



Independent  
Project  
Accountability  
Mechanism

## Problem Solving Completion Report

Albanian Railways  
EBRD Project Number 48466  
Case 2023/02

June 2026

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*Unless otherwise indicated, capitalised terms used in this report are those as set forth in the 2019 Project Accountability Policy.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IPAM would like to thank the Requesters, their Representative, Albanian Railways, Vore Municipality, the Administrative Unit of Bexull, EBRD Management and other stakeholders involved in the Problem-Solving Initiative for their cooperation, clarifications and constructive engagement throughout the process.

The willingness of the Parties to maintain dialogue, exchange information and work towards a practical access solution was essential to the successful completion of the agreed actions and the closure of the Case.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Long Form</b>
Bank	the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
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
Case Registry	the registry of Cases created in accordance with the Project Accountability Policy
Client	Albanian Railways, as the Project implementing entity
EBRD	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 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
PAP	the 2019 Project Accountability Policy
Parties	the Requesters, their Representative, the Client, EBRD Management and other stakeholders directly involved in the Problem Solving process
Problem Solving	the IPAM function which supports voluntary dispute resolution between Requesters and Clients to address environmental, social and public disclosure issues raised in a Request, without attributing blame or fault
President	the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Project	the Albanian Railways Project, EBRD Project Number 48466
PSD	Project Summary Document
Request	the communication submitted to IPAM by Requesters or their Representative under the Project Accountability Policy
Requesters	the individuals who submitted, or on whose behalf a Representative submitted, the Request to IPAM

## Executive Summary

This Completion Report provides the Board of Directors and the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development with a summary of IPAM's Problem Solving process and monitoring activities for **Case 2023/02** concerning the **Albanian Railways Project (EBRD Project Number 48466)**. The Case concerned a practical access issue affecting the Bexull community in Vore Municipality, Albania, and illustrates how early engagement, a focused mandate and direct dialogue between the Parties enabled a timely and workable solution.

The Request was submitted to IPAM on 15 December 2022 by Mr Ditmir Zeqa, acting as representative of 60 individuals residing in Bexull. The Requesters were concerned that closure of the level crossing used by the community would restrict access to homes, businesses and the local mosque once the railway corridor was fenced. They considered that the alternative vehicular crossing proposed under the Project was too distant for pedestrians and that the connecting access roads were unsuitable for heavy vehicles. The Requesters therefore sought IPAM's support through Problem Solving to identify an access arrangement that would meet both community needs and Project requirements.

The case moved quickly from registration to resolution. **IPAM registered the Request on 6 February 2023**, undertook assessment consultations and a site mission, and confirmed that the Parties were willing to engage in a Problem-Solving Initiative. Within less than six months of registration, **IPAM facilitated a joint meeting in Bexull on 26 July 2023 at which the Parties agreed on a technical access solution and signed a confidential Problem-Solving Agreement**. The Agreement addressed the core concern raised in the Request by requiring continued interim access through the existing level crossing until the permanent access solution became operational.

**The case was solved through a narrowly framed and implementable package of commitments.** Albanian Railways agreed to preserve temporary access while works were ongoing and to deliver a permanent solution consisting of an underpass near the mosque for pedestrians and small vehicles and an ancillary road suitable for heavy vehicles. The technical solution was presented directly to the Requesters and adjusted following their comments, helping ensure that the agreed works responded to the community's practical access needs.

During monitoring, **IPAM verified implementation through regular engagement with the Parties, virtual and in-person meetings, document review, stakeholder updates and site visits**. IPAM issued three monitoring reports, in February 2024, September 2024 and March 2025, and undertook a final verification visit in January 2026. Monitoring confirmed that interim access remained available until the permanent solution was operational, avoiding disruption to the community while the works were completed.

By the end of monitoring, the underpass near the mosque was operational for pedestrians and small vehicles, and the ancillary road was constructed and functional for heavy vehicles. IPAM also confirmed that the expropriation steps required for the ancillary road had advanced in line with national procedures and EBRD requirements, while noting that compensation decisions and amounts remained outside the scope of the Problem-Solving Agreement and IPAM's monitoring mandate.

