferences that we launched when I joined the EIB. Looking back, I am happy to have been part of the early years when JASPERS found its form and footing, and I appreciate the experiences I gained during this period.

10
YEARS



SUSEN Sustainable Energy, Czech Republic

Mark Pevsner

Operational Manager, Neighbourhood Advisory Programmes, Advisory Services Department, EIB



I was both fortunate and privileged to be part of JASPERS between August 2005 and June 2008, as it started operations. We were energised by the simplicity and audacity of the central idea – to harness the existing experience of the Bank in order to help the newer Member States build the infrastructure that they needed faster, better and cheaper. It felt instinctively right.

At the beginning JASPERS was like most start-ups, freewheeling, noisy and sometimes conflictual. But everyone was also deeply motivated by a shared vision to improve the everyday lives of their fellow European citizens. As a result, raw energy and enthusiasm allowed it to do many things where caution and maturity would have counselled "let's wait and see". That momentum gave JASPERS its first successes and built the foundations of increasing professional credibility with its partners, which it continues to develop today.

When I left JASPERS in 2008 (or perhaps JASPERS left me) it was like losing a limb. One adapts and goes on, but sometimes that absence, and what might have been, twinges like a phantom.

Ten years later, JASPERS has fully proved its basic idea, and is perhaps one of the most important contributions that the Bank is making to building a better and more integrated Europe. Time has proved, and also improved, the basic idea: free movement of experience is just as much part of the European ideal as free movement of goods and services. That accumulated experience and skill is now solicited to help a growing group of countries throughout Europe and its Neighbourhoods. Throughout that time its greatest resource, and the core source of its strength, has been the skills and perseverance of its people, and its wider stakeholders in the countries, the Commission and elsewhere. I am grateful, and proud, to have played a small part in starting this.



Rudolf Niessler

Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy,
European Commission



I was appointed as director responsible for policy coordination in DG REGIO in 2007, not long after JASPERS had begun operations. Supervising JASPERS was a part of my new tasks. In view of the importance of major projects within cohesion policy, I quickly became aware of the potential of JASPERS for improving the quality of future investment. The then “new” Member States were just beginning to make use of the funds in the 2007-2013 programming period, which were very much larger than the funding available before this time, and we believed that they needed additional help to make best use of these new resources. Clearly the timing of JASPERS' establishment and its later expansion were right.

I felt from the outset that there was a great spirit of collaboration on both sides, which allowed a close working relationship to be forged between JASPERS and DG REGIO. Staff from JASPERS were frequent visitors to DG REGIO and, as in any new structure, there were intensive discussions between the three partners about everything from strategy to the smallest operational details. Something new and different was in the process of being created. Despite the fact that there were three institutions involved, each with its own mandate and working methods, these discussions took place in a very good atmosphere. Everyone knew what was needed and worked towards a common goal.

JASPERS was still quite a small operation in the early days. The growing financial and economic crisis, and the urgent need for more and better investment as part of the response, led to a decision in late 2008 to expand the scope of JASPERS. Much of this first major expansion took place in 2009 and into 2010.

There would be further expansions later, both to new beneficiaries like Greece and Croatia and to expanded areas of activity like capacity building. All of these changes were demand-led, based on what the Member States told us they required. When deciding to add resources to JASPERS, the partners in JASPERS were confident that they were responding to a real need and creating real added value, based on an assessment of the positive impact that JASPERS was having on the quality of projects.

It has been both interesting and rewarding to take part in the growth and development of an initiative like JASPERS. The story is not over because JASPERS continues to evolve and further, far-reaching changes are still ahead of us and our partners, with the intention of improving the quality of investment and bringing it to implementation more rapidly.





Gdansk Sea Port rail connection, Poland

10 YEARS



Anna Krzyżanowska-Orlik

Manager of Programming Unit, Operational Programme Department, Poland



In the beginning it was difficult. JASPERS wanted from us things we had never done before. It seemed completely useless and just time-consuming, but then we realised they simply required strategic planning and a longer perspective. They did help a lot. Now I share their views and opinions.

The above statement greatly describes the attitude shared by many beneficiaries. They do not understand burdens imposed on them when JASPERS gets involved. Beneficiaries are always eager to make projects quicker but not necessarily better. Such an attitude can of course cause many problems in the following stages of implementation.

I always contact JASPERS experts on “special occasions”. Their telephone rings when we have problems or issues that we do not know how to tackle. When we started the preparation of ITI’s strategy, there was nobody else I could turn to. I must say that we were very lucky that JASPERS experts decided to assist us in this difficult undertaking. Together, we built a logical framework and managed to identify strengths and weaknesses. The result is a much better strategy than it was at the beginning. I hope we will continue our fruitful cooperation in the future.



Beltinci-Lendava motorway, Slovenia



Axel Hörhager

Former Head of JASPERS Regional Office Vienna

It was an exciting moment in the history of JASPERS when the Vienna Regional Office was opened in 2007. After all, it was one of the few external offices of the EIB in a prestigious external location such as Vienna. The office is near the Karlskirche, a beautiful baroque church in a central park of the city, and the dozen or so pioneers who initially staffed it had an easy time to come to work, and a very pleasant working environment. And I, as their first Head of Office, had the privilege of working with some very bright and motivated people, who were experts at their respective jobs and disciplines.

There was an incredible atmosphere of excitement at being part of this venture initiated by the EIB and the European Commission, later joined by the EBRD and KfW. We believed we could make a difference to the quality of large infrastructure projects submitted for structural funding. Whether it was roads and railways, or water-linked projects, or energy and research infrastructure – we had people who could provide that extra piece of good advice.

