



Željeznička Infrastruktura Crne Gore
AD Podgorica



Vlada
Crne Gore



ORIENT/EAST-MED CORRIDOR GOLUBOVCI TO BAR MODERNISATION PROJECT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

23 July 2026





Document information

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The Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF) is a technical assistance instrument of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) which is a joint initiative of the European Union, International Financial institutions, bilateral donors and the governments of the Western Balkans which supports socio-economic development and EU accession across the Western Balkans through the provision of finance and technical assistance for strategic infrastructure investments. This technical assistance operation is financed with EU funds.

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**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*





Table of contents

1 - INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND	5
1.1 - Purpose of this Report.....	5
1.2 - Project Context and Objectives.....	5
1.3 - Project Description, Alignment and Scope of Works.....	5
1.4 - Legal and Policy Framework for Consultation.....	6
2 - CONSULTATION PROCESS	7
2.1 - Engagement Prior to ESIA Disclosure	7
2.2 - ESIA Disclosure Package and 120-Day Disclosure Period	7
2.3 - Public Consultation Meeting – Zeta Municipality	7
2.4 - Written Comments Received.....	8
3 - KEY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	9
4 - CONSULTATION OUTCOMES AND FURTHER ACTION	10
5 - GRIEVANCE MECHANISM	11
6 - CONCLUSION	12
6.1 - Next Steps.....	12
ANNEX 1: PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT	13
ANNEX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING.....	15
ANNEX 3: MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING	18
Presentation	18
Discussion, Questions and Answers.....	18
ANNEX 4: DOCUMENTS DISCLOSED DURING THE 120-DAY ESIA DISCLOSURE PERIOD.....	19



ABBREVIATIONS

EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Montenegro)
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESAP	Environmental and Social Action Plan
EU	European Union
IPF9	Infrastructure Project Facility Technical Assistance 9
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
PCR	Public Consultation Report
PR10 / ESS10	EBRD Performance Requirement 10 / EIB Environmental and Social Standard 10 (Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure)
RIOM / ŽICG	Railway Infrastructure of Montenegro (Željeznička infrastruktura Crne Gore AD Podgorica)
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework

1 - INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 - Purpose of this Report

This Public Consultation Report (PCR) has been prepared on behalf of the Railway Infrastructure of Montenegro (RIOM) to summarise the stakeholder consultation and information disclosure activities carried out for the Golubovci–Bar Railway Modernization Project (the "Project"), in line with the requirements of EBRD Performance Requirement 10 (PR10) and EIB Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10) on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, and with the Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

The purpose of this report is to document: (i) the consultation and disclosure activities carried out prior to and during the 120-day ESIA disclosure period; (ii) the key issues, questions and comments raised by stakeholders and the public; (iii) the responses provided; and (iv) any outstanding matters requiring further action.

Preparation of this report at the close of the disclosure period is also a requirement of the Project's Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), and RIOM's ongoing commitment to transparency and meaningful engagement with Project stakeholders throughout the Project lifecycle.

1.2 - Project Context and Objectives

The Golubovci–Bar Railway Modernization Project is a critical investment in Montenegro's national rail network, forming a key link in the regional Orient/East-Med Rail Corridor and the wider TEN-T Trans-European Transport Network. The existing line between Golubovci and the Port of Bar requires comprehensive rehabilitation to enhance safety, improve efficiency, and secure compliance with European Union (EU) transport standards.

The Project's core objective is to reconstruct and modernize the existing single-track infrastructure (including track, substructure, bridges, and tunnels) over the approximately 38.5-kilometre Golubovci–Bar section. The modernization will take place almost entirely within the existing railway corridor, avoiding the creation of new alignment and minimizing the need for new land acquisition and large-scale environmental encroachment. The line was originally inaugurated in 1959, is fully electrified (25 kV, 50Hz AC) and carries mixed passenger and freight traffic.

The Project seeks to: improve the efficiency, safety and reliability of railway operations; eliminate speed restrictions and enhance travel performance along the corridor; strengthen Montenegro's integration into the regional and European transport networks; enhance climate resilience and reduce infrastructure maintenance costs; and support safer, more sustainable rail transport services.

