

Belgrade – Niš Railway Modernisation Project

Technical Assistance to the Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

REFERENCE CODE: NEAR/BEG/2022/EA-RP/0010

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Trnjane and Korman
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Trnjane
Date and time:	November 05, 2025, at 16:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The additional round of public consultations on the ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasised that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism was available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members primarily concerned traffic management during construction, access to properties and agricultural parcels, expropriation procedures and compensation, the placement of underpasses and overpasses, drainage and flood protection, railway noise, and the location of the railway station. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked whether traffic interruptions were expected during the construction phase. The Chief Designer explained that there would be no complete interruptions of traffic and that temporary grade-separated crossings would be provided to ensure uninterrupted movement between both sides of the railway. Wherever the terrain allowed, parallel local roads would be built on both sides of the track (outside the railway fence) for use by local residents. - A participant asked whether the settlement of Trnjane would have no underpasses. The Chief Designer replied that an underpass was planned in Omladinska Street and that a pedestrian pathway for pedestrians and cyclists would be located near the railway station. He pointed out on the map that between km 202+962 there would be a pedestrian pathway equipped with an elevator.	

He further explained that the engineering team had analysed the possibility of constructing a vehicular underpass or overpass at that location, but due to the proximity of local streets on both sides (only 5 meters from the railway), it was not possible to achieve the required gradient for a 7-meter descent without demolishing about 30 houses on each side, which was deemed unacceptable.

- Residents asked about the required height of the pedestrian underpass.
The Designer replied that the underpass would be approximately 4 meters deep, with the clearance height 2.5m, accessed by stairs and elevators.
- A resident asked whether atmospheric water had been analyzed in relation to 7. Juli Street.
The Designer explained that three hydrotechnical studies had been conducted (irrigation, stormwater drainage, and watercourse regulation) and that analyses had been performed beyond the railway zone. All relevant data had been taken into account during design.
- A participant noted that flooding frequently occurred near 7. Juli Street due to the absence of sewage and stormwater network, expressing concern that the underpass might be flooded.
The designer reiterated that adequate technical solutions for drainage and flood protection were provided within the project.
- A participant asked about the expected noise level of freight trains during day and night.
The Environmental Expert explained that noise levels decreased by approximately 20 decibels every 20 meters of distance. Measurements had been conducted and compared with the Novi Sad–Subotica railway and relevant Serbian regulations and WHO standards. The permissible daytime level was 55 dB, and nighttime 45 dB (without noise barriers). With barriers, the levels would be lower than the legal thresholds.
- A participant asked about the average distance between neighbouring overpasses and underpasses.
The Chief Designer replied that the average distance was approximately 2.0 km. The SRI Project Manager added that, with the modernisation of trains and infrastructure, both noise and vibration levels would be significantly lower than at present, and all EU standards would be applied.
A resident from 7. Juli Street noted that about 30 houses with 18 children would be affected, as children would have to make long detours to school, and the fence would reduce property values.
The Designer responded that parallel local roads would be provided on both sides of the railway, wherever the terrain allowed, outside the fenced area. The residents welcomed this clarification.
- Residents asked how far from the railway a house could be located to be considered safe.
The SRI legal representative explained that the railway protection corridor was 25 meters wide, where new construction was not permitted by law. Existing houses outside the expropriation zone would not be affected.
- Several residents repeatedly asked whose parcels would be taken and what compensation would be offered.
The SRI representative explained that the phase concerned the ESIA public disclosure. After the completion of the Expropriation Study, the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) would be prepared in accordance with EBRD and EIB standards. Only then would all affected plots and structures be precisely identified.
- Residents asked how much the railway would expand and which houses would be demolished.
It was clarified that the railway generally remained within the existing corridor, widening only in specific locations depending on alignment corrections or the construction of overpasses and underpasses. Detailed data would be available after the Expropriation Study is developed.
- Residents stated that the community of Trnjane would be divided into two parts by the project, that they opposed the construction of fences, and that the detours for daily activities would be about 3 km long.
- They requested that sewage issues be resolved before construction started and expressed concern about noise during works and property devaluation due to the proximity of the railway and new fencing.
- Residents asked when compensation prices would be offered and who determined them.
The SRI legal representative replied that the valuation would be carried out by the Tax Administration based on market prices. In addition, depreciation will not be applied during valuation, houses would be valued as newly built. There would be no displacement before compensation was paid, and certified appraisers would conduct field assessments.
- Residents complained that the railway station would be located in Korman rather than Trnjane.

The Chief Designer replied that the decision was based on passenger traffic counts, ticket sales, and operational criteria required to maintain train speed. Residents insisted that Trnjane should also have a station, given that surrounding settlements depended on it.

A local journalist commented that while the project team was transparent and organised many consultations, local dissatisfaction remained high. He added that the municipality appeared unsupportive of the project, and protests were expected in Trnjane due to unresolved issues.

- Residents asked who would ensure that the underpass remained dry and protected from flooding. The Designer explained that extensive hydrological studies had been conducted and modern drainage systems would be applied.

- Residents asked what the relocation period after compensation was. The legal representative clarified that the average relocation period was about six months after payment, but that forced evictions would not occur, and schedules would be aligned with the construction plan.

Residents expressed concern about finding alternative housing and compensation values, especially for unlegalised properties.

The legal representative explained that compensation would be based on the market value without depreciation and that the amount should allow purchasing an equivalent or better residence. Legal assistance would be available, and any court costs would be covered by SRI.

- A resident asked about the width of carriageways. The Designer replied that the minimum road width was 5.5 meters and that all roads were precisely measured.
- Residents reiterated their request for a railway station in Trnjane, emphasising that if Korman had one, Trnjane should have one as well.

The Designer explained that station locations had been determined according to technical and operational analyses.

- A participant asked what happened if a house was expropriated but a part of the land remained unused. The legal representative explained that, under Article 10 of the Expropriation Law, owners could request the purchase of the remaining land if it no longer had an economic purpose.

The chief engineer informed participants that all project drawings had been delivered to the municipality on 10 September in digital format and were available for public review. Also, he brought a map showing the locations of all underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the railway stations along Section 3, and made it available for public review.

- The presentation from the consultation will also be published online for further access.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Significant dissatisfaction was expressed by residents of Trnjane, primarily concerning the division of the settlement by the railway, placement of fences, absence of a local station, potential property devaluation, and limited access to certain parcels.
- Residents emphasised their concern about flood risks, noise during construction, and compensation values. However, they appreciated the project team's detailed explanations.
- The meeting was held in an open atmosphere, although concerns in Trnjane remain high, and local protests have been announced.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Vitkovac, Donji Ljubeš, Srezovac, Gornji Ljubeš and Donji Adrovac
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Vitkovac
Date and time:	November 05, 2025, at 18:30 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The additional round of public consultations on the ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasised that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism was available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members primarily concerned the expropriation of land, access to properties, the design and location of underpasses and overpasses (including pedestrian crossings with lifts), impacts on existing roads and utilities, and the placement of stations along the route. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked about the distance between consecutive underpasses and overpasses. The Chief Designer explained that the average distance between them was approximately 2–2.5 km. - A participant asked how access to properties in Donji Ljubeš (along Jordana Pavlovića Pavla Street, where a new underpass will be built) would be maintained, noting that three houses might be left without a proper access road. The Chief Designer explained that any property that could not be provided with access would be planned for expropriation. He further clarified that the entire road network is not included in the project scope, but only the roads located within the immediate vicinity of the railway corridor, while the remaining roads remain under municipal responsibility. Wherever terrain allowed, parallel roads had been designed on both sides of the railway corridor for local residents to use. Residents emphasised the importance of ensuring that those parallel roads were maintained and accessible. - Residents asked about the relocation of existing utilities, including electricity and water supply. The Chief Designer confirmed that all affected installations would be relocated as necessary. Regarding the water supply in Donji Ljubeš (three wells and a spring located near the railway), residents expressed concern that construction might interrupt service. The SRI Project Manager assured that no interruptions were planned and that careful measures would be taken during construction. - Residents were advised to submit written requests for any specific access concerns to ensure that they were formally considered and addressed.	

- A resident asked if the stop in Vitkovac would remain.
The Chief Designer confirmed that the stop would be removed, but bus services would be provided to transport passengers to the nearest stations (Djunis and Korman).
- One resident expressed concern that the high-speed railway might not benefit local residents.
The SRI representative explained that students would benefit from rapid connections to Niš and Belgrade, allowing same-day commutes without requiring parents to pay for temporary housing, which was an advantage for the community.
- A resident asked how the value of existing crops and trees (e.g., acacia and oak) would be calculated during expropriation.
The SRI legal representative explained that authorised appraisers would conduct field assessments to determine compensation.
- A resident asked how far from the railway construction was allowed.
The protected railway corridor was 25 meters from the track axis, and no construction was allowed without SRI approval. The SRI representative also explained that the restriction had existed for decades; residents could not build new structures in that corridor, but existing structures were unaffected.
- Residents expressed concerns about crops near the railway being damaged by construction vehicles.
The SRI representative confirmed that all affected property would be compensated. A grievance mechanism would be in place during construction, allowing residents to submit claims and receive compensation for any damage.
- Question: What about municipal and community-owned buildings along the railway, which cannot be renovated without SRI approval? Residents noted that renovation of the cultural center in Vitkovac was denied.
The SRI legal team advised residents to contact the Real Estate Department for further clarification or send an e-mail.
- A resident asked when expropriation was expected to take place.
The project team explained that the current phase was the ESIA. Following that, the Resettlement Action Plan would be prepared based on the Expropriation Study. Only after that would the exact plots and households subject to expropriation be determined.
- Question: Has the project team considered the location of the overpass in Vitkovac?
The Chief Designer confirmed that the location was reviewed. An overpass would require more space and would necessitate demolition of more houses than a pedestrian underpass.
- Participant asked: What is the depth of the underpass in Donji Ljubeš relative to the current ground level?
The Chief Designer confirmed it was approximately 6 meters.
- Residents noted that travel to parcels would be longer and more fuel-consuming. They also expressed concern that some residents might relocate if stations were removed. Residents appreciated the pedestrian crossings but indicated a preference for overpasses where feasible.
- The chief engineer informed participants that all project drawings had been delivered to the municipality on 10 September in digital format and were available for public review. He also brought a map showing the locations of all underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the railway stations along Section 3, and made it available for public review.
- The presentation from the consultation will also be published online for further access.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The discussion focused on property expropriation, access to parcels, and the placement of underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings.
- Key positive points included that provision of parallel roads for local use, additional pedestrian overpasses in Vitkovac, and relocation of utilities, were affected by the railway project.
- Key concerns included restrictions in the 25-meter railway corridor, access to specific properties, potential relocation of households, longer travel distances to parcels resulting in higher fuel consumption, and the possibility of residents having to relocate from Vitkovac if the station was not maintained. Residents welcomed the pedestrian underpass as a safety solution but expressed a preference for an overpass.
- Overall, the meeting took place in a constructive atmosphere, with active engagement from residents, clear explanations from the project team, and open dialogue that allowed concerns and questions to be addressed thoroughly.