And travel we did. It was pointed out that the Vienna Office was not actually located in any of the ten new Member States. But we were ideally located to be on the spot in Bratislava, Prague, Budapest or Ljubljana at very short notice. Most of my colleagues spent the better part of their working time on missions, which also included Brussels where the hard decisions on whether a project was to be awarded financing were being made.

Were we at times frustrated by the slow progress being made at our partner institutions in the relevant ministries? Of course we were, we had to be patient and have an open ear for their concerns, while not forgetting to impart the importance of a top-grade professional approach toward project planning and implementation.

I should not disguise the fact that, like many of my colleagues, I was at first sceptical of whether JASPERS could find its role. When I was persuaded to move to Vienna in 2007, I gave it my fullest support since it seemed to be one of the few tools that the new Member States were being given to address very pressing needs in terms of project preparation. Patrick Walsh, then Head of JASPERS in Luxembourg, and my immediate boss Norbert Hahn were great inspirations, attracting the right kind of talented people and demonstrating their commitment on a daily basis. I believe that ten years down the road, the original approach is still essentially valid, and I take this opportunity to express my conviction that JASPERS will continue to thrive and prosper for the good of Europe.



10 YEARS



Poland-Lithuania power link



Athens automatic ticketing system, Greece



Iris Harder



Senior Project Manager, Near, East and North Africa,
KfW Development Bank

I was seconded to JASPERS by KfW for a period of five years, from 2008–2013. At the same time KfW seconded to the EIB, on a part-time basis, a number of railway and road transport experts, who provided specialised advice on a number of projects, in particular Juergen Schlotzhauer, Michael Strohn and Dr Rainer Koblo. By combining their knowledge in transport planning, railway engineering and transport economics and in close cooperation with JASPERS Task Managers, projects in many countries were able to be better justified and presented in a transparent and auditable manner.

Of the different assignments that I personally undertook, I very much appreciated the work in the R&D field, in particular the development of the national R&D Cost Benefit Analysis Guidelines in a team with experts from the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the support for the pan-European laser research infrastructure project ELI (Extreme Light Infrastructure) in Romania, the Czech Republic and Hungary, as well as the contribution to the Lithuanian National Physics Research Institute. While working in this fascinating area I acquired a far better understanding of the rationale of public investment in fundamental research and the significance of a well thought-out research policy for national economics in a global market. And it was great to get to know and work with highly motivated people in their particular fields of activity, in physical science or in research policy and financing.



Kukka Steinmetz

Senior Administrative Assistant,
Mobility Department, Projects Directorate, EIB



I started my career at the EIB at the beginning of January 2008 as a secretary to the Head and Deputy Head of JASPERS. The move to Luxembourg from Frankfurt was already very exciting for me and my family, not to mention the excitement of a new job and new colleagues. Frankfurt was an international city, but nothing compared to Luxembourg's and the EIB's multinational and diversified environment, to which we soon got used and which I still enjoy a lot.

I was warmly welcomed on the first two introduction days by colleagues from different services of the Bank. Monday, 7 January 2008 was my first official working day at JASPERS in the EIB office in Findel. Patrick Walsh and Agustin Auria also welcomed me very warmly to the new JASPERS team. As I had understood from the recruitment process and interviews in July 2007, the JASPERS department and team were still in the starting phase. So my first experience was not the standard departmental secretary role of the EIB. Luckily, I had the great opportunity to create and implement new procedures and guidelines in the administrative and secretarial services. The main contacts were the Managing Authorities in the Member States, as some of the main stakeholders, so the contacts and addresses list had to be updated on a regular basis. One of my most important tasks! It was always a great and even a proud feeling to send out the completion notes on diverse projects, to receive the list of major projects from the Commission (which we were anxiously awaiting, to see the development of JASPERS assignments), and to prepare the action plans for the JASPERS countries for the following year – not to forget the pleasure of observing the continuous growth of the team and welcoming new colleagues in Luxembourg, Vienna, Bucharest and Warsaw!





ELI Beamlines, Czech Republic



Inesis Kiškis

Director, EU Funds Management Department
Ministry of Environment, Lithuania

When I first heard of JASPERS in 2006, I was rather sceptical about its potential role in facilitating EU-supported project implementation in new Member States. A newly established organisation set up under a tricky arrangement between the EC and the EIB, I thought, would be preoccupied with justifying its own mandate rather than substantially advising the clients. That was until I met the JASPERS staff..

Devoted professionals, they dissipated my prejudices during the very first assignment – despite the sad fact that the recommendations we jointly developed for endorsement were ultimately not accepted at the political level. Such things happen, but the foundations for the trust in JASPERS were undoubtedly built.

Ever since, I consider approaching JASPERS for advice on complicated matters, especially strategic ones. A specific area of our close cooperation has been the evaluation of our water and municipal waste management programmes, which are heavily dependent on EU funds. The conclusions drawn and recommendations to be considered during the upcoming funding period were fine-tuned largely thanks to input from JASPERS.

I cannot but mention the regular workshops on “hot topics” which JASPERS regularly organises for practitioners of EU-funded projects. In my view, this is one of the best training programmes I’ve ever seen – no kidding.

Now, almost ten years later, I regard JASPERS as a powerhouse of knowledge. We have not only developed mutual respect as professionals, we have become good friends.





Kappara Junction, Malta



Kiki Tsingou

Honorary Director General, EIB

JASPERS was born some ten years ago as a new initiative reflecting the commitment of the European Investment Bank to supporting EU policies and objectives.

At the time of the EU's enlargement to the East there was strong political will to promote growth and development in the new countries joining the EU, confirmed by the substantial endowment of cohesion policy funding. It was also recognised then that on top of money, and given the capacity shortages in the countries concerned, another kind of support was of critical importance: technical assistance. Not surprisingly the Commission, with DG REGIO taking the lead, turned to the EIB. The positive EIB reaction to this request and its generous contribution of both human and other resources quickly led to the creation of JASPERS.

