

FOREWORD

The Chairman and Secretary-General of a banking association occupy one of the most senior positions in the society of a country.

The authorities and society look to her or him to exercise constructive leadership in the sector that protects the country's savings and builds future prosperity. Under their leadership, competitive activities by individual financial institutions can converge, with positive impacts on the welfare of society; financial institutions can enhance their cooperation to modernize standards and services that affect the entire economy; and banks can launch initiatives that bring them closer to their clients.

This position of authority also carries special obligations. As Chairman and Secretary-General help to shape the collective views of the banking sector on actions by authorities and other stakeholders, they have direct influence on how your country governs itself. Expertise, balanced judgment and a sense of the collective good are therefore essential attributes: their position gives unique insights into how well banks support the needs of the real economy, and into changes to the legal and regulatory environment that would enable enhanced support.

Yet in many countries banking associations have not had many opportunities to equip themselves to carry out such actions in support of the public good.

This *SPI Platform Toolkit*, which is a result of visionary work by the World Bank with financial support from Italy's Ministry of Economy and Finance, is intended as a guide for the senior leaders of banking associations that are Associates of the European Banking Federation to increase their contribution to the prosperity in their countries through financial sector modernization.

The SPI Platform catalyses collaboration among authorities, bank clients and financial institutions to identify a modernization program that meets their collective interests and to work out together the solutions that will enhance the contribution of finance to the economy.

The detailed, transparent step-by-step process of the *SPI Platform Toolkit* enables a banking association to engage with the authorities and other stakeholders to launch a large financial modernization program, leveraging the unique financial and intellectual resources of the banking sector. The SPI Platform itself can become the instrument of choice for the banking community to make itself a champion for economic prosperity – and raise the public profile and influence of its leadership.

I am grateful to the European Banking Federation for agreeing to publish this *SPI Platform Toolkit* to contribute to the institutional growth of its Associates in Eastern Europe.

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