

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	[101081558] - [Counter Balance]
PIC number:	[939793231]
Project name and acronym:	[Citizens'Observatory For Green Deal Financing] — [Citizens4EGDFunding]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	16
Event name:	Webinars on EU public finance
Type:	webinars
In situ/online:	online
Location:	online
Date(s):	10/10/2023; 9/1/2024; 22/2/2024; 5/3/2024
Website(s) (if any):	<p>Webinar 1: The Foundational Economy: Putting public liveability at the heart of EU public finance (10 October 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counter Balance website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Event publication: https://counter-balance.org/news/webinar-the-foundational-economy-putting-public-liveability-at-the-heart-of-eu-public-finance o Report of the event: https://counter-balance.org/news/the-foundational-economy-putting-public-liveability-at-the-heart-of-eu-public-finance - Recorded webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfzlwLFMAsw - Article on the project landing page (includes link to the published EDS): https://bankwatch.org/event/webinar-the-foundational-economy-putting-liveability-at-the-heart-of-eu-public-finance <p>Webinar 2: EU external investments: geopolitical competition or fair partnerships? (9 January 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counter Balance website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Event publication: https://counter-balance.org/news/webinar-eu-external-investments-geopolitical-competition-or-fair-partnerships-9-january-2024-1400-cet o Report of the event: https://counter-balance.org/news/webinar-report-examining-the

	<p style="text-align: center;">state-of-eu-external-investment-initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recorded webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m_9OgHStWs&t=3144s - Article on the project landing page (includes link to published EDS): https://bankwatch.org/event/webinar-eu-external-investments-geopolitical-competition-or-fair-partnerships <p>Webinar 3: Charting the course for a sustainable and social EIB (22 February 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counter Balance website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Event publication: https://counter-balance.org/news/charting-the-course-for-a-sustainable-and-social-eib o Report of the event: https://counter-balance.org/news/charting-the-course-for-a-sustainable-and-social-eib-1 - Recorded webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCemQ3t8YJU - Article on the project landing page (includes link to published EDS): https://bankwatch.org/event/webinar-charting-the-course-for-a-sustainable-and-social-eib <p>Webinar 4: Manifesto on the future of EU public finances (5 March 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Article on the project landing page (includes link to published EDS): https://bankwatch.org/event/webinar-manifesto-on-the-future-of-eu-public-finances <p>Published EDS: EDS_Deliverable-16.1_Counter-Balance.pdf</p>
Participants	
Female:	67
Male:	48
Non-binary:	-
Didn't provide information on gender:	19
From country 1 [Austria]:	2
From country 2 [Belgium]:	37
From country 3 [Bulgaria]:	2
From country 4 [Croatia]:	5
From country 5 [Czech Republic]:	16
From country 6 [Estonia]:	3
From country 7 [Finland]:	1
From country 8 [France]:	4
From country 9 [Germany]:	13

From country 10 [Greece]:	1		
From country 11 [Hungary]:	1		
From country 12 [Italy]:	6		
From country 13 [Ireland]:	1		
From country 14 [Latvia]:	1		
From country 15 [Luxembourg]:	13		
From country 16 [Poland]:	6		
From country 17 [Romania]:	5		
From country 18 [Slovakia]:	4		
From country 19 [Spain]:	8		
From country 20 [Sweden]:	1		
From country 21 [The Netherlands]:	4		
Total number of participants:	134	From total number of countries:	21

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

As part of the work package 16, four webinars focusing on the EU public finance were organised:

Webinar 1: The Foundational Economy: Putting public liveability at the heart of EU public finance (10 October 2023)

The first webinar was a presentation of Counter Balance's latest report "[Things Have to Change](#)". The panel included three speakers, two academics and one grassroots policy expert. There was a good gender balance on the panel, with two women and two men (one of whom acted as moderator). 22 participants from 11 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain) took part in the discussion, of whom only half responded to the non-mandatory question to identify their gender (the rest being 7 women and 4 men).

The exchange focused on the urgent need for EU Member States to encourage the EIB to take on riskier investments, but only in support of the common good and quality public services. Participants expressed the urgent need for the EIB to prioritise investment in public services over profit-driven ventures.

Acknowledging the EIB's substantial annual profits of €2.5 billion, participants argued that these funds should be redirected to socially and environmentally beneficial projects that could play a key role in bringing about transformative change, particularly in the context of climate change.

In essence, the webinar highlighted the need to harness the untapped potential of the EIB to promote a fairer, more sustainable and inclusive future for all, based on strong public services and social justice.

A recording of the webinar can be accessed [here](#) and presentations of the speakers are available [here](#).

Webinar 2: EU external investments: geopolitical competition or fair partnerships? (9 January 2024)

Counter Balance hosted the second webinar of the series entitled "EU external investments: geopolitical competition or fair partnerships?" on 9 January 2024. It explored the recalibration of public spending within the EU's international development agenda, with a particular focus on the Global Gateway initiative. Representatives from various sectors, including the European External Action

Service (EEAS), the Belgian Ministry of Development Cooperation, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the NGO Debt Observatory in Globalisation (ODG), offered insightful recommendations to ensure a more sustainable and equitable approach to development finance. Key themes emerged, highlighting concerns about the private sector-driven aid framework hindering pro-poor policies, and the need for democratic governance and better representation of workers in the Global South.