JASPERS has already achieved a lot and the statistics speak for themselves. No doubt, further efforts may be needed and lessons drawn over these years will continue to lead to adjustments and improvements. I will only highlight three points here, the importance of which, in my view, goes well beyond JASPERS itself:

1. JASPERS brought together (i) the commitment of the EU institutions to support growth and development in the (then) New Member States; (ii) substantial funds, allocated from the EU budget and managed by the European Commission's DG REGIO; and (iii) the valuable know-how of the EIB, a product of its long experience and strong capacity in project assessment and financing, enhanced by its unique in-house technical expertise.

This brought in an important new dimension in the relations between Brussels and the EIB. JASPERS was set within the EIB organisational structure and under EIB management, but its governance included joint EU Commission/EIB bodies. The Bank undertook a sizeable recruitment campaign for staff with diverse backgrounds and expertise and carried it out to the satisfaction of all. Important challenges were quickly overcome, removing any scepticism about the relevance of JASPERS or the overall "cost-benefit" of the initiative for the Bank. JASPERS thus developed quickly, has always been well respected and is fully playing its role in a context of continuously increasing demand for its services and successive extensions of its initial mandate.

2. JASPERS was designed to work closely with the Member States and support their own proposed investment programmes. The establishment of a number of fully operational regional offices has led to closer contacts with the national authorities, a better understanding of objectives and a gradual transfer of know-how both on project work and on EU mechanisms and procedures. This also represents an important new dimension in the relations between EU institutions and the Member States, with tangible results.

3. The EIB and the Commission were joined by the EBRD and the KfW as junior partners in JASPERS (2008-2013). This again brought in a new dimension, this time mainly in the relations between the key financiers of public investments in the regions concerned. While the contribution of resources by both the EBRD and KfW to the daily functioning of JASPERS has been limited, their input in terms of policy proposals and their participation in JASPERS' governing structures has contributed to a common understanding on the way forward.

I have highlighted these three points in order to stress that joining forces on the basis of respective strengths and common objectives has a strong multiplier effect and helps to achieve much better and faster results. It might be said that this is obvious, but it is always good to keep it in mind.



Słowackiego road, Gdansk, Poland



Noémi Dálnoky

Deputy Head of Department,
Ministry of National Development, Hungary

I work for the Hungarian public administration. I have been dealing with major projects since 2000. I also worked for two and a half years for DG REGIO on the Hungarian desk and lived in Brussels. I have seen the system from several sides.

There is a gap between the old and new Member States: historical, cultural, etc. To narrow the gap, there is money: funding in several fields distributed in and outside the EU. Why is integration such a difficult thing? Not only because of the variety of thinking and the differences mentioned, but due to the way the world is nowadays becoming. We are more and more specialised in a certain field or activity, but integration needs interdisciplinarity. We and JASPERS are part (and the result) of this process, and try to cover both specialisation and interdisciplinarity in complex or integrated projects.

In order to use the significant pre-accession funding, we engaged a framework contractor for each major ISPA project, as recommended by the EC. After the projects had been improved, they were submitted to the EC for approval. The EC and the EIB came on a site visit, looking at each project and asking even “stranger” questions than the framework contractors. Then JASPERS was born – and not only JASPERS, but JEREMIE, JESSICA and JASMINE.

Sometimes JASPERS understands us better than we do ourselves. They know us quite well. Not only the Member States, but also the European Commission relies on JASPERS’ expertise and professionalism. The diplomatic and reconciliation skills help us a lot in solving difficult problems.

Many years have passed and systems are changing. I have seen a large number of us come and go, taking their knowledge with them. So knowledge of the institutional systems has to be rebuilt and refurbished from time to time. JASPERS also lends a hand in this exercise, with its continuous presence and stock of knowledge.

The focus is on major projects, which are in many fields the tip of the iceberg. These projects are the most visible and the shiniest ones. But they should be, in order to have a spillover effect into smaller ones. With JASPERS, your project either improves or dies; you have no choice, just do your best.

I still see many “d’jà vu” problems. Since the majority of these emerge because JASPERS is involved late in project preparation, I can suggest that the Member States should involve JASPERS from the outset. They will be able to avoid problems relating to the excessive burden of political considerations, to the reluctance to justify the project, the reasons for it and the strategy behind it. In order to get the approval of the EC, you cannot skip the work to be done with JASPERS. Our experience is that there is a high risk of rejection by the EC if JASPERS is not involved in the project preparation. One thing I appreciate most about working with JASPERS is that I can ask its experts anything at any time. No matter if it is the very last or the very first moment in the life of a project, they are always there to help.

I hope JASPERS will grow even bigger, have a bright future and continue teaching us, sharing its knowledge and revealing to all of us different ways of thinking.



Modernisation of Białystok football stadium, Poland



Pierluigi Gilibert

Chief Executive, European Investment Fund

In my capacity as Director General of the EIB's lending operations in Europe, I was a member of the JASPERS Steering Committee between April 2010 and March 2014.

During that time, the foundations were laid for many of JASPERS' future achievements.

In November 2010, a new strategy was agreed for JASPERS' activities through to 2013. The core focus was to remain on support for project preparation for the 2007-2013 period, but as resources became available, additional emphasis would be placed on the preparation of projects for the 2014-2020 programming period.

In 2011, the Steering Committee endorsed the development of a JASPERS networking platform which would go beyond the 12 Member States at the time assisted by JASPERS, eventually to cover all EU Member States as well as pre-accession countries.

Strategic support, implementation and capacity building were the challenges on which JASPERS was called to deliver concrete results in the years to come. JASPERS introduced guidelines developed for the transport sector initially in Lithuania which could be of use to other Managing Authorities as a tool to support their own review of transport projects. Similar guidelines were developed for the environment sector in Romania.

