



First Problem Solving Monitoring Report

Belgrade Solid Waste Public Private Partnership

EBRD Project Number 46758

Case 2021/01 (Request #2)

April 2024

PUBLIC

The Independent Project Accountability Mechanism (IPAM) is the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD) accountability mechanism. IPAM independently reviews issues raised by individuals or organisations concerning Bank-financed projects that are believed to have caused or be likely to cause harm. The purpose of the mechanism is to facilitate the resolution of social, environmental, and public disclosure issues among project stakeholders; to determine whether the Bank has complied with its Environmental and Social Policy and the project-specific provisions of its Access to Information Policy; and, where applicable, to address any existing noncompliance with these policies, while preventing future non-compliance by the Bank. For more information about IPAM, contact us or visit www.ebrd.com/project-finance/ipam.html

Contact information The Independent Project Accountability Mechanism European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Five Bank Street London E14 4BG Telephone: +44 (0)20 7338 6000 Email: ipam@ebrd.com	How to submit a complaint to the IPAM Concerns about the environmental and social performance of an EBRD Project can be submitted by email or via the online form at:  https://www.ebrd.com/project-finance/ipam.html
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Unless otherwise indicated, capitalised terms used in this report are those as set forth in the 2019 Project Accountability Policy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Long Form
Board	the Board of Directors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Case	the consideration of a Request under the Project Accountability Policy following its registration
CAO	the Chief Accountability Officer of the EBRD, and IPAM head
Case Registry	the registry of Cases created in accordance with Section III, Paragraph 3.1 of the Project Accountability Policy, which can be found on the IPAM Webpage
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EBRD (or Bank)	the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESP	the EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy in force at the time of Project approval
IPAM	the Independent Project Accountability Mechanism of the EBRD established as per the 2019 Project Accountability Policy
IPAM Head	the EBRD managing director responsible for the running of IPAM, the implementation of the Project Accountability Policy and for making the decisions that are the responsibility of IPAM under said Policy
PAP	the 2019 Project Accountability Policy
Parties	the individuals, entities, and/or organisations with a direct interest in a Case. Parties may include (but are not limited to): the Requesters; their Representatives, if any; the relevant Bank department, team, or unit; the Client; and other Project financiers or other entities responsible for the implementation of a Project
Problem Solving	the IPAM function which supports voluntary dispute resolution engagement between Requesters and Clients to resolve the environmental, social, and public disclosure issues raised in a Request, without attributing blame or fault.
PSD	Project Summary Document
President	the President of the EBRD
Request	The communication submitted by a Requester or the representative to IPAM under this Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 24 November 2020 the [Independent Project Accountability Mechanism](#) (IPAM) received a [Request](#) from five Roma households of waste pickers (Requesters) represented by A11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights (a Serbian CSO) and advised by CEE Bankwatch (an international network of CSOs). Requesters alleged that the [Belgrade Solid Waste PPP](#) (46758) caused them physical and economic displacement as they had to move from the Vinca landfill where they used to live and work. Requesters asked for their identities be kept confidential as a precautionary measure, due to concerns of potential intimidation, pressure, and reprisals and expressed interest in Problem Solving.

IPAM registered the Request on 14 January 2021 under [Case number 2021/01](#), thus initiating the [Assessment](#) stage which was conducted until April 2021. During the Assessment 12 additional affected families that were relocated from the Vinca landfill joined the IPAM Case, making 17 households in total. IPAM determined that the Case was suitable for Problem Solving as all Parties expressed their willingness to engage in a Problem Solving Initiative under the facilitation of IPAM.

From May 2021 to July 2023 IPAM, with the help of a Serbian dispute-resolution expert, facilitated a [mediation process](#) between Requesters, their Representatives (A11 Initiative), Advisors (CEE Bankwatch), Beo Čista Energija d.o.o Beograd (the EBRD Client), the City of Belgrade, the Municipality of Vladimirci and City of Šabac.