The case generated **lessons relevant to future access-related infrastructure complaints**:

- First, rapid progress is possible where the concern is clearly defined, the Parties are willing to engage, and the proposed remedy can be translated into specific technical commitments.
- Second, interim arrangements are essential where construction works may otherwise create immediate disruption.

- Third, technical solutions are more likely to be accepted when affected community members are directly involved in their design and verification.
- Fourth, if implementation depends on third party approvals or requires following local permitting procedures, periodic updates to the community need to be incorporated into the monitoring plan so that trust in the process is maintained.
- Finally, clear communication on the scope of the Agreement is important to manage expectations.

After a final verification visit in January 2026, IPAM determined that the commitments under the Problem-Solving Agreement had been effectively fulfilled and that no outstanding issue within the agreed scope remained. Although one technical commitment related to piping for future lighting could not be implemented due to technical limitations, IPAM concluded that this did not affect the core objective of ensuring safe and functional access for pedestrians, small vehicles and heavy vehicles.

This Report will be circulated to the Parties and disclosed in the virtual case file for [Case 2023/02](#) in both English and Albanian, following its submission to the Board and the President for information. Once disclosure takes place, IPAM will consider the Case successfully completed and closed.

## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1. REQUEST

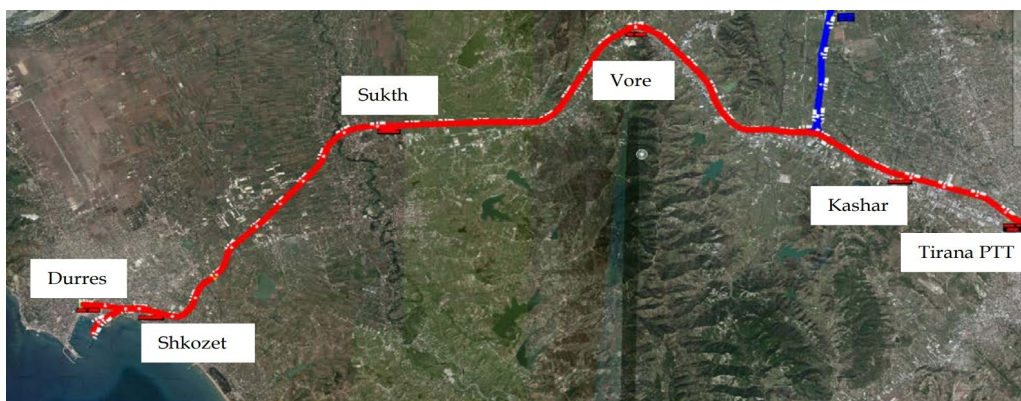
On 15 December 2022 the [Independent Project Accountability Mechanism](#) (IPAM) received a [Request](#) from Mr Ditmir Zeqa, acting as a representative of 60 individuals (Requesters) residing in the Bexull community, in Vore Municipality of Albania. The Request is related to the EBRD-funded [Albanian Railways Project](#) (OP ID 48466). Requesters alleged that they would lose access to their businesses, residences and to the local mosque because the level rail crossing, they relied on would be closed once the railway corridor was fenced. Although they acknowledged that the Project considered a vehicular crossing some kilometres away, they considered that to be too far for pedestrians and noted that the connecting access roads are unsuitable for heavy vehicles. The Requesters asked for their concerns to be addressed through Problem Solving.

### 1.2. PROJECT

The [Albanian Railways Project](#) (OP ID 48466) is a sovereign loan of 36.87 million euros to the Republic of Albania and is implemented by the Albanian Railways. The Project seeks to rehabilitate the existing railway line of 34.17 km in length between Tirana and Durres and build a new railway link of approximately 5 km to connect the existing Tirana-Durres rail line with the Tirana International Airport and the interchange with the existing line.

The Project was approved by the EBRD Board on 30 November 2016 and was classified as category B under the Bank's 2014 Environmental and Social Policy. According to the [Project Summary Document](#), the Project would involve specific environmental and social issues, mainly due to the fencing of the rail corridor and closure of a number of crossings that are currently used by communities along the railway.

Picture 1:



*Tirana - Durres Railway line to be rehabilitated (red line), new Tirana International Airport connection (blue line)*  
Source: Land Acquisition Framework for the Albanian Railways Project

### 1.3. PROCESSING TO DATE

The Request was registered on 6 February 2023 as [Case 2023/02](#) and IPAM commenced the Assessment stage, during which it engaged with the Requesters, Albanian Railways, Vore Municipality, and the EBRD project team to understand the issues raised and evaluate the feasibility of a Problem Solving Initiative.