- Residents were encouraged to submit written requests for unresolved issues, which would be considered and addressed by the project team.
- Participants were informed that the presentation materials would be made available online.
- The chief engineer brought a map showing the locations of all underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the railway stations along Section 3, and made it available for public review.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Tešica, Lužane, Bankovac, Grejač, and Veliki Drenovac
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Tešica
Date and time:	November 06, 2025, at 16:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
•	The additional round of public consultations on the ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending.
•	The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders.
•	The SRI representative emphasised that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism was available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage.
•	The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation.
•	Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points	
•	Questions raised by community members primarily concerned the status and locations of railway stations, overpasses and underpasses, the possibility of additional pedestrian crossings, land acquisition and compensation, as well as the communication process between the municipality and the project designers.
•	Key questions and responses included the following:
-	A participant asked which railway stations would remain operational. The Chief Designer explained that on the Đunis–Trupale section, the following stations would remain: Korman, Adrovac, Aleksinac (Žitkovac) Lužane, Tešica, and Trupale. For locations where stops would be removed, bus lines would be organised to connect residents with the nearest railway stations.
-	The designer emphasised that, upon the request of the local self-government, an overpass had been moved to location 212+642 in the settlement of Lužane.
-	A resident asked where the station in Tešica would be located. The designer clarified that it was the only location where the design team had intervened in the proposals of “Srbija Kargo” and “Srbija Voz”. Due to geometric constraints, a modern station required a minimum length of 750 meters, which could not be achieved in the settlement of Grejač without significant demolitions. Therefore, the station had been relocated to Tešica, where there was previously a stop.
-	A resident asked whether an overpass or underpass was planned in Grejač. The designer responded that an overpass was planned.
-	Several residents stated that, through the president of their local community, they had submitted to the Municipality of Aleksinac (signed by 90 citizens) a request after the previous meeting to include a pedestrian crossing in Grejač but had never received a response. The designer noted that he had not received this request but

confirmed that if it had reached him, he would have responded. The participants agreed to resend the request via email so that its inclusion could be considered.

- A resident asked whether the presented design was final.
The designer confirmed that the alignment of the railway and the locations of overpasses and underpasses were final, but that minor adjustments remained possible.
- A local journalist remarked that, although numerous public consultations and meetings had been organised, which was commendable, the process still did not lead to solutions desired by the citizens. He pointed out that the local self-government appeared to be boycotting the additional meetings, as no municipal representatives had attended any of them. The journalist also mentioned that protests were being planned—not in the currently discussed settlements, but in the settlement of Trnjane—due to dissatisfaction over the locations of grade separations (underpasses), and due to the poor maintenance of local infrastructure, which fell under the responsibility of the municipality.
The designer explained that all preliminary drawings and layout proposals had been shared with the municipality 18 months ago, before the Spatial Plan had been adopted, but no feedback had been received. During the public disclosure process, 60 comments had been submitted, and all feasible requests had been incorporated into the updated design.
- A resident asked whether the area around the Cultural Center in Žitkovac would be affected.
The designer replied that no demolitions were planned on that side of the railway.
- A resident asked whether there will be demolition of houses required for the construction of overpass no. 14.
The designer replied that no demolitions were planned.
- A resident inquired about the distance between adjacent underpasses and overpasses. The designer explained that in Grejač there was an overpass, in Tešica an underpass, and the distance between them was approximately 2.4 km.
- Another resident asked how many overpasses/underpasses and stations were planned between Đunis and Trupale. The designer answered that there would be 18 overpasses and underpasses and 6 stations along the 37 km section.
- Regarding the proposed pedestrian underpass in Grejač, the designer stated that it would be approximately 5 meters wide if approved, with a 2.5 m clearance height
- Residents asked who determined compensation values for expropriated land.
The SRI legal representative explained that valuation was carried out by the Tax Administration and certified experts, who assessed property values directly on site.
- Residents asked when the exact plots for expropriation would be known, the project team replied that they would be defined once the Expropriation Study was completed.
- Residents also asked how much the railway corridor will expand on each side.
The designer noted that there was no single answer, as it depended on the terrain and specific technical solutions at each location.
- The chief engineer informed participants that all project drawings had been delivered to the municipality on 10 September in digital format and were available for public review. He also brought a map showing the locations of all underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the railway stations along Section 3, and made it available for public review.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The discussion mainly focused on the scope of expropriation, access to properties, and the locations and inclusion of underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings along the section.
- Residents requested clarification on which plots would be affected and how compensation would be determined. The SRI representative explained that detailed valuation and identification of affected land would follow upon completion of the Expropriation Study.
- Citizens of Grejač reiterated their request for an additional pedestrian overpass. Although not included in the current design, the Chief Designer confirmed that its inclusion remained technically feasible if formally proposed via e-mail.
- A local journalist commended the large number of consultations held and the responsiveness of the project team. He also noted that, although many meetings had been organised, dissatisfaction persisted in Trnjane due to the

location and maintenance of underpasses (referring to water pump maintenance). However, protests were expected in Trnjane, not in the five settlements covered by this meeting.

- The meeting concluded in a constructive manner. Participants were informed that the presentation materials would be made available online and that additional comments or questions might be submitted via email.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Prćilovica, Moravac, Źitkovac and Nozrina
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Źitkovac
Date and time:	November 06, 2025, at 18:30 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
•	The additional round of public consultations on the ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending.
•	The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders.
•	The SRI representative emphasised that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism was available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage.
•	The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation.
•	Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points	
•	Questions raised by community members primarily concerned the expropriation process and timeline for determining affected plots and owners, the exact alignment of the railway, technical details regarding overpasses and underpasses, accessibility for persons with disabilities, potential house demolitions, and general issues related to road connections, fencing, noise, and vibration during construction.
•	Key questions and responses included the following:
-	A female participant asked whether the underpasses would be accessible for persons with disabilities. The chief design engineer confirmed that they would, noting that both ramps and lifts were included in the design.
-	Residents asked when they would know which plots would be expropriated. The SRI legal representative explained that the exact plots and ownership details would be identified once the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) was prepared.
-	Participants inquired whether the railway station in Źitkovac would remain in the same location. The design engineer confirmed that it would.
-	Questions were raised about the number of tracks in Źitkovac. The designer explained that eight parallel tracks were planned, but emphasised that the design had been adjusted after previous community concerns — the initial proposal would have required extensive demolition of residential houses. Following meetings with representatives of Srbija Voz and Srbija Cargo, the station's capacity was reduced to the minimum required for safe operation, thereby minimising resettlement impacts in the station area.
-	A resident asked about the location of the road in Źitkovac, and it was confirmed that it would remain in the same position.
-	Questions were raised regarding the distance of the protective fence from the railway line.

The chief engineer clarified that it depended on the local conditions but generally ranged between 2 and 3 meters from the slope (cut or fill) edge.

- A resident asked whether there would be any house demolitions in the section from the school in Prćilovica to Žitkovac.

The designer replied that demolitions were foreseen only near the existing road close to the railway station.

- Participants asked whether an overpass would be built in Moravac at the location of the existing level crossing. The engineer confirmed that an overpass would indeed be constructed at that location.

- A question was raised regarding whether the pedestrian path in Prćilovica would be affected. The designer confirmed that it would not.

- Questions concerning the expropriation procedure and timeline were also raised.

The SRI legal representative explained that once the Expropriation Design was finalised, all affected plots would be known, and another round of consultations would be organised to inform the public.

- Questions about the project design process were also discussed.

The designer explained that the project was currently in the Preliminary Design phase, to be followed by the Design for Construction Permit and Execution Design stages.

- Residents asked about the distance of the noise barrier from the track.

The designer answered that it would be approximately 4 meters from the track.

- A participant asked about the width of the railway protection zone.

The legal representative clarified that it was 25 meters from the track axis, and construction within that area requires an SRI approval.

- It was confirmed that the existing road in Prćilovica would remain, and that a local road parallel to the track would ensure access to the new underpass. Residents expressed concern that local connections beyond the railway zone might not be reconstructed if under the responsibility of local self-government.

The designer assured that access roads to all structures, including overpasses and underpasses, would be provided and that no households would be left without access. Where access could not be ensured within the existing layout, additional land would be included in the expropriation plan for that purpose.

- Concerns about potential property damage during construction were also raised.

The SRI representative emphasised that, if damages occur as a result of construction, they would be addressed through the project Grievance Mechanism, which was free, accessible, and active throughout construction.

- Regarding the project schedule, it was explained that works would begin after the completion of all design and permitting phases — the project was currently in the ESIA stage, followed by the preparation of the Expropriation Study and RAP.

- Residents also asked about noise and vibration during construction.

The designer confirmed that temporary disturbances were expected but would be mitigated, and that noise levels would be significantly lower once the project was completed.

- Questions were raised about train stops — the designer explained that the high-speed train would stop in Belgrade, Jagodina, and Niš, but local trains would continue to serve other stations. Some residents expressed concern that it might limit benefits for the local population.

- The chief engineer informed participants that all project drawings had been delivered to the municipality on 10 September in digital format and were available for public review. He also brought a map showing the locations of all underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian crossings, as well as the railway stations along Section 3, and made it available for public review.

- The presentation from the consultation will also be published online for further access.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The consultation in local communities reflected a high level of public interest, particularly concerning land acquisition, potential displacement, and changes to local infrastructure.
- Participants were actively engaged and raised detailed, site-specific questions about the technical design, accessibility, and environmental and social impacts.
- The main focus of the discussion concerned the extent of expropriation and demolition, as well as local connectivity and community access.
- Overall, the discussion demonstrated that residents were primarily concerned with minimising physical and economic displacement and ensuring adequate access during and after construction.
- The project team provided detailed explanations and committed to maintaining open communication with the public, ensuring that updated information and design documentation remain accessible through municipal offices and online channels.

Belgrade – Niš Railway Modernisation Project

Technical Assistance to the Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

REFERENCE CODE: NEAR/BEG/2022/EA-RP/0010

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Pojate and Lučina
Location:	Ćićevac, Cultural Centre, 106 Karađorđeva St.
Date and time:	September 08, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members in Ćićevac primarily concerned land expropriation and the timeline for knowing which plots and owners would be affected, the exact alignment of the railway, technical aspects of overpasses and underpasses, potential impacts on houses (vibration, safety), agricultural land access, flood protection measures, and compensation procedures. - Further issues discussed included noise barriers, the planned capacity of the railway (speed, additional tracks at the station), and the status of the adopted Special Purpose Spatial Plan. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked when they would know whose land would be taken and when the exact expropriation boundaries would be determined. The SRI representative explained that exact plots and ownership will be determined once the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) is prepared. - Residents reported that they had been contacted by private lawyers offering legal services and requesting blank powers of attorney. - A resident from Lučina stated that vibrations from trains carrying tank wagons already damage his house and that he was worried about potential full expropriation. The SRI representative replied that a grievance mechanism is in place throughout the project cycle, and that complaints may be submitted at any stage. It	

was added that the new railway will be modernized and designed to eliminate current issues with vibrations and safety risks.

- Questions were asked regarding the corridor width and whether existing overpasses could be modified. The PPF9 main designer responded that, while the adopted Special Purpose Spatial Plan defines the alignment, certain minor adjustments are possible that do not involve changing the railway route. However, grade-separated crossings such as overpasses are not subject to modification.
- Participants asked whether the municipality had been involved in the design process. The PPF9 designer confirmed that municipal representatives were consulted, and their request for additional crossings was integrated into the design where technically feasible.
- Participants asked whether the corridor will widen. It was explained that the embankment will expand during reconstruction to allow safe works while one track remains in use, but the alignment stays within the existing corridor.
- Residents raised concerns about frequent floods and adequacy of culverts. The designer confirmed that hydrotechnical measures, including adequate culverts, have been incorporated into the design.
- A question was raised about whether Special Purpose Spatial Plan plan exists. The project team confirmed that it was adopted in October 2024 and made available for public review, with consultations held accordingly.
- Residents asked how much new agricultural land would be affected. The designer replied that approximately 80% of the corridor is within the existing railway footprint, with only around 20% extending into new land.
- It was confirmed that additional tracks will be constructed on both sides of the station.
- Residents asked what happens to the remaining part of a parcel if only part is acquired. The SRI legal representative explained that compensation will be based on market value determined by the Tax Administration, and that if access is lost, the parcel will also be subject to expropriation.
- A question was raised on the minimum distance of noise barriers from houses. The main designer explained that barriers are expected to be located approximately 4 meters from the railway axis.
- A participant noted that in Serbia the design speed should not exceed 160 km/h. The project team confirmed that the railway is being designed in line with national standards and technical requirements.