In November of the same year, the Steering Committee agreed that JASPERS would start to operate in the IPA (Investment for Pre-Accession) region, beginning with the Candidate Countries, to help them build up capacity to prepare projects for funding under the EU Structural Funds.

Following a request for assistance from the Greek authorities, JASPERS started operations in Greece, the first of the EU's "old" Member States to benefit from its assistance whereas beforehand it had focused on the EU's "new" Member States. Others followed more recently (Italy and France).

Since 2009, stakeholder meetings became highlights of JASPERS' calendar as a valuable forum for exchanging ideas between the Member States, JASPERS and the Commission, so as to help improve the service that JASPERS provides.

Contributing to JASPERS was a privilege for me and I will always regard it as a positive step in my professional career. JASPERS is not only an example of "good practice" for the delivery of technical assistance for project development, nor only a model partnership between the EC, the EIB and EBRD. JASPERS is a beacon of European cooperation supporting the implementation of EU policies, based on a bottom-up approach of experts embedded in Member States.





Orastie – Sibiu motorway, Romania





Denisa Žiláková



Director General of Operational Programme
Transport Division, Ministry of Transport,
Construction and Regional Development, Slovakia

JASPERS' support has been instrumental in the preparation of major projects fostering sustainable mobility and the development of TEN-T corridors. Thanks to its intense work, our Managing Authority is on the brink of full absorption, while not sacrificing project quality. JASPERS' guidance brings high added value to our work and has led to significant improvements in our own preparation and implementation processes.

Our mutual cooperation extended to the preparation of strategic transport documents, which are often cited as examples of good practice. It remains our policy to maintain our excellent level of cooperation going forward into the 2014-2020 financial perspective.

Hričovské Podhradie – Lietavská Lúčka motorway, Slovakia



Simon Barnes

Head of Advisory Services, EIB

Since becoming Head of the EIB's Advisory Services at the beginning of 2015, I have come to realise just how much JASPERS is a key part of our overall advisory offering.

When I first arrived, I probably had a lot of misconceptions about JASPERS, thinking that its role was pretty much limited to the administrative process leading to the release of grants from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). However, over these past months as I have learned more about the daily work of JASPERS and its staff, I have been personally impressed by the enormous experience of colleagues, the depth of their expertise and the incredible knowledge derived from their presence on the ground and proximity to our client beneficiaries. I have also come to appreciate the mutual trust and confidence needed between the different parties in order to build lasting local capacity which has enabled Managing Authorities to develop their own expertise and capabilities dramatically.

My increasingly better understanding has convinced me that, although now ten years old, this joint EC/EIB partnership remains as relevant as ever, since it continues to make a real difference to policy thinking, strategic investment planning and the effective preparation and implementation of individual projects. In this way, the investment pipeline supported by ESIF can be more coherent, it is of better quality and projects can even be accelerated and thus impact sooner on growth, jobs and hence people's lives.

This wealth of expertise stands JASPERS in good stead for the future. But it will have to continue to adapt to ensure it meets the needs of the EU citizens we serve and I am also convinced that we need to leverage this asset as much as we can. That is why I am certain that JASPERS will also make a significant contribution to the work of the European Investment Advisory Hub, a core pillar of the support provided under the Investment Plan for Europe.

Thank you to JASPERS for all it has done so far and I look forward to its undoubted contribution in the future.



Sibiu County water, Romania



Jarosław Orliński

Deputy Director, Department of Infrastructural Programmes
Ministry of Development, Poland

I am delighted to celebrate JASPERS' 10th anniversary!

The activities of JASPERS in Poland have contributed to a better quality of projects. JASPERS has provided essential assistance to our institutions dealing with EU funds. The knowledge, competence and involvement of JASPERS' experts are of great value to us.

We appreciate JASPERS' valuable contribution and support in the preparation of projects and we are looking forward to further constructive cooperation.



Luko Vuletić

Assistant Minister, Ministry of Maritime Affairs,
Transport and Infrastructure, Croatia

Happy Anniversary JASPERS, and I wish you many more!

Working with JASPERS, every day is different, and full of new knowledge.

I hope JASPERS will help the Member States to develop a stable system, with future JASPERS certification of knowledge for people in the system who deserve it, after good work and examination. I look forward to seeing a JASPERS office in Croatia very soon.



Jonathan Vassallo

Director General Planning and Priorities Coordination
Division, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Malta



Malta has been working with JASPERS since the start of the 2007-2013 programming period, and has benefited from world class experts in key investment areas such as life science, waste treatment, water treatment, risk prevention, climate change and health, amongst others. JASPERS assessed all of Malta's major projects under the ERDF and CF operational programmes. This support made it possible to have a success rate of 100%, with the evaluation process never exceeding the six-month mark. Furthermore, in view of Malta's unique situation – dictated by its size – JASPERS expertise was also provided to projects which did not exceed the major project value threshold, but which were nevertheless deemed to be of national importance. JASPERS had not only a direct impact on the process but also an indirect impact through the knowledge transfer that occurred during the intensive months of work that accompanied each submission.

Malta welcomes any future cooperation with JASPERS and extends its appreciation for all the work carried out for and in conjunction with the Maltese authorities from 2007 until today.

European Centre of Solidarity, Gdansk, Poland



Petar Spasic

Government of the Republic of Serbia
Serbian European Integration Office, sector for
planning, programming, monitoring and reporting on
EU funds and development aid

As a country which is in the EU accession process, Serbia is implementing systemic reforms in the fields of planning, structuring, financing and implementing infrastructure projects. Bearing in mind that infrastructure development is recognised as an accelerator of economic growth, substantial efforts are being invested in establishing a system for selecting and prioritising infrastructure projects. The methodological approach to selection and prioritisation has been introduced and resulted in the Single Project Pipeline for transport, energy, environment and business-related infrastructure projects.