During Assessment stage, IPAM conducted a site visit and engaged in virtual consultations with all Parties. These engagements confirmed that both the Requesters and the Client were willing to participate in a Problem-Solving process aimed at identifying an access solution that would remain

functional during construction and ensure adequate pedestrian and vehicular connectivity once the railway corridor was fenced. Based on these findings, IPAM determined that a Problem Solving Initiative was appropriate and could assist the Parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

The [Problem Solving Initiative](#) was conducted during July 2023 and was focused on ensuring that the technical solution proposed by the Client addresses the needs of the Requesters regarding pedestrian and vehicular access that will substitute the level crossing the community has been using for some time. Furthermore, the Requesters asked for a guarantee that the current level crossing would remain open until the technical solution becomes operational. On their side the Client asked the community to allow them to continue with railway construction works.



On 26 July 2023 IPAM facilitated a joint meeting of Parties in Bexull where the Client presented the technical solution to the Requesters and adjusted it based on their comments. Parties also agreed to abide by respectful behaviours during the implementation period. In that meeting, the Parties signed the Problem-Solving Agreement, which is confidential as per the Parties' request. After the signing of the Agreement, the Case 2023/02 was transferred to the Problem-Solving Monitoring stage for IPAM to monitor its implementation.

## 2. AGREEMENT MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Following the signing of the Problem-Solving Agreement on 26 July 2023, IPAM commenced Problem Solving Agreement Monitoring to oversee the implementation of the agreed access solution for the Bexull community. Monitoring was carried out through regular engagement with the Parties, review of documentation, and periodic site visits.

The table below illustrates the initial timeline set up for the Problem Solving and Monitoring stages.

Table 1. Case 2023/02 Case Timeline

Date	Action
<b>2022</b>	
15 December	Request received
<b>2023</b>	
6 February	Registration notification
3 - 6 April	Assessment mission to project site
June	Assessment report is issued
July	Problem Solving mission to project site
26 July	Problem-Solving Agreement signed
October	Problem-Solving Summary Report is issued
<b>2024</b>	
February	1 <sup>st</sup> Problem-Solving monitoring report issued
September	2 <sup>nd</sup> Problem-Solving monitoring report issued
<b>2025</b>	
March	3 <sup>rd</sup> Problem-Solving monitoring report issued
<b>2026</b>	
January	Monitoring visit to project site
June	Completion report issued

The first monitoring report, issued in February 2024, confirmed that the Parties had maintained constructive communication and that the underpass design had been jointly agreed with the community. During this period, IPAM also met with Requesters and Albanian Railways to verify that interim access would remain available until the permanent solution became operational.

The second monitoring report, issued in September 2024, noted that the technical design for the ancillary road and underpass had been approved by the Supervisor, and that the Contractor intended to proceed with works pending financial approval. In parallel, community members requested clarification on implementation timelines, including the possibility of extending the pavement near the mosque, which IPAM clarified fell outside the scope of the Agreement. Engagement during this period confirmed that Requesters continued to use the existing level crossing and that the Parties remained committed to the agreed solution.

The third monitoring report, issued in March 2025, confirmed continued progress, with the Parties abiding by the agreed behaviours and maintaining regular communication with IPAM. Albanian Railways reiterated its commitment that the existing level crossing would remain open until the new solution became fully operational. The expropriation process for the land required for the ancillary road advanced in line with national requirements and EBRD requirements, with a Council of Ministers decision expected before compensation payments to affected landowners.