- At the end of the discussion, it was reiterated that any questions not answered on site can be submitted by email to the project team, with responses provided in the shortest possible timeframe.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The consultation in Čičevac demonstrated a high level of community interest and active engagement, with residents raising a wide range of issues related to expropriation, technical design, environmental and safety impacts, and local infrastructure.
- The discussion was conducted in an open and transparent manner, enabling a constructive two-way exchange between residents, SRI representatives, and the PPF9 team.
- Almost all questions were addressed during the meeting, with clarifications provided on expropriation procedures, railway alignment, hydrotechnical measures, compensation principles, and technical standards.
- Participants were also informed that more detailed questions can be submitted through the established grievance mechanism by email, ensuring that the consultation process remains continuous and responsive. In addition, the SRI representative announced that the project team will return in two weeks to hold another public consultation, to allow residents who could not attend this meeting or who may have new questions to participate.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Vrapčane, 11. Kongres, Branko Krsmanović, and Dankovo
Location:	Paraćin, Paraćin Theatre Hall, Dr Dragoljuba Jovanovića St., no. b.b.
Date and time:	September 09, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points
- During the consultation in Paraćin, participants primarily raised questions related to: <u>Alternative crossings and temporary access routes</u>: organization of pedestrian and vehicle access during construction, including Šumadijska, Branka Krsmanovića, Moravska, Striška, and Majora Gavrilovića streets, as well as access to Žabare and Dankovo neighborhoods. <u>Underpasses and overpasses</u>: height, width, and usage (pedestrian vs. vehicle). <u>Construction works</u>: proximity to railway tracks, timing and sequencing, temporary deviations, and coordination with local traffic. <u>Land expropriation and compensation</u>: criteria, process, timing, property valuation, and grievance mechanisms. <u>Hydrotechnical and environmental concerns</u>: handling of water runoff, drainage, flood prevention. <u>Noise barriers and mitigation measures</u>: placement, height, and effect on adjacent properties. <u>Project phasing and timeline</u>: start of construction, sequence of underpass/overpass construction, and overall project schedule. <u>Technical design and operational aspects</u>: railway alignment, speed (200 km/h), and station locations. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked how alternative crossings would be organized. The main engineer explained that wherever terrain allows and houses are not affected, service roads are designed on both sides of the railway for local use. For Moravska Street in Žabare, a separate bridge over the Crnica River will connect to Kosovska Street, with a distance of 450 meters from Šumadijska and Branka Krsmanovića streets. - Residents inquired about the height of underpasses. The designer responded that the clearance height in the underpass will be 4.75 meters.

- Residents asked how far construction would extend from the railway tracks.
- The designer clarified that this depends on specific locations and terrain configuration; there is no uniform distance.
- Residents asked about the alternative crossing for Branka Krsmanovića and Šumadijska streets. The designer stated that pedestrian crossings with lifts and staircases are planned. Vehicle access is not possible due to the need to minimize house demolition. Residents were informed that detailed technical solutions could be provided to the local community upon request.
- Questions were raised about underpasses in Drenovac and Dankovo, and the distance of fences from the tracks. The engineer explained that the distance varies by location. Sindjelićeva Street in Dankovo, connecting two underpasses, will be designed to ensure proper access. All streets connecting to underpasses are the responsibility of the project designer.
- Residents asked how traffic will be managed on Majora Gavrilovića Street during construction. The main designer responded that technical solutions for temporary deviations will be provided via email.
- A petition from residents in Žabare highlighted that approximately 1,500 people use the railway crossing at Šumadijska and Branka Krsmanovića streets, and its closure would significantly increase travel distances for daily activities. The designer explained the difference between underpasses and pedestrian, noting that creating a vehicle-accessible underpass is not feasible due to legal and spatial constraints. The best solution would be a municipal bridge over the Crnica River. SRI will organize a meeting with the municipality regarding this. The municipal representative explained that the feasibility and funding would be discussed with relevant ministries and integrated into the project planning if possible.
- Residents requested that the underpass in Striška Street (Dankovo) be constructed first to maintain access during construction at Majora Gavrilovića. The SRI representative explained that Serbian Railway Infrastructure will remain in close cooperation with the local municipality throughout project implementation, including on matters related to the grievance mechanism and other issues of community concern. It was emphasized that any damages caused by the contractor will be compensated. Regarding the construction sequencing, it was clarified that SRI will prepare its own works schedule, but it can be adjusted in coordination with the municipality to reflect local needs. Importantly, alternative crossings will be ensured during construction, so that at no time will local connections be completely cut off.
- Questions were asked regarding the start of construction in Paraćin and the sequence of works. The SRI representative explained that ESIA is ongoing until the end of November, followed by the conceptual design, submission to the Republic Review Commission, and the Resettlement Action Plan based on expropriation. Construction could start in 2028, depending on approvals and other factors.
- Residents from Donje Vidovo asked about alternative crossings and water accumulation at underpass locations. The main designer confirmed that overpasses are not feasible due to space and property constraints. Underpasses will include drainage channels and pumps to manage runoff.
- A resident asked whether the underpass in Striža Street would be usable for vehicles. The designer confirmed that the roadway will be at least 6 meters wide and 4.75 meters clearance high.
- Residents asked about compensation if they disagree with the expropriation valuation. The SRI legal representative explained that appeals must go through the court system, with a court expert determining the valuation.
- Residents asked if his house in Žabare would be subject to expropriation. The engineer explained that either a service road will be provided for access, or the house will be expropriated if no alternative access is possible.
- Residents asked about noise barriers. The design team stated that barriers will run the entire Paraćin section, approximately 3 meters high and 3.5 meters from the tracks.
- Residents requested that their houses be purchased due to proximity to noise panels. The designer advised submitting an email query to review the specific case.
- Residents asked about pedestrian pathways at underpasses and overpasses. The designer confirmed their inclusion, with pedestrian fences on some structures.
- Residents asked whether the railway could be rerouted to bypass the town. The designer explained that, based on the requirements of the terms of reference, the railway follows the existing corridor.
- Residents asked about the design speed of trains through Paraćin. The answer provided was 200 km/h.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The consultation in Paraćin showed high community interest, with residents raising specific issues related to access, safety, construction impacts, expropriation, and environmental mitigation.
- Discussions were conducted in an open and transparent manner, facilitating constructive dialogue between residents, SRI representatives, and the PPF9 team.
- Almost all questions were addressed during the meeting. Clarifications were provided on underpass and overpass design, alternative crossings, temporary traffic management, hydrotechnical measures, noise mitigation, compensation procedures, and construction timelines.
- Participants were informed that additional questions can be submitted via the grievance mechanism, ensuring continuous engagement. It was also announced that follow-up consultations will be organized at the settlement level in the coming weeks, allowing residents further opportunity to raise issues and receive clarifications.
- SRI emphasized its commitment to working closely with the municipality and affected communities throughout the project lifecycle, including the provision of compensation and mitigation for any damages caused by construction.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Striža, Sikirica, Ratare, Gornje Vidovo, Donje Vidovo, and Drenovac
Location:	Paraćin, at the Paraćin Theatre Hall, Dr Dragoljuba Jovanovića St., no. b.b.
Date and time:	September 09, 2025, at 13:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points
- Questions in Paraćin mainly focused on: <u>Technical aspects</u>: underpasses, overpasses, service roads, and the planned design speed of trains through settlements. <u>Property access</u>: accessibility to individual plots during and after construction, including whether a new track will be added; concerns from Gornje Vidovo about potential loss of access and the need for parallel roads. <u>Water management and safety</u>: drainage, flood prevention measures, and provision of safe animal crossings. <u>Stations and local infrastructure</u>: position and accessibility of Drenovac station, relocation of sports facilities and local infrastructure. <u>Expropriation and resettlement</u>: procedures, compensation criteria, parcel valuation, relocation of households, and treatment of railway tenants. <u>Spatial planning</u>: the adopted Special Purpose Spatial Plan and the possibility of its amendment. <u>Documentation and consultations</u>: accuracy of ESIA and SEP documentation, as well as requests for more frequent consultations and broader local participation. - Key questions and responses included the following: - A resident from Ratare asked about the planned length of the underpass in Ratare and requested a sketch and design plan. The main designer explained that the full technical documentation comprises over 50 project designs, and that he could provide detailed information if the resident submitted a written request by email. He confirmed that the underpass would be with a two-meter pedestrian sidewalk and a service lane included within the design. He added that the carriageway will be wide enough to allow access for heavy vehicles. - A citizen asked about the maximum speed of trains passing through Paraćin. The main designer replied that the design foresees speeds of up to 200 km/h on open sections.

- A resident asked how access to individual yards would be ensured, especially those located near the planned underpass. The designer explained that access roads with appropriate gradients had been designed wherever space allowed, ensuring that retaining walls and embankments would not endanger nearby houses.
- A resident from Striža asked whether a new track would be added next to the existing alignment, noting that his house is very close to the railway. The designer clarified that no new tracks will be built in that section, and invited the resident to provide his parcel number so that the design team could verify the exact status.
- A question was raised on whether the adopted Special Purpose Spatial Plan could still be changed. The main designer explained that the railway alignment itself would not be subject to change, but that certain design elements could be adjusted based on feedback from citizens and the local self-government.
- The president of the Local community of Gornje Vidovo expressed support for the project but voiced strong dissatisfaction, stating that “neighbouring communities are getting more benefits, while we are left without access roads.” He stressed that residents depend on those connections, otherwise they would be “forced to leave the village,” warning that protests or legal actions could follow if no solution was found. He also raised concerns regarding water drainage, potential flooding, and the need for animal crossings. The main designer responded that hydrotechnical studies were conducted for all water flows, with official location permits obtained from the responsible institutions. Regarding road connections, he explained that the spacing of grade-separated crossings (underpasses/overpasses) was designed at intervals of approximately 2 km, in line with regulations, and that parallel service roads would provide vehicular access to neighbouring routes. An environmental specialist from PPF9 added that underpasses for both large and small animals had been incorporated, based on monitoring data reviewed with the Institute for Nature Conservation.
- A citizen asked whether all settlements would be connected by service or parallel roads. The main designer requested that such questions be submitted with precise locations, so that the design team could provide exact answers in writing.
- A resident of Drenovac raised several concerns, including the way the settlement was described in project documentation as “a smaller village,” the adequacy of flood protection, the safety of school children, and the accessibility of Drenovac station, which is planned to be closed. He questioned whether relocation of the station or overpass closer to Drenovac would be possible, and also pointed out that land in Drenovac is predominantly agricultural with low market prices (around 46 dinars per square meter). The SRI legal department explained that land valuation will be carried out by licensed assessors based on market prices obtained from the Tax Administration, and that individual owners will be able to express objections during the expropriation procedure. The designer confirmed that the siting of crossings had been coordinated with the municipality, but promised to review the request and provide additional clarifications if submitted formally.
- Participants asked who would bear the costs of relocating existing utilities. The designer explained that a separate design had been prepared for this purpose and that relocation costs were included in the project.
- Citizens welcomed the announcement that further consultations would be held in two weeks, but requested that such meetings become more frequent. A resident stated that “the ESIA and SEP documents contain errors and inconsistencies,” including mislabelled meeting locations, identical minutes for different consultations, and misleading data regarding Drenovac. The project team responded that the documents were still in draft form and that comments could be submitted in writing for correction before final adoption.
- A resident from Striža and Donje Vidovo asked how people would reach town during construction. The designer explained that temporary asphalted bypasses would be provided wherever existing alternative routes were not available.
- A citizen asked about the fate of the football field (parcel no. 237). The designer confirmed that it would need to be relocated due to the raised railway embankment at that site.
- Residents asked why some level crossings would be closed. The designer responded that a traffic analysis and optimization of the crossing locations had been carried out. Some road crossings are grade-separated, while others have been removed and redirected through the road network to adjacent crossings.
- Several questions were raised regarding the expropriation process. Residents asked whether assessors would come from the local Tax Administration. The SRI legal representative confirmed this. Another participant, a tenant of a railway-owned apartment due to be demolished, asked about his status. The SRI legal team confirmed that both formal and informal occupants are entitled to equal treatment, including the provision of alternative housing if displacement occurs.