1.3 - Project Description, Alignment and Scope of Works

The Project comprises the rehabilitation and modernisation of the existing railway line between Golubovci and Bar, passing through the stations of Golubovci, Zeta, Virpazar, Sutomore and Bar, and the stops of Morača, Vranjina, Crmnica and Šušanj. The works are limited to the existing railway corridor and do not include construction of a new railway alignment.

Key technical components of the Project include:

- Rehabilitation and renewal of railway track infrastructure (rails, sleepers, ballast and substructure where required);
- Rehabilitation of bridges, tunnels (including the 6,170 m Sozina Tunnel) and other associated engineering structures;
- Upgrading of railway stations and stops, including platforms, canopies, passenger access and related facilities;

- Installation and modernisation of signalling (ETCS Level 1 / electronic interlocking), telecommunication (GSM-R) and safety systems;
- Drainage improvements and slope stabilisation, including at the Ratac landslide area;
- Limited rehabilitation works within sensitive areas, including sections located within or near Skadar Lake National Park.

No significant widening of the corridor or land acquisition is envisaged, as works will be mostly undertaken within the existing railway right-of-way. Following completion, the line will continue to operate as part of the national railway network, with improved safety, reliability and reduced door-to-door journey times.

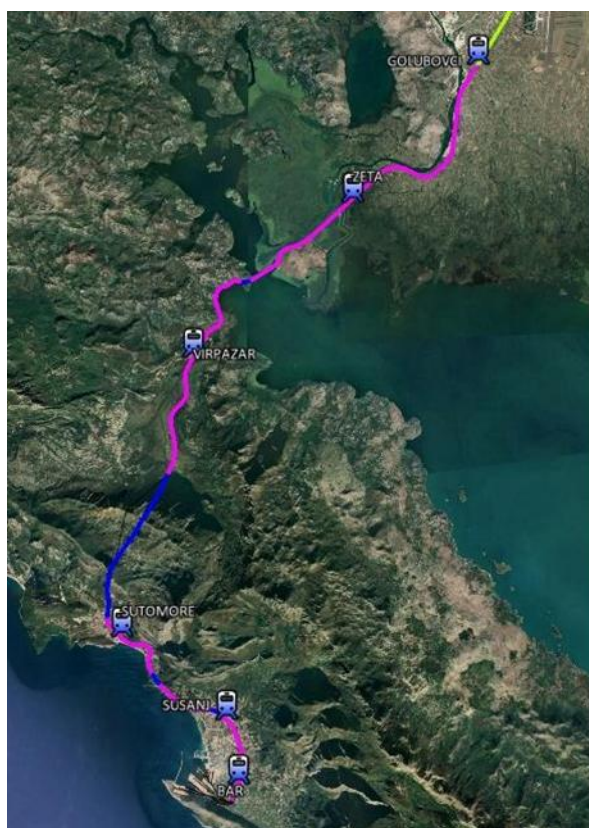


FIGURE 1: PROJECT LOCATION AND ALIGNMENT – GOLUBOVCI TO BAR (GOLUBOVCI, ZETA, VRANJINA, VIRPAZAR, CRMNICA, SOZINA TUNNEL, SUTOMORE, ŠUŠANJ, BAR)

1.4 - Legal and Policy Framework for Consultation

The Project must comply with all applicable Montenegrin legislation, including the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, requirements relating to Nature Protection (in particular Skadar Lake National Park), Waste Management, Water and Expropriation. In parallel, compliance with EBRD and EIB standards is a non-negotiable commitment, requiring a level of environmental and social performance that meets or exceeds national requirements, including EBRD PR10 and EIB ESS10 on stakeholder engagement and public disclosure, which this report addresses.

2 - CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1 - Engagement Prior to ESIA Disclosure

Stakeholder engagement on the Project began during project preparation and continued throughout design development. Key milestones include:

- 2021–2025: Regular progress and technical meetings with RIOM, relevant Ministries, JASPERS and the Lead IFI on design and environmental matters, including the Ratac landslide, Skadar Lake National Park and the Virpazar level crossing.
- April 2023: Socio-economic surveys covering 300 households (1,068 household members) and 50 train passengers, complemented by qualitative research with local businesses and residents along the corridor.
- National EIA procedure: public hearings were formally held on 5 March 2025 (Zeta Municipality) and 7 March 2025 (Bar Municipality), as part of the statutory 20-day national EIA disclosure process. The draft EIA Study was reviewed by 5 independent experts engaged by the Environmental Protection Agency, whose comments were incorporated into a revised version of the Study.
- 9 May 2025: The Environmental Protection Agency of Montenegro issued Decision No. 03-UPI-1710/30, formally approving the national EIA Study.