The Problem Solving Agreements were signed on the 4th and 5th of July 2023, when all Parties met in Belgrade and Vladimirci. This was an important milestone for the 17 resettled families. All affected families were provided with short-term support measures and long-term sustainable housing solutions. All Requesters received affordable social housing and were offered access to subsidized utility costs. Requesters residing in Belgrade were supported to cover utility debts and had their enforcement proceedings suspended, which is enabling them to take formal jobs. Requesters can access social benefits and healthcare services as per their entitlements, follow to be offered training and employment opportunities. Each family received furniture and house appliances and self-employed Requesters were offered tools and equipment. After the signing of the Agreements, the Case 2021/01 was transferred to the Problem-Solving Monitoring stage for IPAM to monitor the implementation of the Agreements reached by Parties as per an agreed Monitoring Plan.

During the first monitoring period (July - December 2023), IPAM engaged with the city of Šabac officials, the Client, the Representatives and Advisors to the Requesters, to follow up on agreed actions and understand challenges met to implement the Agreements. In addition, IPAM conducted its first monitoring visit to Belgrade, Serbia in December 2023. Under the signed Agreements, the Parties had committed to undertake 15 actions before December 2023. However, only three have been completed and 12 are still pending. The electoral process in Serbia has been the main challenge faced in the implementation of the Agreements, as the process lost the representatives from the City of Belgrade and Vladimirci. To ensure that the Requesters are not affected by this situation, IPAM will hire a local monitor to oversee progress of some of the actions.

IPAM will continue monitoring the implementation of the Problem-Solving Agreements until all commitments made by Parties are effectively carried out. The second Problem Solving Monitoring Report will cover the period January - June 2024 and is expected to be issued in July 2024. This report was circulated to the Parties for comments prior to its disclosure and is submitted for information to the EBRD Board of Directors and the President and the Parties are notified of its disclosure in the virtual case file [Case 2021/01](#) in both English and Serbian.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. REQUEST



Waste picker at Vinca landfill before remediation. Source: Beo Čista Energija

The Request was submitted to IPAM on 24 November 2020 by five families of Roma waste pickers represented by A11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights (a Serbian CSO) and advised by CEE Bankwatch (an international network of CSOs). Requesters alleged that the [Belgrade Solid Waste PPP](#) (46758) caused them physical and economic displacement as they had to move from the Vinca landfill where they used to live and work. During the Assessment stage 12 additional affected

families that were relocated from the Vinca landfill joined the IPAM Case, making 17 households in total. Requesters expressed that they received no temporary housing, or for some of them the housing that was offered wasn't adequate, and they were unable to pay utility costs. In addition, Requesters claimed that lost personal property during the resettlement process and the resettlement process has not complied with the local legislation of Serbia and the EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy. Requesters asked for their identities be kept confidential as a precautionary measure, due to concerns of potential intimidation, pressure, and reprisals and expressed interest in Problem Solving.

1.2. PROJECT

The [Belgrade Solid Waste PPP](#) (46758) involves debt financing in an amount of up to EUR 70 million to Beo Čista Energija d.o.o Beograd who is in charge of the construction of new sanitary landfills, an energy-from-waste facility for thermal treatment of solid municipal waste and production of electricity and heat for the residents of Belgrade. The Project also envisages the construction of a landfill gas facility which utilizes landfill gas for energy production, a leachate collection system and a leachate treatment facility, and construction and demolition of a waste recovery facility. The Project is also receiving support from the International Finance Corporation in the amount of up to EUR 70 million.



Vinca landfill after remediation. Source: Beo Čista Energija

The existing Vinca landfill was one of the largest non-sanitary landfills in Europe which has been operating since 1977, spreading over 45ha and reaching 80m in height. Through the Project the landfill is being stabilized remediated, and covered, thus preventing landfill gas pollution and leachate generation, and polluting the surrounding soil.