- A resident asked whether it would be possible to publish a full list of parcels to be expropriated. The SRI legal team explained that precise parcels will be known only once the Expropriation Project is completed.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The consultations generated a large number of questions, with active participation from all settlements.
- Positive feedback:
- Residents welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with the project team and appreciated the announcement of follow-up consultations.
- Many participants valued the detailed technical clarifications, including information on underpasses, overpasses, service roads, train speeds, and property access during and after construction.
- Community members acknowledged that some design adjustments are possible in agreement with the municipality, which provided reassurance that their concerns could be considered.
- Concerns and negative feedback:
- In Gornje Vidovo, residents expressed strong dissatisfaction regarding the potential loss of access roads and the lack of parallel roads, feeling that their settlement was treated as “secondary” compared to others.
- In Drenovac, participants raised concerns about the relocation of the local station, the accuracy of underpass positions, and potential disruptions for schoolchildren and daily commuting.
- Residents highlighted inaccuracies in the draft ESIA and SEP documentation, including errors in meeting minutes and incorrect settlement descriptions.
- Concerns remained regarding water drainage and flood protection, particularly the reliability of pumping systems in underpasses, as well as the overall management of surface water.
- Questions about compensation for agricultural land were raised, including requests for reclassification of land from agricultural to construction, reflecting its actual use and value.
- Additional issues included the relocation of sports facilities, treatment of railway tenants, and clarity on expropriation procedures and parcel valuation.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Vitkovac, Donji Ljubeš, Srezovac, Gornji Ljubeš, Donji Adrovac, Trnjane, Korman, Prčilovica, Moravac, Žitkovac, Nozrina, Tešica, Lužane, Bankovac, Grejač, and Veliki Drenovac
Location:	Aleksinac, Assembly Hall of the Municipality of Aleksinac, 169 Knjaz Miloša St.
Date and time:	September 10, 2025, at 11:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the President of the Municipality of Aleksinac, who then gave the floor to the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- The public consultations in Aleksinac were attended by a large number of residents, representing various local communities across the municipality. - The main concerns raised by the community can be summarized as follows: <u>Pedestrian and vehicle crossings</u>: Residents emphasized that the number of pedestrian is insufficient, especially considering 15 underpasses/overpasses planned across the municipality. Additional crossings are requested, particularly for agricultural machinery. <u>Safety and security</u>: Concerns were raised about the safety of children near schools and residents living close to the railway. Questions focused on barriers, safety measures, and flood-prone underpasses. <u>Expropriation and property impacts</u>: Residents requested clear information on which households will be expropriated, how compensation is calculated, and the timeline for resettlement. Concerns were also raised about the potential loss of properties and generational family assets. <u>Utilities and infrastructure</u>: Questions focused on the maintenance of underpass pumps, relocation of water, gas, and electricity lines, and handling of unregistered village water systems. <u>Environmental impacts and wildlife</u>: Residents asked about animal crossings, noise barriers, and flood protection measures. <u>Agricultural access</u>: Farmers expressed concern that the closure of certain crossings would increase travel distances, impacting their daily operations. <u>Construction impacts</u>: Questions addressed construction waste disposal, coordination with local authorities, and responsibility of contractors. - Key questions and responses included the following:	

- The President of Municipality of Aleksinac noted that although five pedestrian underpasses are planned at the request of the local government, this number remains insufficient. He asked who will be responsible for maintaining underpasses and water pumps in case of flooding. The Main Designer explained that any additional requests for pedestrian can be submitted to the project team, who will review them for technical feasibility. A resident from Grejač confirmed their interest in requesting an additional pedestrian.
- The President of the Municipality recalled that similar questions were previously sent to the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure but were not answered. He asked whether it is necessary to submit them again. A representative of SRI requested the municipality to repeat all questions so they could be formally received and addressed.
- The President summarized key community concerns, including the final railway alignment, identification of households subject to expropriation, safety measures for residents living near the railway, and the adequacy of pedestrian. The SRI representative responded that the expropriation and resettlement process will be prepared after the ESIA phase, with consultations held with affected owners, and protective measures implemented for residents not subject to relocation.
- Residents expressed concern that the number of pedestrian may require children to walk longer distances, up to 2 km, instead of 200 meters. The Main Designer confirmed that underpasses were designed according to regulations, and additional requests can be submitted for review and technical evaluation.
- Concerns were raised regarding safety near schools. The SRI representative explained that railway modernization will significantly improve safety, and protective barriers and noise-reduction measures will be installed in all populated areas.
- Residents asked about the status of illegal structures near the railway and unregistered water systems. SRI clarified that expropriation procedures will address these cases, and unregistered village water systems should be reported prior to construction to allow for proper planning.
- A resident highlighted flooding in underpasses making them impassable. SRI explained that any damages related to the project will be compensated, and the modernization works will reduce current safety and access issues.
- Residents asked whether houses close to the tracks, approximately 16 meters away, will be protected from noise. The Main Designer confirmed that noise analyses have been conducted, and sound barriers will ensure protection for all nearby households.
- Some residents expressed concern over expropriation of family properties built over generations and emphasized that they would prefer the railway to be relocated outside the settlement to avoid resettlement. SRI confirmed that the railway will remain within the existing corridor, in accordance with national strategic plans.
- Residents of Prčilovica noted the lack of underpasses for safe access and highlighted that the distance to key points, such as the cemetery, will increase significantly. The Main Designer explained that pedestrian will be installed at stations, and additional requests can be submitted for review.
- The local hunting association asked about wildlife crossings. The PPF9 environmental expert explained that passages for both small and large animals will be constructed under the railway.
- Residents asked when expropriation would start. The SRI team explained that the Resettlement Action Plan will be prepared based on the Expropriation Study, which represents the next phase following the ESIA disclosure.
- Residents in Žitkovac asked whether an underpass or overpass would be provided. The Main Designer explained that a pedestrian will be constructed in the station area, and agricultural crossings can be reviewed upon request.
- Farmers expressed concerns about increased travel distances due to the removal of certain crossings, affecting daily operations and access for vehicles. The designer explained that underpasses have been designed where spatially feasible. In locations where it has been suggested to replace pedestrian underpasses with underpasses for vehicles, there is no available space to accommodate them.
- Residents asked about the management of construction waste. The PPF9 representative confirmed that contractors are responsible for disposal, and disposal sites will be agreed with the municipality.
- A journalist highlighted the need for the President of the Municipality to communicate to the MCTI that the local community prefers the railway to be relocated in order to avoid protests, emphasizing the potential social and economic impacts of the planned expropriations.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Residents and municipal representatives expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of pedestrian crossings, safety near schools and homes, flooding, and maintenance responsibilities. The project team confirmed that modernization works will improve safety, install protective barriers, implement noise-reduction measures, and allow for submission of additional pedestrian requests for technical review.
- Expropriation and resettlement were key concerns, with residents seeking clarity on the final railway alignment, identification of affected households, and compensation procedures. SRI clarified that the Resettlement Action Plan will be prepared following the Expropriation Study, with consultations held for affected owners and protective measures implemented for households not subject to relocation.
- Infrastructure and utility issues, including unregistered village water systems and illegal structures, were raised. SRI emphasized the need for municipalities to report all relevant infrastructure before construction to enable proper planning and mitigation.
- Agricultural crossings and daily mobility were highlighted as critical issues, with farmers concerned about increased travel distances due to removal of certain crossings. The project team confirmed that technical solutions will be considered, and formal requests can be submitted for review.
- Overall, residents expressed strong concerns about the planned relocation of a large number of households, which could result in the depopulation of areas in Aleksinac and migration to larger cities, as well as broader socio-economic impacts and the adequacy of mitigation measures. The consultations highlighted the importance of ongoing communication, transparent planning, and accessible grievance mechanisms throughout the project lifecycle.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local community Đunis
Location:	Kruševac, hall of the Local community Đunis, Đunis b.b.
Date and time:	September 11, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- The consultation in Đunis was attended by a smaller number of residents, as the railway passes through the settlement for only about 170 meters. No land acquisition requiring physical resettlement is foreseen, and no overpasses or underpasses are planned, which was explained in detail by the PPF9 main designer. - Questions raised by participants mainly concerned expropriation and compensation, as residents wanted to know whether their plots would be affected. Some also raised issues related to the procedure for claiming compensation and ongoing delays in unrelated expropriation cases under a different project. - Additional questions touched upon the exact alignment in Đunis, whether a station exists in the settlement, minor deviations of the alignment in Vitkovac, and the legal procedure for requesting expropriation of entire plots. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked why compensation payments for land in the Stalać–Đunis section have been delayed. The SRI legal representative explained that this was not related to the present project, but delays may occur when owners request that land be reclassified from agricultural to construction land in order to achieve higher compensation, which requires additional administrative steps. - Residents asked whether they can request full expropriation of their plot and what the procedure is. The SRI legal representative confirmed that under Article 10 of the Law on Expropriation, owners can submit such a request within two years of the completion of works. The request would then be assessed by experts with regard to the usability of the remaining property. - A resident stated that he owns 10 ares of land and asked how much would be taken. The legal representative explained that only the portion necessary for railway construction will be expropriated. The resident expressed dissatisfaction that the remaining part would be compensated at the agricultural rate, while construction land yields higher compensation. The legal representative clarified that	

compensation is determined based on land classification and market value, with railway needs dictating which land is acquired.

- Residents asked which exact parcels are affected by the 170 meters of railway passing through Đunis. The legal representative explained that the exact parcels will be known once the expropriation project is prepared. The designer added that the alignment remains within the existing corridor, though exact cadastral plots are not yet determined.
- Residents asked whether Đunis has a station. The designer confirmed that a station exists in Đunis.
- Residents asked whether the alignment deviates from the existing corridor in Vitkovac. The designer explained that it deviates slightly to allow adjustment of the track for higher design speed.
- Residents asked where requests under Article 10 (for full parcel expropriation) should be submitted. The legal representative clarified that such requests should be submitted to the City Administration in Kruševac.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The consultation in Đunis was characterized by a smaller turnout, reflecting the limited scope of project impacts in the settlement.
- The discussion focused primarily on land expropriation and compensation procedures. Residents showed interest in ensuring clarity on affected parcels, compensation rates, and the legal framework for submitting claims.
- Almost all questions were addressed during the meeting. The SRI representative reminded participants that any further inquiries can be submitted via email and that timely responses will be provided.
- The meeting concluded in a constructive atmosphere, with residents expressing appreciation for the clarifications provided and project representatives thanking participants for their engagement.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and local stakeholders (representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements)
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Trupale, Mezgraja, and Vrtišće
Location:	Niš, Trupale Cultural Centre, 4 Nišavska St.
Date and time:	September 12, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The first round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the President of the Municipality of Crveni Krst, who then gave the floor to the Project Manager of SRI, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI Project Manager emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team – engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members in Niš primarily concerned the scope of land expropriation, compensation valuation, and the timeline for knowing which parcels and owners would be affected. Citizens also asked about access to agricultural land and local roads, the alignment of the railway in relation to houses, the treatment of underpasses and overpasses during and after construction, and potential vibration impacts on nearby structures. - Further issues discussed included the preservation of local facilities and cultural assets (e.g., football field, historic fountain), errors in the draft SEP records, temporary traffic deviations during construction, property rights in the railway protective zone, and whether stations in Trupale and Vrtišće would remain operational. - Key questions and responses included the following: - One citizen remarked that, while the project team presented information on environmental protection, the issue of primary concern for residents is the scope of expropriation - what land and structures will be taken, under what conditions, and how compensation will be determined. He emphasized that fair valuation of property is crucial and that citizens need clear and practical proposals, not just general principles. He also noted that the Environmental and Social Impact Study was difficult to read due to small print and unclear graphics, and asked about the treatment of access roads in Niš, particularly in relation to planned underpasses and overpasses. The Main Engineer clarified that access to overpasses will be ensured, with at least 200 meters of approach, and that where access to houses could not be provided, such properties will be included in the expropriation. Temporary road deviations will be constructed during the works on underpasses/overpasses to secure local circulation. Representatives of SRI's Legal Department explained that the precise list of parcels will be available only once the Expropriation Project is finalized, and based on it the Resettlement Action Plan will be prepared. No one will be resettled before receiving compensation, with a grace period of approximately six	

months after payment. The compensation value is established by the Tax Administration (for land) or by certified court experts (for buildings and crops). If citizens are dissatisfied, they may initiate court proceedings at SRI's expense.