This prior engagement forms the basis for the Project's stakeholder relationships and did not identify major opposition to the Project from stakeholders or local communities.

2.2 - ESIA Disclosure Package and 120-Day Disclosure Period

The full ESIA Disclosure Package — comprising the ESIA Main Report, Non-Technical Summary, Environmental and Social Management Plan, Environmental and Social Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Resettlement Policy Framework, Framework Biodiversity Management Plan, Preliminary Critical Habitat and Priority Biodiversity Feature Screening Assessment and Framework Management Philosophy and Preliminary Safety Risk Assessment — was disclosed in both English and Montenegrin on the EBRD and RIOM websites, opening the 120-day disclosure period from 23 March 2026 to 21 July 2026.

In line with the SEP, hard copies of the ESIA Study were also made available for public review at Bar Municipality, Zeta Municipality and RIOM offices. The organisation of the public consultation meeting was announced on the websites of Bar Municipality, Zeta Municipality and RIOM, as well as on RIOM's and Zeta Municipality's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) — see Annex 1.

2.3 - Public Consultation Meeting – Zeta Municipality

In line with the SEP commitment to organise at least one targeted, in-person public consultation meeting in the Project-affected area, RIOM, with the support of the IPF9 Consultant, organised a public consultation meeting on 14 May 2026, at 10:00, at the premises of the Municipality of Zeta.

The meeting was structured around a presentation covering: (i) general Project information, objectives and scope; (ii) the ESIA findings and mitigation measures (environmental and social aspects, including expropriation, traffic and construction safety, cultural heritage and the grievance mechanism); and (iii) planned activities in the local community, followed by an open discussion with participants.

Twelve (12) participants attended the meeting. The panel responding to questions from the public comprised:

- Tamara Todorović (RIOM);
- Vasilije Bušković (ESIA Expert);
- Milena Čojbašić (Local Institutional Coordinator / Main Designer).

Minutes of the meeting were prepared and are provided, in Annex 3 to this report. Photographs from the meeting are provided in Annex 2.

2.4 - Written Comments Received

RIOM received one (1) written request during the disclosure period, coinciding with the location discussed at the Zeta meeting. An interested party requested access to technical documentation for the section between the Vukovački Bridge and the Morača railway stop, specifically regarding the drainage and stormwater management solution, the regime for surface and groundwater management, the planned dimensions and boundaries of the intervention area, and any future project phases or land reservations at that location.

In response, the Consultant provided the following documentation to RIOM for onward transmission to the requesting party: the Hydrological Study; the Hydrotechnical Design (drainage and channel systems); and the Main Design of the train stops' building structures (platforms, ramps and canopies), including the Morača stop.

No other written comments were received, either through the disclosure process or directly by RIOM, during the 120-day disclosure period.

3 - KEY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Both substantive questions raised during the Zeta consultation meeting related to the Project's technical design, and were explained and answered directly by the technical panel present at the meeting. The table below summarises the questions/comments received during the disclosure period and the responses provided.

NO.	TOPIC	QUESTION / COMMENT RAISED	RESPONSE PROVIDED
1	Noise and Vibration (Zeta meeting – resident, Bistrica area)	Concern about the potential impact of increased noise and vibration during operation, given that the reconstructed line will run at higher speeds, and whether this could affect the structural integrity of old, unreinforced stone houses nearby.	The cumulative noise and vibration impact of the existing railway and the nearby main road has already been assessed in the ESIA. New, higher-quality track materials and components are expected to reduce noise and vibration levels compared to the current situation. The ESMP (Section 12) further includes dedicated mitigation measures for noise and vibration during construction and operation, including a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan, restrictions on piling methods and working hours near sensitive buildings within 50 m of the works, pre-work vibration testing, and periodic operational noise monitoring. No amendment to the ESIA was required.
2	Groundwater / Geotechnical Design (Zeta meeting – resident, Goričani / flood-prone area)	Whether groundwater and pore water pressure have been adequately factored into the design of the railway substructure (retaining structures, embankments) in the flood-prone area near Goričani	Groundwater and pore water pressure are already incorporated into the geotechnical design of the substructure, based on the geotechnical investigations and engineering analyses carried out for the Project, including Goričani and other flood-prone zones. All necessary geotechnical investigations to assess geology and groundwater conditions have been completed, and the geotechnical design has been finalised, including stability checks, drainage measures and appropriate safety factors. No amendment to the ESIA was required.
3	Technical Documentation Request (written request – Vukovački Bridge to Morača stop)	Request for technical documentation on the drainage and stormwater management solution, surface/groundwater management regime, intervention area boundaries, and any future project phases for this section.	The requested documentation (Hydrological Study, Hydrotechnical Design, and Main Design of the train stops' structures, including Morača stop) was provided to RIOM for onward transmission to the requesting party. The request did not raise any issue requiring a change to the ESIA.