Selected and prioritised projects are subject to further preparation and JASPERS' expertise is essential in that respect. In particular, JASPERS' involvement in the process of preparing some of the infrastructure projects has helped Serbian institutions to understand critical milestones in the project preparation lifecycle and their potential implications in the project implementation phase. In that sense, Serbian institutions have identified reforms which need to be undertaken in order to create an environment adequate for the effective implementation of infrastructure projects in the future.

In that regard, thanks to the extensive work and exchanges with JASPERS' experts, we are investing joint efforts in integrating demand-driven logic, cost-effectiveness and option analyses as a practically applied principle when it comes to the preparation of certain infrastructure projects. Also, after almost three years of cooperation with JASPERS we intend to benefit from JASPERS' expertise in the definition of some of the sector strategy targets, primarily in the transport and environment sectors. In that sense, our intention is to include JASPERS in the policy discussions in the areas which are considered critical for the effective implementation and sustainable functioning of transport, energy, environment and business development-related infrastructure projects.

We are aware that the tasks which are ahead of us will require strong commitment on the part of the responsible institutions and sufficient time for processing and embedding reforms in the practical assignments. We are counting on JASPERS' assistance in that sense, and this is confirmed by the resources allocated for this purpose for the forthcoming period.





Clinical Centre of the University of Pécs, Hungary



Stéphane Ouaki and Lia Potec

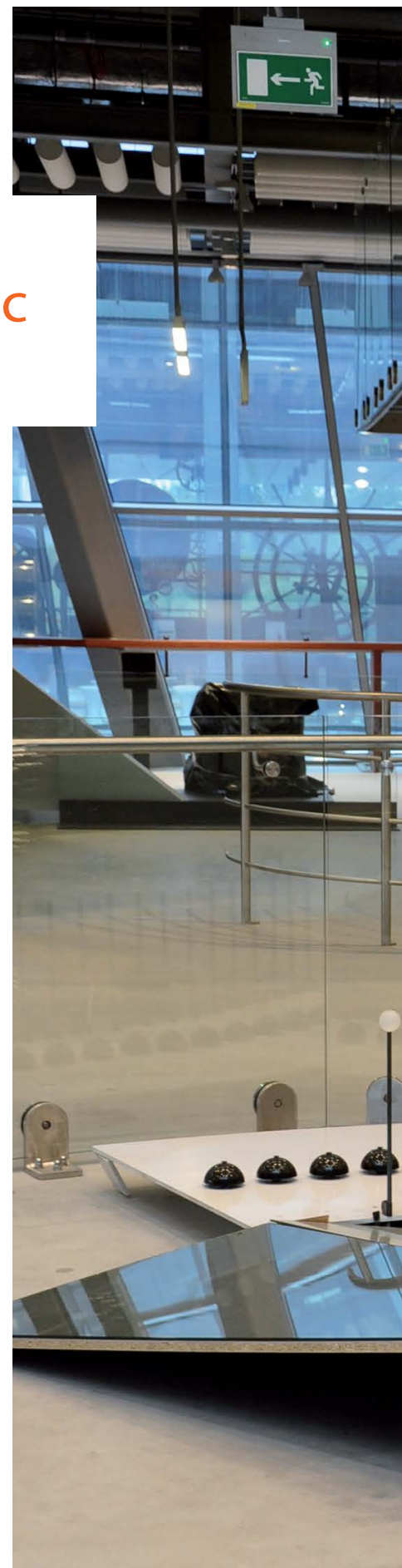
Head of Unit, DG MOVE, European Commission (Ouaki)
Deputy Head of Unit, DG MOVE, European Commission (Potec)

Since 2015, DG MOVE has been a member of the expanding JASPERS family. It is the first other European Commission Directorate General to sign up to the JASPERS Framework Partnership Agreement, following in the footsteps of DG REGIO and benefiting from the latter's experience and good practice.

As a new partner, DG MOVE brought not just new financial resources to the initiative, but also its own specific needs and requirements for the use and management of JASPERS' services. At first it seemed that this would require significant changes in the way JASPERS worked. But eventually we all concluded that we shared the same end-goal – well prepared transport infrastructure projects that make the most effective use of EU co-funding – and that the differences entailed for the beneficiaries and for the way of working of the JASPERS experts could be easily accommodated.