Under the Project's Public Private Partnership, the City of Belgrade is responsible for carrying out land acquisition and resettlement. In this regard, in 2018 the City of Belgrade prepared a Resettlement Action Plan in line with the EBRD's Environmental and Social Performance Requirements 5. The families who used to live on the dumpsite in makeshift houses had to be relocated to Belgrade, Šabac and Vladimirci during December 2018 – January 2019. Considering that waste pickers were expected to lose their income, livelihood restoration measures have been provided in the Resettlement Action Plan. The Project was approved for financing by the EBRD Board of Directors on 18 September 2019, as Category A under the EBRD's 2014 Environment and Social Policy. The loan is currently being repaid.

2. PROBLEM SOLVING INITIATIVE

The Problem-Solving function of IPAM, supports dialogue between Requesters and Clients to resolve environmental, social, and public disclosure issues underlying a Request, without attributing blame or fault. IPAM engages with Project-affected People, Clients, and other stakeholders as a neutral third party, to help them find mutually satisfactory resolutions through flexible, consensus-based problem-solving approaches.

From May 2021 to July 2023 IPAM, with the help of a Serbian dispute-resolution expert, facilitated a mediation process between Requesters, their Representatives (A11 Initiative), Advisors (CEE Bankwatch), Beo Čista Energija d.o.o Beograd (the EBRD Client), the City of Belgrade, the Municipality of Vladimirci and City of Šabac.

The Problem Solving Agreements were signed on the 4th and 5th of July 2023, when all Parties met in Belgrade and Vladimirci. This was an important milestone for the 17 resettled families. All affected families were provided with short-term support measures and long-term sustainable housing solutions. All Requesters received affordable social housing and were offered access to subsidized utility costs. Requesters residing in Belgrade were supported to cover utility debts and had their enforcement proceedings suspended, which is enabling them to take formal job opportunities. Requesters can access social benefits and healthcare services as per their entitlements, follow to be offered training opportunities and employment opportunities. Each family received furniture and house appliances and self-employed Requesters were offered tools and equipment.

The major concerns raised in the Request were addressed before July 2023 (see [Case 2021/01 Problem Solving Summary](#)), however, some were still pending completion and the agreement included several actions that were expected to take place after the signing, in particular the actions related to livelihood restoration. The Parties agreed for IPAM to monitor their implementation.

After the signing of the Agreements, the Case 2021/01 was transferred to the Problem-Solving Monitoring stage for IPAM to monitor the implementation of the Agreements reached by Parties as per an agreed Monitoring Plan.

3. PROBLEM SOLVING MONITORING

As per paragraph 2.5 a) of the Project Accountability Policy, IPAM will monitor the implementation of any agreements reached by Parties through Problem Solving and will determine its completion when the fulfil the following criteria:

- i. The commitments made by the Parties in such agreements are being effectively carried out; and
- ii. Implementation timetables are being met.

Regarding the monitoring approach, the Project Accountability Policy specifies that in its monitoring activities, IPAM will:

- i. Consult with the Requesters, the Client, Bank management and other relevant stakeholders;
- ii. Consider Project documentation, documentation submitted by the Requesters (or their Representatives, if any), the Client and publicly available information;
- iii. Undertake a site visit to the Project area, if deemed necessary by IPAM; and
- iv. Engage consultants on specific technical matters, if deemed necessary by IPAM.

IPAM will issue bi-annual Monitoring Reports to describe on-going monitoring activities and to provide updates on the status of each Problem-Solving agreement implementation, until IPAM determines that full implementation has been reached.

3.1. MONITORING ACTIVITIES

This document is the first Monitoring Report for Case 2021/01 covering the period from July 2023 to December 2023. During this monitoring period, IPAM engaged with the Parties in virtual meetings and via email, received inputs on progress made in the implementation of the Problem Solving Agreements and reviewed the documents shared by Parties.

On 15 December 2023, the IPAM team conducted its first monitoring visit to Belgrade, Serbia. During the mission, IPAM held two separate bilateral meetings in Belgrade with A11 Initiative for Social and Economic Rights and CEE Bankwatch; and another meeting with Beo Čista Energija d.o.o. The overall objective of these bilateral meetings was to review progress on pending actions and determine next steps.