4 - CONSULTATION OUTCOMES AND FURTHER ACTION

The issues raised during the public consultation process were mainly clarification questions on the Project's technical design and were addressed directly by the technical panel at the meeting itself. The responses given referred to mitigation measures already set out in the disclosed ESIA and its supporting documents (notably the ESMP), and to geotechnical work already completed for the Project. As a result, the comments and questions received during the disclosure period did not require any amendment to the ESIA or its supporting documents.

ISSUE RAISED	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
Noise and vibration impact during operation (Zeta meeting)	None – addressed at the meeting; mitigation measures already included in the ESMP.
Groundwater / pore water pressure in substructure design (Zeta meeting)	None – addressed at the meeting; geotechnical investigations and design already completed and approved.
Technical documentation request – Vukovački Bridge to Morača stop	None – requested documentation already provided to the requesting party.

At the close of the meeting, RIOM informed participants that additional comments and suggestions could still be submitted until the end of the 120-day disclosure period (21 July 2026), for consideration in the finalisation of the ESIA. Any further comments received after the date of this report will be reviewed and addressed in line with the Project's Grievance Mechanism and, where relevant, reflected in an update to this report.

5 - GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

A Project Grievance Mechanism remains available throughout Project implementation for stakeholders and members of the public to submit comments, ask questions or raise concerns, free of charge, either verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (email, post or personal delivery):

Any grievance can be submitted via:

Društvo sa ograničenom odgovornošću „**Željeznička Infrastruktura Crne Gore**“ Podgorica

To the attention of the Grievance Mechanism for the Bar-Golubovci Railway Project

Att. – Tamara Todorović

prigovor@zicg.me

Address Trg golootočkih žrtava br. 13
81100 Podgorica

6 - CONCLUSION

The consultation and disclosure activities carried out for the Golubovci–Bar Railway Modernization Project — spanning the national EIA process, the 120-day ESIA disclosure period, including the targeted public consultation meeting held in Zeta Municipality on 14 May 2026 — were conducted in line with EBRD PR10, EIB ESS10 and the Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

The comments and questions raised by stakeholders were limited in number, mainly related to the Project's technical design, and were fully addressed at the time they were raised. No amendments to the ESIA were required as a result of the consultation process, and no further action is considered necessary at this stage. RIOM will continue to keep the Grievance Mechanism open and will review and respond to any additional comments received after the close of the disclosure period.

6.1 - Next Steps

RIOM will continue to engage with Project-affected communities and other stakeholders as the Project progresses towards implementation, including through continued dissemination of Project information, the Grievance Mechanism, and — where relevant — further site-specific consultation during construction. This report will be updated should any additional comments be received after the close of the 120-day disclosure period on 21 July 2026.