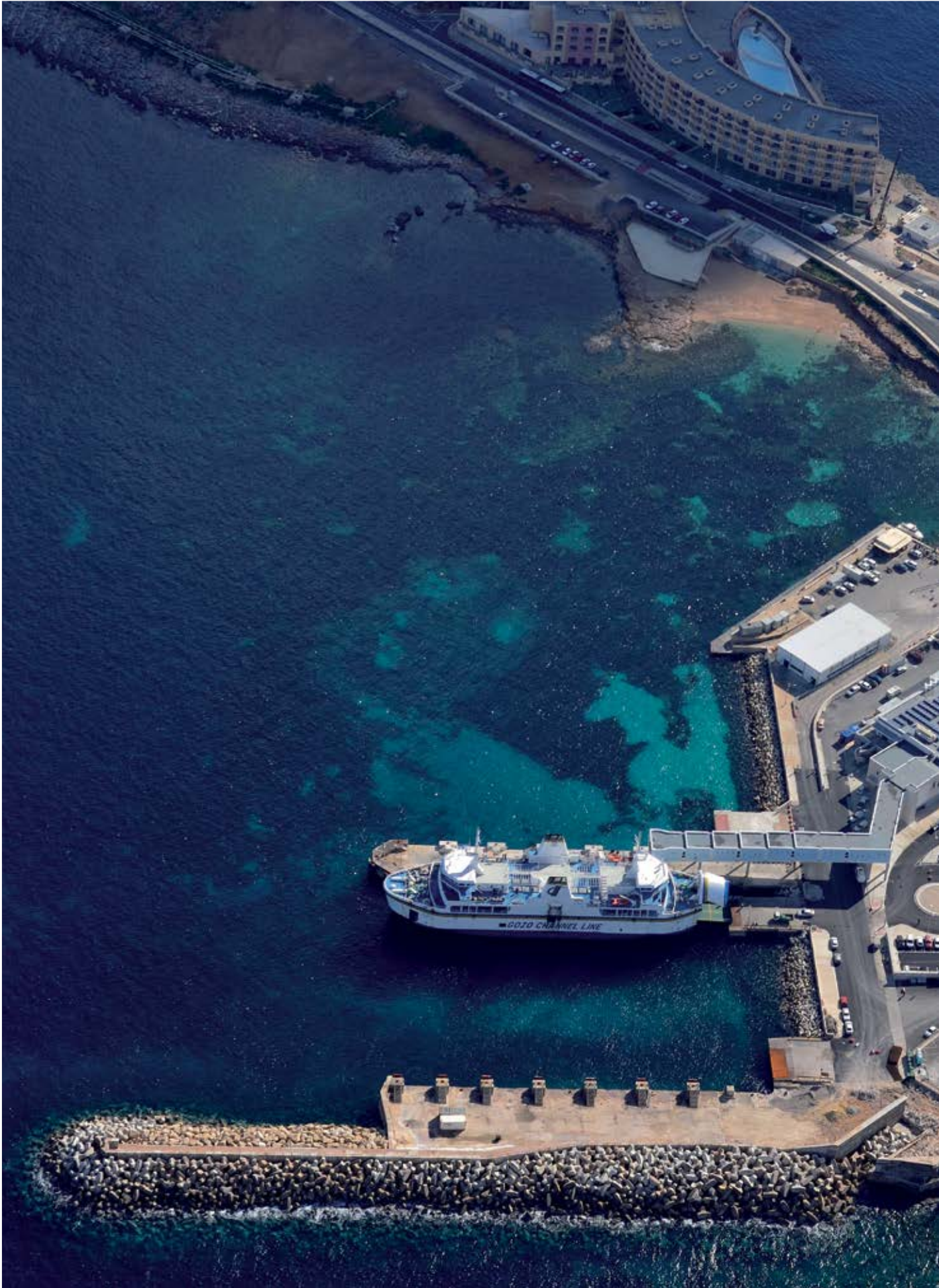
We had our first encounter with JASPERS' Alan Lynch and Pasquale Staffini in a phone conference call from the office of Brendan Smyth, in Beaulieu, in March 2013. The negotiations with the Council and the European Parliament on the establishment of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) were at the time in full swing. One of the main provisions being negotiated was the transfer of EUR 10bn from the Cohesion Fund for management under the CEF rules. And one of the main conditions for that transfer was ensuring that the eligible Member States would receive support in the form of technical assistance to help them successfully secure those funds under the CEF rules. We wanted to make sure that this possibility was there as soon as the CEF Regulation came into force at the beginning of 2014. It took us somewhat longer than we thought.

We signed the amendment to the JASPERS Framework Partnership Agreement in early summer 2015, after a good number of hours spent in meetings, written exchanges and the drafting of amendments. But in the process we got to know each other well, to understand each other's objectives, expectations and constraints. And it was just the end of the beginning. A new journey lies ahead, long-term and more exciting – a true partnership for supporting quality, efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure.





Kopernik Science Centre, Poland





JASPERS milestones

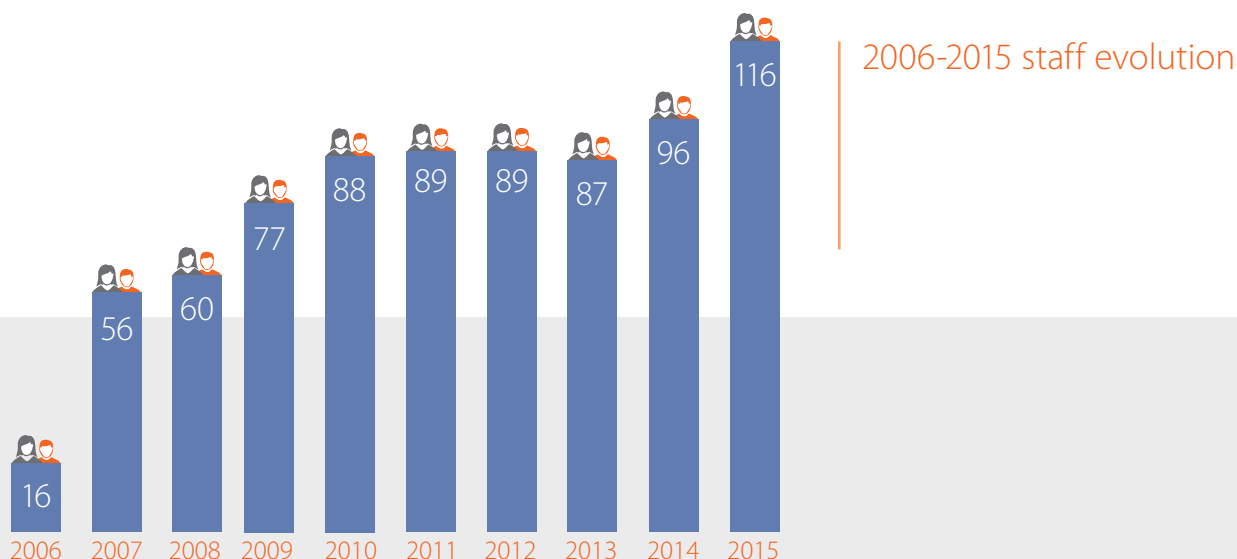


2005

JASPERS' beneficiaries are 14 EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and three Candidate Countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) receiving assistance from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

JASPERS supports projects in the following sectors: roads, air, maritime and public transport, knowledge economy and energy, water and waste.