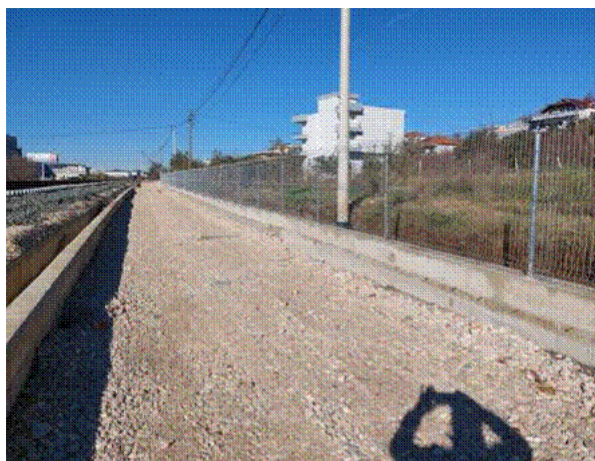


Figure 1: Photo of ancillary road under construction in Bexull, December 2024

In January 2026, IPAM conducted a final monitoring visit to verify completion of the access solution. The ancillary road was fully constructed and functional for vehicular traffic, and the underpass near the mosque was confirmed by both the Client and Requesters to be serving pedestrians and small vehicles as intended. IPAM verified that the temporary arrangement, the continued use of the level crossing, had remained in place until the permanent solution became operational. The team also confirmed that the landowners who were due to receive compensation due to the partial expropriation of their land were informed that the documents were submitted to the Council of Ministers. However, they noted their understanding that the compensation process and amount is out of scope of IPAM's work. The visit also confirmed continued communication between the Parties and that the commitments under the Problem Solving Agreement had been substantially fulfilled.



Figure 2: Photo completed of ancillary road in Bexull, January 2026



Figure 3: Photos of the underpass in Bexull, January 2026

### 3. PROBLEM SOLVING OUTCOMES

The Problem Solving Agreement focused on preserving and improving access for the Bexull community following the closure of the existing level crossing as part of the railway rehabilitation works. At the end of the monitoring stage, IPAM confirmed that the principal commitments under the Agreement had been implemented and that the agreed access solution was operational.

The main outcomes of the Problem Solving process were: the construction and operation of an ancillary road enabling heavy-vehicle access; the construction of an underpass near the mosque for pedestrians and small vehicles; the continued availability of interim access through the existing level crossing until the permanent solution became operational; and the maintenance of communication between the Parties during implementation.

IPAM also confirmed that the expropriation process required for the ancillary road had advanced in accordance with national procedures and EBRD requirements. While compensation decisions and amounts remained outside the scope of IPAM's Problem Solving mandate, affected landowners were informed that the relevant documentation had been submitted to the Council of Ministers.

Although one technical commitment related to piping for future lighting could not be implemented due to technical limitations, IPAM determined that this did not affect the core objective of the Agreement: to ensure safe and functional access for pedestrians, small vehicles and heavy vehicles. No outstanding issue within the agreed scope remained at closure.

#### 4. LESSONS LEARNED

The monitoring process for Case 2023/02 highlights several lessons relevant to future Problem-Solving cases involving access impacts and infrastructure works.

- 1. Early agreement on practical interim access arrangements is essential.** Maintaining the existing level crossing until the permanent solution became operational helped avoid disruption and supported confidence in the process.
- 2. Technical solutions benefit from direct community input.** Adjustments to the ancillary road and underpass design following consultation with Requesters helped ensure that the final access solution responded to local needs.
- 3. Clear communication on scope prevents misunderstandings.** During implementation, some issues raised by community members fell outside the agreed scope. Continued explanation of what the Agreement covered helped manage expectations and keep implementation focused.
- 4. Coordination with public authorities should be built into implementation planning.** Delivery of the access solution depended on coordination among Albanian Railways, municipal authorities, the administrative unit and national decision-making processes, including expropriation procedures.

#### 5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Based on the monitoring activities undertaken since July 2023, IPAM has determined that the commitments agreed by the Parties during the Problem-Solving Initiative for [Case 2023/02](#) have been effectively implemented. The access solution comprising the ancillary road for heavy vehicles and the underpass for pedestrians and small vehicles is operational, and Requesters have confirmed that the arrangements address the concerns raised in their Request.

Albanian Railways has fulfilled its obligations, including maintaining interim access through the existing level crossing until completion of the new infrastructure, advancing the required expropriation steps, and ensuring coordination with Vore Municipality throughout implementation. The Requesters have confirmed that the commitments have been met, and no outstanding issues within the scope of the Agreement remain.

The Report will be circulated to the Parties and disclosed in the Case Registry under the virtual case file for [Case 2023/02](#) in both English and Albanian after its submission to the Board and the President for information. Once this disclosure takes place, IPAM will consider the case to be successfully completed and closed.