ANNEX 1: PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The organisation of the public consultation meeting held on 14 May 2026 in Zeta Municipality was announced through the following channels:



FIGURE 3: ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE OF ZETA MUNICIPALITY



FIGURE 4: ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE INSTAGRAM PAGE OF ZETA MUNICIPALITY

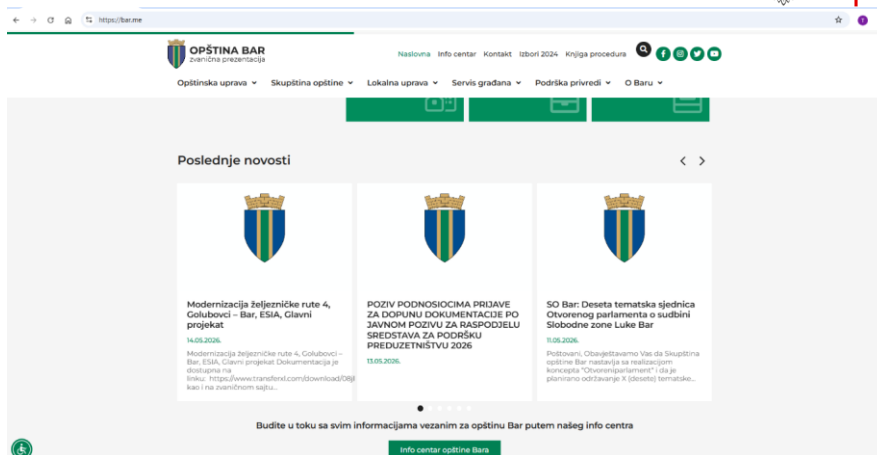


FIGURE 5: ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE WEBSITE OF BAR MUNICIPALITY (BAR.ME)

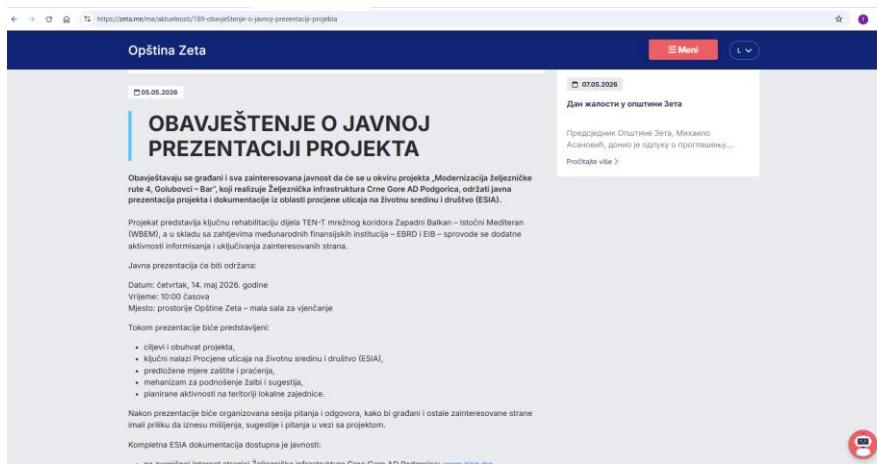


FIGURE 6: ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE WEBSITE OF ZETA MUNICIPALITY (ZETA.ME)



FIGURE 7: ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE WEBSITE OF RIOM (ZICG.ME)



ANNEX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

The following photographs were taken during the public consultation meeting held on 14 May 2026 at the premises of the Municipality of Zeta.