- JASPERS was launched by the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Brussels on 24 November 2005.
- Building on previous cooperation in financing projects in Central and Eastern Europe, the three institutions decided to work together in a more structured way to help prepare projects eligible for support from the Structural and Cohesion Funds in the 12 countries that joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007 (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia).



2006

2007

- On 30 May 2006, the European Commission, the EIB and the EBRD signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning JASPERS, as well as a Contribution Agreement specifying objectives, procedures for operations, governance and financial aspects.
- In late 2006, when it began operations, JASPERS had a staff of 16. It was based only in Luxembourg and was active in the ten Central and Eastern European countries that had joined the European Union in 2004¹ and in the two that would join in 2007². At the end of the 2007-2013 programming period, JASPERS had grown to be a much bigger and more complex structure, active in 17 countries, with a staff of 87, headquarters in Luxembourg and offices in Bucharest, Vienna, Warsaw and Sofia.

- JASPERS' office in Warsaw, covering operations in Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, was opened on 12 January 2007 by EU Commissioner Danuta Hübner, EIB President Philippe Maystadt and EBRD Secretary General Horst Reichenbach.
- JASPERS' office in Vienna, covering operations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, was opened on 2 May 2007 by DG Regional Policy Director General Dirk Ahner, EIB Vice-President Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen and Alexander Auboeck, Business Group Director of the EBRD.
- JASPERS' office in Bucharest covering operations in Romania and Bulgaria, was opened on 7 June 2007 by Messrs Ahner, Kollatz-Ahnen and Auboeck.
- Urban infrastructure sector was created with effect from 1 September 2007.

¹ Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

² Bulgaria and Romania.

JASPERS milestones

2008

- Germany's Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) joined JASPERS on 1 July.
- New JASPERS website <http://www.jaspers-europa-info.org> was created.
- JASPERS was given a new matrix structure and, as of 1 March, included for administrative purposes in the Projects Directorate of the EIB as a separate department.
- JASPERS was presented at the EIB's 50th Anniversary conference in Bratislava on the new instruments in European regional policy addressing public and private stakeholders from all EU Member States.
- As part of the economic recovery package announced on 28 November, the Commission's contribution to JASPERS was decided to be increased by 25% over the 2008 level from 2009 onwards. This was to be matched by a pro rata increase in the EIB's contribution in kind to JASPERS.

2009

- At the request of the EU Member States, JASPERS was given the go-ahead to provide assistance to a limited number of specific projects during the early stages of their implementation.
- First JASPERS Stakeholders meeting (Krakow, 28-29 May) with representatives from the beneficiary countries. Participants compared their experience of working with JASPERS and presented case studies in different sectors.

2010

- Second JASPERS Stakeholders meeting (Sofia, 17 June) discussed measures to reduce time for submission and approval of grant applications. JASPERS was asked to start work at an early stage on project preparation for the 2014-2020 financial perspective, to step up its support for capacity building and to expand support for project implementation.
- November Steering Committee meeting agreed on new strategy for JASPERS' activities through to 2013. Core focus was to remain on support for project preparation for the 2007-2013 period, but as resources became available, additional emphasis would be placed on the preparation of projects for the 2014-2020 programming period.
- Information on completed assignments per country was made available on JASPERS' website.

2011

- Third Stakeholders meeting (Budapest, 7-8 April) discussed measures to improve the quality of submissions as well as streamlining the application process and the role of JASPERS after 2013.
- June Steering Committee approved JASPERS' strategy after 2013: JASPERS would continue operating in 2014-2020 period; a review exercise would be carried out in 2017 to assess the progress of Member States towards achieving sufficient internal capacity for project preparation.
- Core objectives post-2013: to improve project quality, timeliness of project preparation, approval process, capacity building; to provide assistance for implementation aimed at speeding up absorption in specific areas; and to create a networking platform to exchange information on project-specific issues between and across Member States.
- November Steering Committee meeting agreed that JASPERS would start to operate in the IPA region, beginning with the Candidate Countries (Croatia, Turkey, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia if granted candidate status), to help these countries build up capacity to prepare projects for funding under the Structural Funds. JASPERS would assist them in the preparation of sound projects in the transport and environment sectors under the regional development component of the IPA instrument.

JASPERS milestones

2012

- JASPERS strengthened its presence in the IPA beneficiary countries (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia).
- JASPERS signed the Contribution Agreement for Croatia, covering the implementation period from 8 August 2011 until accession.
- An independent evaluation of JASPERS from 2005 until the end of June 2011 confirmed the substantial added-value of JASPERS advice on project development and the continued strong demand for its services, and recommended an increased focus on capacity building: (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/jaspers_evaluation/final_report_131212.pdf).
- Fourth JASPERS Stakeholders meeting (Zagreb, 7-8 April) discussed Structural Fund Regulations for 2014-2020 as agreed at that time, the implications for JASPERS, the JASPERS networking platform and implementation plan and the remaining challenges for the 2007-2013 period.
- December Steering Committee meeting agreed to extend JASPERS' activities in Croatia to knowledge economy and energy projects and to extend the Contribution Agreement for Croatia to end-2014.
- Following a request for assistance from the Greek authorities, JASPERS support for a work programme was discussed in November.
- Re-tendering of JASPERS' management information system services contract (database, website and networking platform) was launched during the year.