- Another citizen pointed out an error in the SEP draft, where he was mistakenly listed as chairing a previous consultation meeting. SRI noted the comment and explained that he may also send a written request for correction by email. Municipal representatives offered to assist him with submitting the email.
- An SRI representative confirmed that available project drawings will be provided to the municipality so citizens may review them. Questions not addressed during the meeting may be submitted by email or raised at the next round of community consultations.
- Several citizens repeated questions regarding which parcels will be subject to expropriation. The project team reiterated that the final list will only be known once the Expropriation Project is completed, and additional consultations will then be organized.
- One citizen praised the consultations, noting it was the first time such meetings were organized locally. He also highlighted that access roads had already been improved since project activities began and that the consultations clarified the location of underpasses and overpasses.
- Questions were raised about potential vibrations from trains, construction phases, and restrictions on building within 200 meters of the railway line. The design team explained that new technologies will mitigate vibrations, while SRI representatives clarified that existing protective zones already apply and will remain, except where the track alignment changes.
- Citizens from Trupale raised concerns about access to their settlement, given the planned expansion of station capacity. The engineer explained that no road connection would be cut without replacement; service roads parallel to the tracks will be provided where possible. Citizens were invited to send specific locations by email.
- SRI underlined that for any damages caused during construction, both SRI and the contractor are obliged to provide compensation.
- Questions were also raised regarding the station in Trupale, with citizens asking whether it would remain operational for passenger transport. The project team confirmed that at present the station is not foreseen for passenger services.
- Residents of Vrtište raised issues regarding the football field (partly affected by the alignment) and requested a parallel road connection similar to Mezgraja. They also asked for the preservation of a historic fountain dating back to 1926. The engineer requested detailed information by email for further assessment.
- Citizens noted that meeting records for Vrtište were missing from the SEP draft (only Mezgraja and Trupale were listed). SRI representatives reiterated the existence of a grievance mechanism and encouraged all participants to submit additional remarks.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The key concern of citizens remains the expropriation process, including clarity on affected parcels, compensation values, and resettlement procedures. The project team repeatedly stressed that detailed information will be available once the Expropriation Project and Resettlement Action Plan are finalized.
- Citizens demonstrated strong interest in ensuring proper access roads during and after construction. The project team committed to providing temporary deviations during works and permanent alternative routes wherever road connections are cut.
- Concerns were raised about potential impacts on local facilities (football field, historic fountain), and citizens were encouraged to submit detailed requests for technical review.
- Misrepresentation in the SEP draft was flagged and SRI confirmed that corrections could be submitted formally by email, with municipal support for citizens who lack digital access.
- Overall, citizens welcomed the consultations, noting that it was the first time such discussions had been held in the area and that the dialogue clarified many technical issues. They also appreciated the assurance that compensation for damages during construction would be provided.

Belgrade – Niš Railway Modernisation Project

Technical Assistance to the Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

REFERENCE CODE: NEAR/BEG/2022/EA-RP/0010

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the roma associations and the Municipality of Crveni krst
Subject:	Focus group meetings with vulnerable groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the Roma National Council and the Roma Cultural Center.
Location:	Niš, Assembly Hall of the City Municipality of Crveni Krst, 89 Bulevar 12. Februara Street
Date and time:	Ocotber 09, 2025, at 10:00 CET

1. Introduction

- Following the two rounds of public consultations, a focus group meeting with a vulnerable groups representatives was held to discuss the Project's environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed the participants and thanked them for attending.
- At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained the purpose of the meeting and its relevance for the local community. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share his feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on the Roma community and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects.
- Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. The participant was encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage, and reassured that all correspondence during the meeting would remain anonymous.
- The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented key expected socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather the participant's feedback.

2. Discussion points

- A representative of the Municipality, who lives in the Roma settlement, opened the meeting and explained that the settlement has around 3,000 inhabitants within the territory of the City Municipality of Crveni Krst, Niš. Around ten houses are located close to the railway, while the rest are at a greater distance. However, this area is linked to another parallel project, as the settlements of Vrtište, Mezgraja, and Trupale along Section 3 do not have Roma settlements in the immediate vicinity of the railway and are therefore not directly affected by the Project.
The municipal representative commended the railway modernization project, noting that the line passes directly through the city. He emphasized that the main issue is not the construction activities but rather the

maintenance and cleanliness of the railway area. As a recommendation, he proposed that Roma community members could be engaged in maintenance and cleaning works or other project-related activities.

- When asked by PPF9, “How do you assess the current quality of life and economic conditions in the Roma community?”, participants responded that living conditions are difficult, primarily due to unemployment. Even one employed family member significantly improves a household’s economic situation.
- Regarding common jobs or income activities among Roma community members, participants mentioned that most are engaged in physical labor and low-skilled jobs.
- When asked about the potential impact of railway reconstruction on livelihoods, participants stated that employment opportunities are the main expected benefit. They expressed interest in being included in the Project workforce and highlighted that they have established a Roma social enterprise that could be engaged for such work.
- On possible job opportunities and training needs, participants said they could perform manual work, welding, metalwork, cleaning of dumpsites, railway maintenance (greenery), janitorial services, or food preparation. Since many Roma men and women have completed only primary education, they welcomed any opportunity for training or requalification. The Roma Cultural Center has available space that could host training sessions.
- The participants emphasized that the Municipality provides strong support to the Roma community and has already employed over 200 Roma individuals. The Roma Cultural Center engages women who wish to contribute to the community. Women participants highlighted the need for support and networking opportunities, stating that many Roma women are increasingly educated and wish to become economically active rather than remain confined to domestic roles.
- Regarding the use of railway transport, participants noted that train use among Roma residents is currently very low, mostly due to poor timetables and limited accessibility. Many women are married outside Nis and would use the railway more frequently if it were better organized. Illiteracy and lack of information also represent barriers to using railway services. They believe that modernization will improve safety and accessibility and increase usage.
- Concerning safety and accessibility during construction and operation, participants said that in the past there were more accidents, but awareness has improved. Children no longer climb on trains as before, and level crossings are mostly used properly. However, it was mentioned that some community members collect scrap metal, glass, or screws from the tracks, which poses safety risks, though this behavior is driven by economic hardship rather than intent.
- On the presence of foreign workers during construction, participants expressed that employment of local Roma residents should be prioritized. They are open to cooperation and maintaining good relations with foreign workers but fear that foreign labor might reduce opportunities for local employment. Female participants expressed some concerns due to the patriarchal structure of the community.
- The participants proposed organizing information sessions and trainings for Roma settlement residents before construction begins, so they can be informed about potential impacts and safety measures. The Roma Cultural Center, which has appropriate facilities and staff fluent in the Roma language, could serve as the main hub for such activities and communication with the Project. They also emphasized the importance of having a dedicated info call center available throughout the construction phase.
- Regarding the installation of protective fences along the railway, participants supported the measure, stating it would improve safety and reduce illegal crossing of tracks.
- When asked about gender equality within Roma households, participants said that around 60% of families practice gender equality in decision-making, especially among younger couples, while older generations tend to be more traditional.
- If land expropriation or resettlement were to occur, participants agreed that women’s opinions should be equally considered, but noted that this still depends on family dynamics. They emphasized the importance of informative meetings and continuous education, as well as employment opportunities for women to strengthen their social and economic position.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- According to the representative of the Municipality of Crveni Krst, the Roma settlements are not located near the railway line in this section (Vrtišće, Mezgraja, and Trupale).
- The Roma community representatives expressed a strong interest in participating in project-related activities, particularly in employment opportunities linked to railway maintenance, cleaning, and auxiliary works.
- Participants clearly identified unemployment as the main social issue and viewed the Project as an opportunity to improve local livelihoods.
- It was emphasized that awareness-raising and information sessions are essential to ensure safety and community cooperation during project implementation.
- The Roma Cultural Center was recognized as a key stakeholder for community engagement, and communication, and potential training delivery.
- The discussion revealed that gender equality is gradually improving, with Roma women showing increasing interest in economic participation and empowerment.
- Overall, participants expressed positive attitudes toward the railway modernization project and its potential benefits, provided that communication, transparency, and local employment inclusion are ensured throughout all project phases.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and representatives of the hunting association and the Municipality of Crveni krst
Subject:	Focus group meetings with NGOs groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the hunting association “Nis”
Location:	Niš, Assembly Hall of the City Municipality of Crveni Krst, 89 Bulevar 12. Februara Street
Date and time:	Ocotber 09, 2025, at 12:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with hunting associations were held to discuss the Project’s environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the participants from the hunting association. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on hunting activities and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence from the meeting would remain confidential. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented the key expected environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants’ feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the meeting, representatives of the Niš Hunting Association introduced their organization and its activities. They explained that, within the area potentially affected by the Project, their association is the only one operating, with around 900 members, established in 1895. The hunting ground covers approximately 59,500 hectares, of which 44,000 hectares are productive hunting areas. - They emphasized that the most significant species for them is the partridge, which provides substantial income and is mainly found in the area of Mezgraja settlement. Other important species include small game such as hares and pheasants. - In response to the question “Have you been informed about the railway reconstruction project planned for this section?” the hunters stated that they received an invitation from the Municipality to attend this meeting. - When asked by the PPF9 environmental expert about possible animal migration routes near the railway, they replied that they would provide this information subsequently. They also noted that there are no strictly protected species in the area. - In relation to the question about potential impacts of fencing along the railway on hunters and wildlife, participants explained that the main issue could arise during training of hunting dogs. When birds fly over to the other side of the track, dogs would be unable to cross due to fencing, creating a kind of buffer zone. They expressed concern that this could result in birds, especially partridges, being struck by trains.