The panel was also gender diverse, with three women and two men taking turns to speak. The webinar was well attended, recording 60 participants. 43 of them were coming from 8 EU countries and did not participate in the previous webinar (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Estonia, Spain and Sweden). There were 23 women, 15 men and 5 person that do not provide information, one of which marks “prefers not to say”. The discussion between the speakers was lively and there were many questions from the audience.

Overall, the focus was on the need for a clear development mandate and transparent planning within the Global Gateway Initiative to effectively address global development challenges. During the discussion, several key themes emerged:

- A private sector driven aid framework stands in the way of. pro-poor policies. The webinar highlighted that EU development funds are increasingly driven by private sector interests in expanding market opportunities, raising concerns about maximising corporate profits as the objective when major investments are needed globally in social infrastructure and public services.
- Democratic governance and better representation of workers in the Global South is essential. The lack of a clear development mandate and transparent planning within the Global Gateway Initiative raises doubt whether the initiative is genuinely addressing global development challenges or merely serving as a public relations exercise.
- Sustainable development and corporate responsibility must prevail over neocolonial business models and duly re-evaluating consequences of EU's consumption demand and external investments is essential for financing of a truly just and global ecological transition.

Overall, the webinar underlined a collective plea for a more transparent, inclusive and sustainable approach to the EU's external investments to effectively address global development needs.

Respondents to the EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values indicated a high level of satisfaction with the discussion (with an average score of 4.5), as well as with the topic and the content shared, which were considered relevant to the discussion by participants, who overall felt that their knowledge had increased.

A recording of the webinar is available [here](#) and a presentation used during the event is available [here](#).

Webinar 3: Charting the course for a sustainable and social EIB (22 February 2024)

The 3rd webinar provided a comprehensive examination of the operational landscape of the European Investment Bank (EIB), coinciding with the appointment of a new EIB President. Through a dialogue between a McMaster University professor, an EIB official and a Bankwatch representative, participants gained insights into the dynamics, challenges and opportunities for improvement within the Bank.

Discussions focused on governance structures and their profound impact on communities, with a particular emphasis on addressing environmental and social concerns, notably through increased funding for green public services. Key themes such as equitable transformation, broader participation in decision-making, and the need for transparency and accountability underscored the need for more inclusive and effective governance of public banks.

Throughout an hour-long discussion, several key themes emerged:

- **Just transformation:** The webinar underscored the historical oversight of public banks and emphasised the imperative of governance discussions for a just transition. While recognizing the EIB's commitment to enhancing its green and social impact, it also acknowledged the pressing need for more effective measures to catalyse a truly just transformation that prioritises people's wellbeing. This involves supporting public-public investments geared towards enhancing green public services.
- **Participation:** Advocacy for broader representation in decision-making processes was a recurrent theme. Stressing the necessity of including meaningful contributions from various stakeholders such as CSOs, unions, SMEs, and municipalities, the discussion highlighted the importance of enhancing the accountability and responsiveness of public banks to the communities they serve.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Concerns were voiced about the classification of projects, prompting a call for greater transparency and accuracy in defining climate action initiatives

and fossil fuel phase-out strategies. The importance of adhering to statutory requirements, additionality, and avoiding commercial activities within the EIB's mandate was emphasised. Additionally, the discussion highlighted the need for enhanced transparency in project implementation, due diligence procedures, and a well-functioning complaint mechanism. There was also an emphasis on the necessity for more strategic planning and integrated approaches to foster community engagement.

The webinar was well attended by 40 participants out of which 34 were European and new to Counter Balance's panel discussions, from 13 EU countries (13 women and 18 men, 3 persons that did not provide information on gender). The discussion between the speakers was balanced and some questions were raised by the audience. Due to time constraints and a busy schedule of one of the speakers, not all questions could be answered live, but the most detailed ones were answered at the end of the call (with the help of Counter Balance).

A recording of the webinar is available [here](#).

Webinar 4: Manifesto on the future of EU public finances (5 March 2024)

With the project coming to its end and to close the series of webinars on EU public finance, a webinar aimed at presenting the Citizens' Observatory for Green Deal Financing coalition's vision of EU public finance as contained in the manifesto on the future of EU public finances to the whole Bankwatch network members was organized. Two speakers (1 female, 1 male) from Bankwatch alternated in shedding light on the following topics: the 'Citizens' Observatory for Green Deal Financing' project recap and the current political context with the most important upcoming highlights such as the EU elections in June 2024, proposal for the next MFF, RRF ending in 2026 and uncertainty with green policies and attack on the European Green Deal.

Second part of the webinar focused on presenting the manifesto as such, specifying the thematic chapters and proposals for how to deliver truly transformative investments it contains, as well as how the process of manifesto development went since the [Citizens Observatory Forum](#) in Italy in September 2023 until March 2024. Lastly, participants got acquainted with the next steps including finalization and further promotion of the manifesto, as well as its possible usage in Bankwatch's future lobbying and advocacy endeavours.

The webinar was attended by 48 persons in total, out of which 35 were coming from 9 EU countries (24 female, 11 male) and did not participate in any of the previous events of this webinars' series.

Regarding the EU survey on Justice, Rights and Values, unfortunately, we did not receive any replies related to the 1st, 3rd and 4th webinar, hence we cannot provide summary of participants' feedback on these events.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).