2013



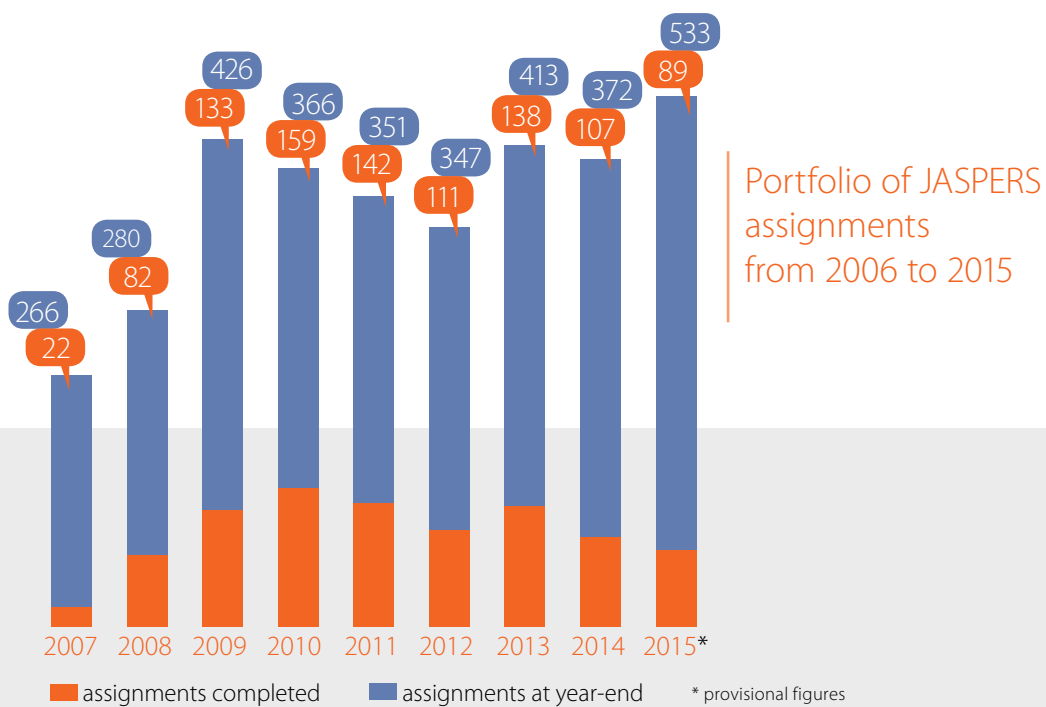
- JASPERS' assistance to Greece focused on the transport, environment and knowledge economy sectors and on the preparation of projects to be implemented in the 2014-2020 period.
- Fifth JASPERS Stakeholders meeting (Malta, 15-16 April) discussed the practice of JASPERS cooperation and lessons learnt in the 2007–2013 programming period; the activity of JASPERS in the 2014–2020 programming period; and the transition between the two programming periods.
- December Steering Committee meeting agreed that JASPERS would continue to provide support in the IPA countries during the 2014-2020 programming period.
- Apart from the advisory function, JASPERS was expected to play a new role in the 2014-2020 programming period as Independent Quality Reviewer (IQR) of major projects, as provided for in the Common Provisions Regulation.

JASPERS milestones

2014

- In 2014, JASPERS established an Independent Quality Review (IQR) function and further developed its Networking and Competence Centre with the objective of disseminating knowledge and exchanging best practices with its beneficiaries.
- JASPERS IQR is located in Brussels and organised as a separate division from the project advisory divisions.
- A Quality Management Unit was also set up in 2014 to ensure consistency and high quality in the delivery of JASPERS services.
- In November, the EC and EIB signed a Framework Partnership Agreement for the management of JASPERS for the 2014-2020 programming period. The indicative maximum amount of grants that may be awarded from the EU budget was set at EUR 250m for the entire period.
- The Steering Committee approved an increase in JASPERS staff financed under the main contribution agreement with DG REGIO to 124 posts.
- Sixth JASPERS Stakeholders meeting (Athens, 11 December) discussed the expansion of JASPERS; the role of IQR; enhancing the delivery of JASPERS expertise and cross-sector advice through the new Networking and Competence Centre; the Connecting Europe Facility; the new CBA guidelines; and the transition between the two programming periods.

JASPERS signed the Contribution Agreement for Serbia, covering the implementation period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016.



2015

- The first IQR working arrangements for Member States were signed and the IQR team continued to develop guidance and advice for Member States.
- The Board of DG Regional and Urban Policy agreed that all major project submissions would be passed to JASPERS for Post-Submission Appraisal (PSA). The first PSA assignment started in September.
- At its meeting on 13 July 2015, the Steering Committee (SC) endorsed JASPERS' Operational Plan 2015-2017, which confirms the new role of JASPERS IQR in Post-Submission Appraisal (PSA) for the Commission and the criteria for supporting requests not related to major projects.
- The Steering Committee also endorsed in principle the idea of using JASPERS expertise to respond to requests that might come through the Advisory Hub (a gateway to which requests for information on advisory services may be addressed), where JASPERS is best placed for delivering advice.
- As at 1 November 2015, JASPERS had a staff of 114 working in offices in Luxembourg, Brussels, Bucharest, Sofia, Vienna and Warsaw.
- The Steering Committee approved the principle that JASPERS' assistance is available for the development of all categories of projects supported by **European Structural and Investment Funds** (ESIF).
- First JASPERS assignments in Italy and France. JASPERS assistance became available to the majority of EU and Candidate Countries. Those who are not yet availing themselves of the JASPERS facility may obtain assistance, subject to the agreement of JASPERS' Steering Committee.
- Agreement was signed with DG MOVE for JASPERS experts to support Connecting Europe Facility projects.





Czajka – biological reactor, Poland



Joint Assistance
to Support Projects
in European Regions







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