IPAM was informed of the challenges encountered by Parties in the implementation of the Agreements, including the local and general elections taking place in Serbia at the end of the year and the fact that most officials that had taken part in the Problem Solving Initiative had left their positions.

The absence of counterparts in the City of Belgrade and the Municipality of Vladimirci has delayed the implementation of several actions under the responsibility of these two local governments. Furthermore, there was no set timeframe for new officials to take over these responsibilities.

To ensure that the Requesters would count with assistance in relation to some of the actions pending, IPAM proposed to the Client and the Requesters' Representatives, to hire a local monitor. This person would engage with the Requesters periodically and maintain continued engagement with relevant government departments to assist in administrative matters related to access to benefits and training opportunities. Once the new administration officials take office, IPAM would renew its engagement with them to expedite the fulfilment of the commitments made under the Problem Solving.

3.2. STATUS OF AGREEMENTS' IMPLEMENTATION

During this monitoring period, **15 actions were due to be completed by December 2023**. However, by that time only **three actions have been completed**.

Belgrade

Sustainable housing – Requesters' social housing agreements required amendment and the City of Belgrade committed to this being completed. A formal communication is to be sent to the relevant department by IPAM to expedite this process once the new administration is in place.

Access to utilities – two households have not had their utility debts cancelled after payment. During January - February 2024, a review of the situation and engagement with the relevant service provider to write off any incorrect charges will take place.

For several months one family from Belgrade had no access to electricity due to debts. In October 2023 the household was reconnected to electricity after the debt was covered. This action was closed by IPAM.

Furniture and household equipment – One Requester was unable to receive the delivery. IPAM will follow up with the Client and ensure the Requester is present to receive it.

Access to social services - The City of Belgrade (Social Service Centre) committed to visit Requesters once a month to check the status of utility bills and address other social concerns as per their competences. IPAM has no information whether visits have taken place by the City of Belgrade. To provide this assistance, IPAM offered to hire a local monitor undertake monthly visits to Requesters' houses during 2024.

Most eligible Requesters can access their social benefits; however, the digitalization of social services has created obstacles for two Requesters' families who are not able to access the benefits. This action requires clarification and support to Requesters so that they can regain access as per their entitlements. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until December 2024.

Education and income generation - Requesters have been presented with information on how to access adult education on several occasions by Project consultants, but it seems that they have not expressed interest in accessing it. The IPAM local monitor will engage with each Requester to present to them the educational options and provide support for enrolment for those expressing interest. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

Beo Čista Energija covered the costs of vocational trainings in the areas of interest of Requesters. One Requester from Belgrade expressed interest in attending training in construction painting. By February 2024 IPAM committed to follow up on this item to clarify when the training would be available; how would the Requester be receiving information and will follow up directly with the Requester to ensure they know how to attend the training. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

During the six months following the signing of the Agreements, the City of Belgrade and Beo Čista Energija committed to offer the Requesters jobs and alternative income generation opportunities in line with their level education and skills.

From July 2021 Beo Čista Energija has offered jobs to Requesters as landfill waste helpers and assistants to the waste controllers. One Requester from Belgrade got a job at that time as truck cleaner and then switched to a recycling facility. The Beo Čista Energija job invitation has remained active and is posted in public spaces at the landfill.

No specific job offers were made during the period. IPAM will engage with the City of Belgrade as soon as feasible, as well as with Requesters so that they are aware of the opportunities available. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

Vladimirci

Sustainable housing – the five families resettled to Vladimirci moved to the new housing in May 2023. Houses were equipped with basic furniture and household appliances and tools to allow for self-employment. External porches have been built to four out of five houses to allow for sufficient living space. However, the porches have not been closed, although it had been one of the actions agreed. Follow up by IPAM and others is needed until completion.

Access to utilities – Requesters are expected to pay utility costs once bills have been issued on their names. Once Requesters start receiving bills, the IPAM local monitor will make sure they are aware of the reduced utility costs, with the condition of paying bills on time. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until December 2024.