- As a key concern, the Association mentioned that they breed around 15,000 pheasants per year and are worried that project activities could disrupt this process, leading to reduced income and hunting area. They also noted that hunting is prohibited in the area around the railway for safety reasons.
- Regarding noise impacts during construction, hunters stated that noise will initially disturb animals, but they will gradually adapt and relocate to quieter areas.
- They noted that there are feeding stations within the hunting area. The PPF9 team explained that wildlife crossings will be provided under the railway and invited the Association to share any additional suggestions. If a need for extra passages is identified, it can be addressed during the construction phase.
- As a mitigation measure, hunters proposed to install denser fencing at the lower part of the railway embankment to prevent animal passage, and to avoid construction works during the hunting season (from October 19 to the end of January, especially on weekends). Another important proposal was that, since the hunting ground borders with the public enterprise “Srbija Šume”, a part of that territory (Mali Jastrebac area) could be allocated to the Association to compensate for the potential loss of hunting area.
- The Niš Hunting Association expressed their interest in cooperating with the Contractor and Investor during further project phases. It was agreed that the Association will send proposals for locations of animal crossings.
- Responding to the question about the economic and tourism importance of hunting, participants stated that hunting attracts a number of foreign tourists, particularly from Italy, who visit for several months annually, contributing to local income through accommodation and hospitality services.
- Finally, participants requested that all communication related to the Project be conducted through the Niš Hunting Association, which would then disseminate information to its members via their Viber group.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The Niš Hunting Association operates as the only organized hunting body in the affected area.
- Participants do not oppose the Project and generally view the modernization of the railway positively, but expressed specific ecological and operational concerns, particularly related to animal crossings, fencing, and the training of hunting dogs.
- Mitigation measures (such as wildlife passages, adequate fencing, and limited work during hunting season weekends) are recommended to minimize disturbance.
- Hunters emphasized the economic role of hunting in the region, both through local employment and tourism, and requested consideration for compensation or cooperation mechanisms (e.g., use of part of the territory from “Srbija Šume”).
- Continuous communication and information-sharing through the Hunting Association is seen as essential to maintaining a positive relationship and ensuring timely identification of environmental or operational challenges.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the women's association, women entrepreneurs who are not members of any association, association of persons with muscular dystrophy and the Municipality of Paracin,
Subject:	Focus group meetings with vulnerable groups about Project E&S impact assesment – Women's association "Nasa podrska" and Association of persons with muscular dystrophy of the Pomoravlje district.
Location:	Paracin, Regional Innovation Center, Svetog Save Street bb.
Date and time:	October 10, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with vulnerable groups were held to discuss the Project's environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the women participants from the local community. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on women and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence on the meeting would remain anonymous. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented key expected socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants' feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the meeting, representatives of the Association of Persons with Muscular Dystrophy of the Pomoravlje District explained that their premises are located near the railway station and that vibrations from passing trains can be felt. They asked how such impacts could be mitigated during construction. The PPF9 team clarified that appropriate mitigation measures would be implemented during works, particularly for properties not subject to expropriation, and added that fencing along the track is planned. Participants were informed that any specific concerns could be submitted through the Project Grievance Mechanism for official review and response. - Regarding women's quality of life and employment, participants stated that it largely depends on education and occupation. They noted that women in Paraćin are generally equal to men in terms of opportunities and are mostly employed in education, administration, and trade. - Participants expressed concern that the closure of the railway crossing in Žabare would severely affect their livelihoods, as their businesses operate on both sides of the railway. Without access, some might be forced to close. They suggested that a bridge or overpass be considered at this location to ensure connectivity,

pointing out that emergency services and local residents would otherwise face long detours and higher travel costs.

- They mentioned that they currently use railway transport infrequently but would do so more often if a station were available nearby. Regarding the benefits of the Project for women, participants said they did not see long-term employment opportunities, as construction jobs are temporary. They emphasized the need for stable and sustainable employment, especially for women.
- Participants from Žabare reiterated that the potential closure of the crossing would affect access to essential services such as schools, shops, and healthcare facilities. They stressed that this would have a significant impact on their quality of life.
- In terms of safety, participants noted that some residents cross the railway at unauthorized points.
- Regarding women's participation in community life, participants said that women's organizations exist but are limited in number. They highlighted that training and capacity-building programs for women would be beneficial.
- Participants expressed mild concern about the engagement of foreign workers, hoping that local workers would be prioritized and that community integration would be well managed.
- To ensure the safety of women around construction sites, participants emphasized the need for timely and accessible public information throughout the works period.
- They also noted that women are less represented than men in public and decision-making roles related to infrastructure development, partly due to limited access to information.
- On property ownership, participants explained that property is most often registered in men's names, although in Žabare there are cases where women are owners. It remains common for women to renounce inheritance rights in favor of male relatives, though newer legislation guaranteeing equal ownership of marital property is seen as a positive development.
- Finally, regarding compensation, participants said that it should be fair and adequate, enabling affected households, particularly women, to purchase equivalent property elsewhere. They reiterated that they do not oppose the Project and support the modernization of the Belgrade–Niš railway, but they strongly advocate for preserving the Žabare crossing to maintain access and community well-being.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The main concern expressed by participants relates to the closure of the Žabare railway crossing, which would directly impact access to homes, services, and businesses, as well as emergency response routes. Participants request that a bridge or overpass be considered as a mitigation measure.
- Economic and employment concerns were emphasized, with participants noting the need for long-term job opportunities for women, not just short-term positions during construction.
- Women in the community are generally active and educated, but underrepresented in public decision-making. They would benefit from training, networking, and empowerment programs.
- Safety and accessibility are key priorities, including prevention of unauthorized crossings and improved communication with the public during construction.
- Participants expressed overall support for the Project, recognizing its importance, while calling for adequate mitigation to ensure that communities such as Žabare are not disproportionately affected.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the roma associations and the Municipality of Paracin
Subject:	Focus group meetings with vulnerable groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the Roma association “Đurđevdan”
Location:	Paracin, Regional Innovation Center, Svetog Save Street bb.
Date and time:	October 10, 2025, at 12:30 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, a focus group meeting with a vulnerable groups representatives was held to discuss the Project’s environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed the participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained the purpose of the meeting and its relevance for the local community. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share his feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on the Roma community and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. The participant was encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage, and reassured that all correspondence during the meeting would remain anonymous. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented key expected socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather the participant’s feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the meeting, a member of the PPF9 team asked about the distribution of the Roma population in relation to the railway — whether Roma settlements are concentrated along the railway corridor. The Vice President and the President of the Roma Association explained that there are five Roma settlements in Municipality of Paracin, with some Roma families also living in the urban area. Only two to three households are located near the railway, while most are not in its immediate vicinity. - When asked whether their NGO covers all these Roma settlements and what activities it performs, the representative of the Roma Association Đurđevdan stated that the organization works on all aspects of Roma inclusion — health, education, employment, housing, culture, and language. She also noted that she is a member of the National Roma Council and that the association has excellent cooperation with the municipality. - In response to the question about the current living standards and economic situation, participants said that living conditions are poor, especially in settlements lacking sewage and adequate road infrastructure. - Regarding typical occupations, they explained that many Roma collect secondary raw materials (mainly metals), but that this activity has declined due to automation and loss of social welfare benefits. - Participants emphasized that the railway reconstruction could provide employment opportunities for community members, especially for unskilled labor. Potential jobs mentioned included site cleaning and kitchen assistance.

- Their NGO could host training and capacity-building sessions in its offices to prepare Roma for employment.
- Roma community members rarely use railway transport at present but expect to use it more frequently after modernization, given improved speed, safety, and affordability.
- Only two to three Roma families live close to the railway in Municipality of Paraćin, and no significant adverse impacts are expected. However, participants highlighted the importance of maintaining access across the railway at the Dankovo crossing, which is used by all residents.
- Regarding potential health and safety risks, participants said their NGO could help inform the Roma community about construction activities and safety measures, especially since many members are not well-informed.
- They stated that they had not previously experienced similar infrastructure projects. There are no cultural or religious sites expected to be affected. The Roma community welcomes the railway modernization project.
- Participants expressed no concerns regarding the presence of foreign workers or potential discrimination during construction. They emphasized that there are no differences in property ownership rights between Roma and non-Roma residents, although some Roma households live in rented or non-formalized housing.
- One Roma family lives in a former railway facility near the Veterinary Station without electricity or water. The participants suggested that the Municipality and the Center for Social Work should help this family find alternative accommodation.
- Gender equality was reported to be improving — women are increasingly involved in education and community activities, and both men and women share similar work responsibilities.
- The meeting concluded with participants expressing appreciation for the discussion and stating that they would share the information with their community. They also emphasized the importance of creating employment opportunities for Roma under the project.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The Roma community in Paraćin Municipality is not significantly located near the railway line; only two to three households are in proximity, and no physical or economic displacement is expected.
- No substantial negative social impacts on Roma settlements are anticipated during construction or operation of the railway.
- The Roma community expressed support for the project and interest in potential employment and training opportunities that could arise during implementation.
- Maintaining safe pedestrian and vehicle access, particularly at the Dankovo crossing, was highlighted as important for all local residents.
- Continued engagement with the Roma Association Đurđevdan is recommended for future consultations, dissemination of information, and inclusion of Roma in project-related activities.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the hunting associations, the Municipality of Cicevac, and the City of Stalac
Subject:	Focus group meetings with NGOs groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the hunting association „Hajduk Veljko“
Location:	Cicevac, Fazenerija, Hajduk Veljkova Street 116a
Date and time:	October 16, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with hunting associations were held to discuss the Project’s environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the participants from the hunting associations. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on hunting activities and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence from the meeting would remain confidential. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented the key expected environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants’ feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the discussion, representatives of the hunting association briefly introduced their organization and activities. The President of the Association explained that it was founded in 1900 and covers an area of approximately 12,500 hectares, with about 350 active members. - Among the large game species present in the hunting area, wild boar, roe deer, and wolf are the most common, while small game includes hare, pheasant, turtle dove, partridge, quail, duck, and goose — with hare and pheasant identified as the dominant species. The association conducts regular feeding of game, maintains hunting grounds, and operates according to the annual management plan prepared on April 1 and valid until the end of March of the following year. - The main hunting season lasts from November until mid-December, during which approximately 280 hunters participate in the field. Both individual and group hunting are practiced, though group hunting is not conducted in areas near the railway line. - When asked about animal movement near the railway corridor, representatives stated that hare and pheasant typically move in the area between November and mid-December, and this is the only period when the zone is more intensively used. The association did not indicate any specific day of particular importance for their activities.

- Regarding the impact of modern infrastructure development, they noted that highway construction had already significantly reduced game migration and halved the wildlife population in their hunting grounds, expecting a similar impact due to the planned railway reconstruction. The Jovanovačka River was identified as the key natural passage for animal movement.
- A PPF9 team member explained that the project design includes the possibility of animal crossings under all bridges, culverts, and overpasses, providing sufficient passageways for wildlife. Association members inquired whether green bridges (ecoducts) would be constructed over the railway. The Environmental Expert clarified that such structures were not planned due to the flat terrain and that underpasses and culverts were found to be more effective in similar conditions. It was also noted that there are 46 existing culverts designed for animal crossings between Paracin and Nis.
- As a mitigation measure, the representatives of the hunting association suggested installing denser fencing along the lower parts of the railway embankment to prevent animals from crossing the tracks. They also recommended afforestation around the culvert areas to facilitate safer migration.
- When asked whether any animal collisions with trains had been recorded in the area, the hunters responded that none had been reported along the railway, though such incidents had occurred along the highway.
- Regarding migratory routes, the hunters identified the critical zone between Lucina and Cicevac, where frequent wildlife crossings and casualties occur, as well as the area around the left bank of the Jovanovačka River.
- When asked if the existing railway currently acts as a natural barrier, the President stated that it does not at present, but it likely will after reconstruction.
- Discussing potential project impacts on the hunting grounds and wildlife, the representatives emphasized that the key concern is the disruption of wildlife migration due to fencing and construction activities. Animals typically cross the railway in search of food and quiet zones near the river, making them more vulnerable to predators. They also noted that runoff from nearby hills could flood the lower areas and endanger young animals if culverts are not properly maintained.
- They stressed that the flat section of the hunting ground near the railway is a much more productive breeding area compared to the upper zones. Construction works are expected to cause temporary disturbances due to noise, increased human presence, machinery operation, and vibrations, leading to animal displacement.
- Positive effects identified include the potential reduction of animal casualties due to the new fencing system, although large game may still attempt to breach it.
- The main proposed mitigation measures included:
 - Increasing the number and dimensions of underpasses and culverts to ensure adequate passage for wildlife, even during heavy rainfall or flooding (PPF9 team confirmed this is already addressed in the design).
 - Installing dense fencing along the railway embankment to prevent animals from crossing the tracks.
 - Implementing afforestation around animal crossing areas to improve habitat connectivity.
 - The representatives added that the association does not border state forest land managed by Srbija Šume, so compensation for habitat loss could not be requested.
- In terms of hunting tourism, they mentioned it is well developed but expected certain negative economic impacts during the construction phase, though the extent could not yet be quantified.
- The association expressed willingness to cooperate with the Contractor and the Investor during construction and confirmed they have established efficient internal communication through a Viber group and information sent to members' home addresses.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The main concern raised was the potential restriction of wildlife movement caused by fencing and railway reconstruction.
- The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining adequate and functional animal passages (culverts, underpasses) and ensuring they remain unobstructed during and after construction.
- Stakeholders acknowledged the project's positive design elements, such as multiple crossings under bridges and culverts, and agreed that "green bridges" are not necessary in this flat terrain.