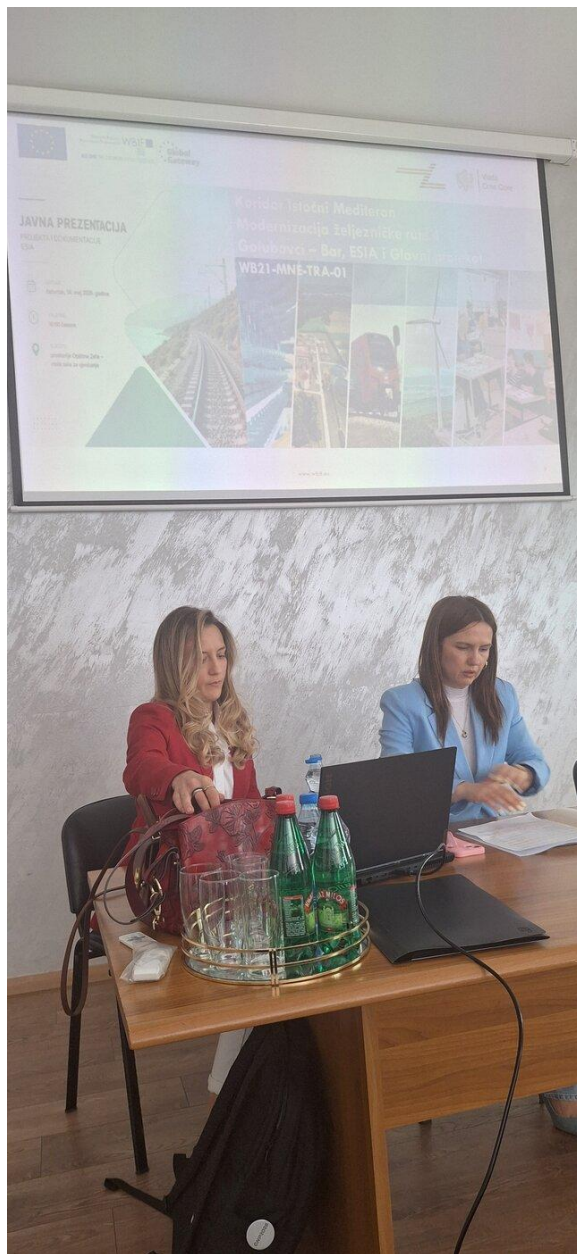


FIGURE 8: PRESENTATION TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING, ZETA MUNICIPALITY



FIGURE 9: THE TECHNICAL PANEL PRESENTING THE MEETING AGENDA



FIGURE 10: THE TECHNICAL PANEL PRESENTING ESIA FINDINGS AND MONITORING MEASURES



FIGURE 11: PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

ANNEX 3: MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

Note: for the purpose of protecting personal data, the following minutes do not contain the names of the community members who raised questions or comments.

Date: 14 May 2026

Location: Municipality of Zeta

Time: 10:00

Presentation

A presentation was delivered to the public, structured in three parts: (1) general Project information, objectives and scope; (2) the ESIA findings, covering both environmental aspects (ESIA documentation and previous studies, biodiversity research, key impacts and mitigation measures, pre-construction and construction monitoring) and social aspects (expropriation procedures, traffic and operational safety, cultural heritage protection, and the grievance mechanism); and (3) planned activities within the local community, followed by an open discussion.

Discussion, Questions and Answers

Community representative 1 raised a question expressing concern about the future impact of increased noise and vibration during the operational phase, given that the reconstructed railway line will operate at higher speeds than at present. The resident, from the Bistrica area, was particularly concerned about whether the resulting vibrations could affect their old, unreinforced stone house and potentially compromise its structural integrity.

Answer: The impact of noise and vibration has already been identified and assessed within the ESIA as a cumulative impact, considering the existing influence of both the railway line and the nearby main road. Although higher train speeds are planned as part of the Project, the new railway materials and components to be installed will be of higher quality and greater structural compactness, which is expected to contribute to a reduction and mitigation of noise and vibration levels during operation compared to current conditions.

Community representative 1 also raised a suggestion aimed at improving Project implementation, highlighting the Goričani area and the adjacent flood-prone zone. The suggestion referred to potential flooding and the influence of groundwater and pore water pressure, and asked whether these parameters had been adequately considered in the calculation and design of the railway substructure, including retaining structures and embankments.

Answer: The influence of groundwater and pore water pressure has been considered in the design process of the railway substructure, including retaining walls and embankments. These geotechnical parameters are an integral part of the soil investigations and engineering analyses carried out during the design phase, particularly in areas such as Gorica and other flood-prone zones. Appropriate design measures, including stability checks, drainage solutions and safety factors, have been applied to ensure the structure is adequately resistant to hydrogeological conditions and long-term variations in groundwater levels.

RIOM's representative thanked all participants for taking part in the discussion and informed those present that the deadline for submitting additional comments and suggestions for consideration during finalisation of the ESIA was the end of the 120-day disclosure period (21 July 2026).

The meeting closed at approximately 12:00.



ANNEX 4: DOCUMENTS DISCLOSED DURING THE 120-DAY ESIA DISCLOSURE PERIOD

- ESIA Main Report (Chapters 1–12)
- Non-Technical Summary (NTS)
- Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)
- Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP)
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF)
- Framework Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) and Preliminary Critical Habitat and Priority Biodiversity Feature Screening Assessment and Framework Management Philosophy
- Preliminary Safety Risk Assessment

All documents were disclosed in both English and Montenegrin, via the EBRD and RIOM websites, and hard copies were made available at Bar Municipality, Zeta Municipality and RIOM offices.