Access to social services - The Municipality of Vladimirci (Social Service Centre) committed to visit Requesters once a month to check the status of utility bills and address other social concerns as per their competences. IPAM has no information whether visits have taken place. To address this action IPAM offered to involve the local monitor in undertaking monthly visits to Requesters' houses during 2024.

All eligible Requesters have been able to access free meals, social benefits, and emergency financial assistance. The IPAM local monitor will visit Requesters once a month to make sure that they continue accessing social services when eligible. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until December 2024.

Education and income generation - Requesters have been presented with information on how to access adult education on several occasions by Project consultants, but it seems that they have not expressed interest. The IPAM local monitor will reiterate educational options and provide support for enrolment for those expressing interest. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

One Requester from Vladimirci expressed interest in attending training in forklift operation and another one in beauty. IPAM will follow up on this item to clarify when the trainings would be available; how would Requesters be receiving information and will follow up directly with Requesters to ensure they know how to attend the trainings. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

During the six months following the signing of agreements, the Municipality of Vladimirci and Beo Čista Energija committed to offer to Requesters jobs and alternative income generation opportunities in line with their level education and skills. The Municipality of Vladimirci has offered jobs at the local shoe factory, but the Requesters have not taken the offers. The IPAM local monitor will engage with Requesters to get more information on this matter. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until completion.

Šabac

IPAM received a progress report from the City of Šabac, who has consistently shown commitment and capacity to implement the agreed actions. In addition, the Requesters are comfortable contacting them when needed. The Parties agreed that for Requesters residing in Šabac, all actions due by December 2023 have been completed.

Sustainable housing - As of December 2021 the three families have been resettled to social housing in Šabac and received basic furniture and household appliances and tools allowing for self-employment.

Access to social services - All Requesters can access free meals, social benefits, and emergency financial assistance. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until December 2024.

Access to utilities - The three families are regularly paying utility bills and those eligible can access subsidized utility costs. IPAM will continue monitoring this action until December 2024.

Education and income generation - Most of Requesters are working, either as day-labourers for a prearranged daily fee, or at the local public utility companies which is allowing them to earn regular income. Those with a regular job have their travel expenses covered as well. This action has been deemed completed and closed by IPAM.

One Requester has recently stopped working as he is currently in the process of obtaining certificates from the elementary school and would then look for a new job. Another Requester is due to attend vocational training to operate construction machines in the coming months. IPAM will follow up directly with the Requesters to assist in the process of enrolment and will continue monitoring this action until completion. IPAM will continue engagement with the city of Šabac officials until December 2024.

4. CONCLUSION

During the first monitoring period (July - December 2023), IPAM engaged with the city of Šabac officials, the Client, the Representatives and Advisors to the Requesters, to follow up on agreed actions and understand challenges met to implement the Agreements. In addition, IPAM conducted its first monitoring visit to Belgrade, Serbia in December 2023. Under the signed Agreements, the Parties had committed to undertake 15 actions before December 2023. However, only three have been completed and 12 are still pending. The electoral process in Serbia has been the main challenge faced in the implementation of the Agreements, as the process lost the representatives from the City of Belgrade and Vladimirci. To ensure that the Requesters are not affected by this situation, IPAM will hire a local monitor to oversee progress of some of the actions.

IPAM will continue monitoring the implementation of the Problem-Solving Agreements until all commitments made by Parties are effectively carried out. The second Problem Solving Monitoring Report will cover the period January - June 2024 and is expected to be issued in July 2024. IPAM wants to thank all Parties for the very constructive engagement during the bilateral meetings and for the hard work undertaken in the implementation of the Problem-Solving Agreements. Please note that this report was circulated to the Parties for comments prior to its disclosure. The Report is submitted for information to the EBRD Board of Directors and the President and the Parties are notified of its disclosure in the virtual case file [Case 2021/01](#) in both English and Serbian.