- Proposed measures such as installing denser fencing at lower track sections and afforestation around culvert areas should be considered in the environmental management plan.
- The association expressed readiness to cooperate in future project stages and to share relevant field information if needed.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the hunting association and the Municipality of Paraćin
Subject:	Focus group meetings with NGOs groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the hunting association „Paraćin“
Location:	Paraćin, Regional Innovation Center, Svetog Save Street bb.
Date and time:	October 16, 2025, at 13:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with hunting associations were held to discuss the Project’s environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the participants from the hunting associations. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on hunting activities and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence from the meeting would remain confidential. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented the key expected environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants’ feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the meeting, representatives of the Paraćin Hunting Association introduced their organization and activities. They explained that the association was founded in 1902 and manages the “Crnica” hunting ground, which covers a total area of approximately 48,000 hectares. Of this, around 44,000 hectares are productive hunting areas, while the remaining 4,000 hectares are non-hunting zones. The association employs three full-time staff members and has around 600 active members. - The hunting ground is known for species such as quail, hare, pheasant, partridge, fox, deer, roe deer, and wild boar, with small game, roe deer, and wild boar being dominant. Key activities include animal feeding, game repopulation (particularly pheasants), and maintaining their own pheasantry and cold storage facilities for game meat. The association operates year-round, with the main hunting season starting on October 19 (hare and pheasant) and lasting for the following six weekends. Afterward, hunting of wild boar continues during December and January, and the official hunting year runs from April 1 to March 31. The association celebrates its patron day, St. Eustace, on October 3. - Representatives stated that the hunting ground extends along both sides of the railway corridor within the territory of the Municipality of Paraćin. - In response to the question “What risks or challenges do you anticipate regarding hunters’ access to hunting grounds during and after reconstruction?”, the representatives expressed concern over the potential

reduction of hunting areas due to urbanization and infrastructure expansion. They emphasized that such developments negatively affect both the hunting ground and its membership, as well as animal populations and migration. The installation of railway fencing was identified as a key issue that could disrupt natural migration routes and reduce available hunting territory.

- Representatives noted that damage to game populations may occur as a result of restricted movement. They were informed that 46 animal crossings are planned along Section 3 of the railway reconstruction project, allowing both small and large game to cross under bridges and culverts. Green bridges are not planned, as this type of crossing has not proven effective in Serbia's flat terrain conditions.
- When asked by the PPF9 team whether there are known animal migration routes, the hunters confirmed their existence and proposed that passages be located at the following key points where animals most frequently move between settlements:
 - Between Zmijač and the entrance to Paraćin from Ćuprija – 2–3 underpasses for small and large game;
 - Between Striža and Ratare – approximately 3 crossings;
 - Between Ratare and Drenovac – 3–4 crossings;
 - Between Drenovac and Pojate – several passages, with the first two routes identified as the most important for animal migration.
- When asked about animal collisions with trains, the hunters stated that none have been recorded along the railway, though such incidents do occur along the highway (approximately once per month).
- They also clarified that there are no feeding points near the railway, as all feeding sites are located deeper within the hunting ground, away from the tracks.
- Regarding the expected project impacts, the representatives identified the main negative effect as the restriction of wildlife migration due to railway fencing, leading to a potential reduction in animal populations. On the positive side, they noted that fencing will reduce the risk of animal casualties from trains. Small game, however, will no longer be able to cross freely from one side of the railway to the other as before, and the fencing will effectively divide the hunting ground into two separate zones.
- During construction, they expect temporary disturbances due to noise and vibrations but stated that these are unlikely to cause major problems since construction activities are conducted during the day, while most animals are active at night. The existing railway does not currently represent a barrier to wildlife movement as it is not fenced.
- The proposed mitigation measures include:
 - Ensuring underpasses and culverts are constructed at the above-mentioned key locations for wildlife crossings and aligned with existing highway passages;
 - Constructing a large culvert near the Striža torrent, which often floods the nearby settlement and hunting area, to ensure adequate drainage toward the Great Morava River and prevent animal casualties during floods;
 - Allocating additional hunting land managed by Srbija Šume to compensate for any territorial losses caused by the project, particularly the area between the highway and the railway, which hunters identified as ideal for such compensation.
- Regarding economic aspects, the representatives explained that their main income comes from membership fees, sale of game meat, and trophies. They expect a negative economic impact, particularly concerning roe deer populations. The association does not receive any financial support or donations from the municipality and does not engage in commercial hunting tourism.
- In terms of communication, all members are informed through the Association President. They maintain a Viber group with approximately 600 members where they share key information. The association held a Management Board meeting the day before this discussion to prepare for participation. The representatives expressed readiness to cooperate with the Contractor and the Investor in future project stages, especially during construction.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The Paraćin Hunting Association manages a large, ecologically diverse hunting ground that extends across both sides of the railway.

- The main concern identified is the interruption of animal migration routes due to railway fencing, which could reduce game populations and effectively divide the hunting ground into two separate parts.
- The hunters acknowledged that fencing may have a positive safety effect by reducing the number of wildlife collisions with trains.
- The representatives emphasized the importance of locating underpasses at known migration routes (Zmijač–Paraćin, Striža–Ratare, Ratare–Drenovac, and Drenovac–Pojate) and aligning them with existing highway crossings.
- It was noted that no animal collisions with trains have been recorded so far and that current railway operations do not hinder wildlife movement.
- Construction-related impacts such as noise and vibration are expected to be minor and temporary.
- The association proposed compensation measures, including the allocation of additional hunting land managed by Srbija Šume (the forest area between the highway and the railway).
- The hunters demonstrated proactive engagement, strong internal organization, and readiness for continued cooperation with project stakeholders.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and representatives of the roma association and the Municipality of Aleksinac
Subject:	Focus group meetings with vulnerable groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the Roma association “Prcilovica”
Location:	Aleksinac, Komitet Hall, 144 Knjaza Miloša Street
Date and time:	October 17, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, a focus group meeting with a vulnerable group representative was held to discuss the Project’s Environmental and Social Impact Assessment. The Project team welcomed the participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained the purpose of the meeting and its relevance for the local community to the President of the Roma Association. He was provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share his feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on the Roma community and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. The participant was encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage, and reassured that all correspondence during the meeting would remain anonymous. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented key expected socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather the participant’s feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- The President of the Municipality of Aleksinac explained that all three Roma settlements within the municipality were invited to the meeting. However, as he noted, since none of these settlements are located directly along the railway, attendance was low, and only the President of one Roma Association participated, as this settlement is the closest to the railway (the other two are situated in the town area). - The Roma representative noted that their settlement is about 500–600 meters from the railway line, with approximately 600 residents living in about 45 houses. - On the current quality of life and economic conditions in the Roma community: - The Roma representative stated that living conditions are difficult, as most community members are unemployed and rely on social assistance. Occasional daily labor is common, such as fruit picking, but even those opportunities have decreased due to mechanization. - On potential impacts of the railway reconstruction on livelihoods: - He expressed a positive attitude toward the railway modernization, stating that it is beneficial and poses no harm to the community. - On potential job opportunities related to the Project: - The representative said that Roma people would be interested in job opportunities, particularly in cleaning, auxiliary work, or similar positions, and that training programs would be welcomed.

- On the use of railway transport:
- The representative said that Roma community members use trains for travel to Paraćin, Niš, and Belgrade, mostly for work purposes. Both men and women use railway transport equally. Children now attend school regularly, which is located above the railway line, so they do not cross the tracks. The health center is also accessible without crossing the railway. Train travel is preferred because it is more affordable than buses, and its use is expected to increase after modernization due to higher speed and efficiency.
- On access to essential services during reconstruction:
- He did not identify any negative impacts on the community's access to education, healthcare, or other services.
- On safety and accessibility during construction and operation:
- No safety risks or concerns were identified.
- He supported the installation of protective fencing along the railway, noting that it will improve safety.
- On awareness and communication:
- The Roma Association President offered to serve as a contact point for communication and information sharing about the Project within the Roma community.
- On potential health or safety risks during construction:
- The representative said that no concerns exist regarding construction activities and that the community does not expect any disruptions to electricity or water supply based on past experiences.
- On specific health and hygiene needs:
- The President of the Municipality of Aleksinac added that sewerage construction in the Roma settlement area is planned but has not yet been implemented.
- On the presence of foreign workers:
- The Roma representative stated that the community has no issues with the presence of foreign workers or people of different backgrounds.
- On risks of harassment or violence:
- He emphasized that there are no concerns about potential conflicts between Roma residents and construction workers or other communities.
- On safety measures:
- He requested to be informed in advance of construction works so he can notify community members to avoid unsafe areas.
- On inclusion in decision-making and consultations:
- The representative said that this is the first time they were directly invited by the municipality to participate in a meeting about the railway project. He proposed that all future communication and meeting invitations be sent through him as the community representative.
- On safe crossings:
- He said that residents cross the railway only at official and safe crossing points, stressing that no one would intentionally take risks, as the railway has existed there for generations and people are aware of safety measures.
- On gender equality and property rights:
- The representative stated that women and men are equal in the Roma community. Of the approximately 45 houses, only 2–3 are legalized, mainly due to high legalization costs. Property ownership is mostly male, but there is no perceived gender inequality.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The overall perception of the Project is positive. The Roma representative emphasized that the community does not foresee any risks, as they live at a distance from the railway, and expects that the modernization will bring safer and faster transport. He added that some social support, such as assistance with food or heating, would be appreciated.
- No safety, accessibility, or discrimination concerns were identified.
- Future communication and consultations should be organized through the Roma Association representatives to ensure timely information sharing and community participation.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, and representatives of the hunting associations and the Municipality of Aleksinac
Subject:	Focus group meetings with NGOs groups about Project E&S impact assesment – meeting with the hunting associations “Tigar” and “Deligrad”
Location:	Aleksinac, Komitet Hall, 144 Knjaza Miloša Street
Date and time:	October 17, 2025, at 12:30 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with hunting associations were held to discuss the Project’s environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the participants from the hunting associations. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on hunting activities and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence from the meeting would remain confidential. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented the key expected environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants’ feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the discussion, representatives of both hunting associations briefly introduced their organizations and activities. The representative of the “Tigar” Hunting Association explained that the association has existed under this name since 2020 and covers an area of approximately 24,000 hectares with around 400 members. The main game species include wild boar, roe deer, and pheasant, while the most valuable species—and the one most commonly found near the railway—is the grey partridge. - The President of the “Deligrad” Hunting Association stated that the association was founded in 1898, manages a hunting ground of around 32,000 hectares, and has 600 members. The most significant game species in their area include grey partridge (considered the most valuable), pheasant, hare, wild duck, wild boar, roe deer, and fox. - When asked about specific hunting events apart from the hunters’ patron day (slava), the Tigar representative said that all activities follow the official hunting calendar: the season for roe deer starts on 15 April, followed by wild boar hunting, while small game hunting begins in August. The main season for hare and pheasant runs from 19 October to 31 January. Hunting takes place throughout the year, both individually (two hunters) and in groups (3–20 participants). The Deligrad representative confirmed that their members are active throughout the year as well, with the season officially starting on 1 April and ending on 31 March of the

following year. Both associations maintain hunting grounds, provide food for wildlife, and organize activities according to their annual work plans.

- In response to the question on how the railway reconstruction and operation might affect hunting activities, representatives of Tigar expressed concern over the planned installation of fencing. They explained that the fence would block traditional migration routes of animals, as wild animals often cross the railway through open areas between settlements due to poor maintenance of existing underpasses. It was noted that there have already been cases of wild boars being hit by trains. During dry periods, animals tend to move from the mountains toward the river and back, crossing the railway in the process — movement that would no longer be possible once fencing is installed.
- The President of the Municipality of Aleksinac asked who would be responsible for maintaining animal underpasses, to which the PPF9 team responded that this responsibility will rest with Serbian Railway Infrastructure (SRI). The team was also asked to provide information on the number of underpasses planned within the Aleksinac municipality, and it was agreed that the Environmental Expert would send this information by email during the following week.
- The Tigar representative emphasized that the area around the railway, particularly near Veliki Drenovac and Sukovo, is especially important for the grey partridge. He also noted that all hunting areas along the railway line are critical, especially those between settlements, and therefore the number of animal crossings should be increased.
- The Deligrad association stated that their hunting grounds are not directly adjacent to the railway, but they expressed support for the idea of green bridges for animal crossings. The PPF9 team clarified that such bridges are not planned under this Project, as they are typically effective in mountainous terrains, while this section is predominantly flat lowland.
- Regarding safety concerns, participants pointed out that fencing would divide the hunting grounds into two parts, creating barriers for both wildlife and hunters. The main concern relates to pheasants and grey partridges, which may collide with the fence, leading to injuries or fatalities. The President of the Municipality of Aleksinac highlighted that the greatest challenge will concern the hunting area located between the railway and the South Morava River, as fencing could significantly endanger local fauna.
- Participants also discussed potential ways for hunting associations to cooperate with project planners and environmental authorities to monitor and mitigate impacts. The Tigar representative explained that both hunters and animals will be affected by changes in habitat caused by construction works, particularly due to noise and vibration, which will disturb animals and may drive them away. He mentioned that there are feeding sites near the railway that could be disrupted.
- Among the proposed mitigation measures, the President of the Municipality suggested that relocating the railway would be the most effective long-term solution. Another proposal was for “Srbija Šume” (Serbian Forests) to allocate a portion of forested land, such as the “Mali Jastrebac” area, to hunting associations as a form of compensation.
- Representatives of both associations also noted that hunting tourism plays an important role in the local economy, particularly along the South Morava River, but the Project might lead to a reduction in hunting activity and membership fees. They emphasized that hunting tourism contributes to the local economy through accommodation, hotels, and restaurants, as visitors spend money during their stays.
- Both associations expressed willingness to cooperate with the future contractor during the construction phase. In terms of internal communication, Tigar stated that it maintains effective communication with members through a Facebook page, notice board, telephone, and mail, with each village having its own section and representative. Deligrad reported similar practices and added that they also use a Viber group for coordination and information sharing.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The “Tigar” Hunting Association is directly affected by the Project, as its hunting grounds are located close to the railway. In contrast, the “Deligrad” Hunting Association is not directly affected, as its hunting area lies further away from the railway corridor.

- The overall attitude toward the Project was constructive, with participants expressing willingness to cooperate with the Project team and future contractors to help monitor and mitigate potential impacts.
- However, several concerns were identified, including:
 - Interruption of wildlife migration routes due to fencing and construction works.
 - Risk of injury or death of animals, particularly pheasants and grey partridges, caused by collisions with the fence.
 - Possible loss of hunting grounds and economic impacts on hunting tourism and association revenues.
- The proposed mitigation measures included:
 - Increasing the number of animal underpasses along the railway line.
 - Ensuring regular maintenance of animal crossings by SRI.
 - Considering compensation measures, such as allocation of alternative hunting areas by Serbian Forests.
 - Maintaining regular communication among hunting associations, local authorities, and Project representatives throughout Project implementation.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting participants:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the women's association as well as female members of the local community.
Subject:	Focus group meetings with vulnerable groups about Project E&S impact assesment – Ethno Women's Association "Korman"
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Centre Korman, Korman Street bb.
Date and time:	October 17, 2025, at 15:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
	- Following the two rounds of public consultations, focus group meetings with vulnerable groups were held to discuss the Project's environmental and social impact assessment. The Project team welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - At the beginning of the meeting, the Project team explained its purpose to the women participants from the local community. They were provided with information about the Project, guided on how to access the ESIA documentation, and encouraged to freely share their feedback, concerns, and suggestions. The meeting was presented as an opportunity to exchange views with the Project team on potential impacts on women and to contribute to measures that enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse effects. - Representatives of SRI emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all Project phases. Participants were encouraged to submit grievances, concerns, and comments at any stage. They were reassured that all correspondence on the meeting would remain anonymous. - The floor was then handed over to the PPF9 team, who presented key expected socio-economic impacts of the Project relevant to the local community. This was followed by a guided discussion based on predefined questions to gather participants' feedback.
2. Discussion points	
	- At the beginning of the meeting, the women participants briefly introduced their Association. In Korman village, Aleksinac, approximately twenty women are members of the Ethno Women's Association "Korman," which preserves local traditions through the maintenance of traditional crafts. The Association provides women with opportunities to achieve economic independence and actively participate in community life. Currently, it gathers 12 active members whose main activities include the production and processing of local agricultural products. For the past nine years, the Association has received financial support from the "Empowering Women's Entrepreneurship and Roles in Rural Southeast Serbia" project, implemented by Caritas Slovenia and Caritas of the Archdiocese of Belgrade. - Participants were asked about the quality of life of women in the local community. They highlighted that, thanks to their Association, women are not limited to household roles but also engage as agricultural workers and artisans, contributing economically to their households. - On the potential job opportunities related to railway reconstruction, participants identified that women could provide meals and sell local products to workers near the railway, which would strengthen their households economically. - Regarding the use of railway transport, participants noted frequent use of trains due to lower cost compared to buses and the convenience of the Korman station.

- In response to a participant's question about whether there will be a railway station in Korman, the PPF9 Social Expert replied that she was not certain and that this question could be additionally addressed after verification.
- On access to schools, health facilities, markets, or water sources, and on the construction of a protective fence, participants acknowledged safety benefits of a fenced railway but raised concerns about village division and the need for safe crossings to maintain daily activities (school, health center, playgrounds, markets).
- Concerning women's safety during construction and operation, participants reported no specific risks or concerns. They noted some general concern about proximity to schools during construction activities.
- On the engagement of foreign workers, participants expressed no concerns, emphasizing that both local and foreign workers are peaceful, and that women are aware of their rights and how to protect themselves.
- Regarding harassment or violence risks, participants reported no concerns and stressed that women are equal to men in public matters such as infrastructure projects.
- On awareness of the railway project, women indicated that direct invitations to participate in consultations were appreciated and more effective than second-hand information, typically received through male relatives or lawyers during expropriation.
- On effective inclusion of women in consultations and decision-making, participants recommended invitations through their Association representatives, as done in this meeting.
- Regarding property rights, women recognized that men are the majority property owners, though women are increasingly aware of their rights. Some traditional practices, such as sisters renouncing property in favor of brothers, persist.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Overall, participants viewed the project positively, highlighting faster travel to nearby cities, improved access to schools, enhanced safety, and benefits for women's mobility. Concerns were mainly related to the division of the village caused by the railway fence and the need for safe crossing points. Noise and vibrations during construction were considered temporary and acceptable.
- The Association's proximity to the railway offers an opportunity for women to provide food services and sell products during the construction phase, generating income and empowering their households.
- Women do not feel more at risk than men due to the project and consider themselves equal participants in public and community matters.

Belgrade – Niš Railway Modernisation Project

Technical Assistance to the Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

REFERENCE CODE: NEAR/BEG/2022/EA-RP/0010

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the municipality and residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Pojate and Lučina
Location:	Ćićevac, Cultural Center Pojate, Kralja Aleksandra Street bb.
Date and time:	September 22, 2025, at 11:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The second round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members in Ćićevac primarily concerned the locations of underpasses and overpasses, access to agricultural land, land acquisition, and safety measures during construction. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Residents asked whether the Drenovac station would be closed. The PPF9 design representative confirmed that the station would be closed. - A representative of the company “Agrotrejd” asked whether an overpass or a roundabout could be constructed near their company premises, where trucks are parked and there are two existing entrances. The designer responded that an overpass is not feasible at that location. All options were analyzed and agreed with the local self-government, based on the proposals provided by the Deputy Mayor. The designer encouraged the company to send their suggestions via email for further review. - Participants asked for clarification on the exact locations of underpasses and overpasses in Pojate. The designer presented the map, indicating the planned overpass in Pojate and another overpass near the Jovanovačka River, towards Ćićevac (at the edge of the settlement). It was explained that the riverbed was regulated and deepened over a length of 1.8 km to prevent flooding. The community expressed satisfaction with	

the proposed solution, noting that all water-related impacts were carefully considered to avoid risks during railway reconstruction.

- Residents owning agricultural land asked about access to overpasses, road width, and surfacing.
The designer explained that the asphalt carriageway will be at least 6 meters wide, with sidewalks or service roads where necessary. The minimum clearance height will be 4.5 meters, allowing passage for trucks, combines, and tractors. All approach roads to overpasses will be asphalted.
- Participants asked whether the railway would remain double-tracked.
The designer confirmed that the railway will remain within the existing corridor, with reconstruction works carried out by sections to allow train traffic on one track while the other is under construction.
- One participant questioned the necessity of the high-speed railway, expressing concern about taking loans and foreign influence.
The project representatives explained the broader economic and regional benefits of modernization, including improved safety, travel speed, and connectivity.
- Questions were raised regarding the timing of the expropriation process.
The SRI Legal Department clarified that the exact list of parcels will be known once the Expropriation Design is completed and that all affected owners will be duly informed and invited to consultations.
- Residents inquired about wildlife crossings and fencing along the railway.
The designer explained that the railway will be fenced on both sides and that passages for animals will be constructed to allow them to cross from one side to the other.
- Participants asked whether alternative access roads would be built before construction of overpasses, to avoid disruption in reaching agricultural parcels.
The designer confirmed that the construction sequence will ensure that temporary access routes are provided before works begin, so that road communication between both sides of the railway is maintained at all times.
- A question was raised whether the railway line will be widened.
The designer responded that the new railway will extend approximately 2–3 meters on both sides of the existing track.
- Participants asked about the distance between tracks.
The designer explained that the spacing between the two tracks is 4.5 meters along the line and 4.75 meters within station areas.
- A citizen asked whether a railway station would be provided in Sikirica, as residents currently rely on the Drenovac station.
The designer responded that a railway station is planned to be built in Sikirica.
- A resident raised a question about property rights near the railway line, mentioning land owned by the SRI and requesting clarification on ownership boundaries.
The SRI Legal Department explained that it will be verified whether the parcel in question falls within the area covered by the Expropriation Design.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Questions raised by participants primarily concerned the design and location of underpasses and overpasses, land access during construction, and land acquisition/expropriation procedures.
- Visual materials, including maps and project layouts, were used to explain the location of crossings and planned adjustments to riverbeds and access roads.
- Participants expressed satisfaction with the explanations provided, particularly regarding the planned regulation of the Jovanovačka River and the assurance that all agricultural and access roads will be maintained during construction through temporary alternative routes.
- Concerns about property rights and expropriation were noted, and participants were informed that all affected landowners will be officially contacted once the Expropriation Project is finalized.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the municipality, and residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Vrapčane, 11. Kongres, Branko Krsmanović, and Dankovo
Location:	Paraćin, Paraćin Theatre Hall, Dr Dragoljuba Jovanovića St., no. b.b.
Date and time:	September 23, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
- The second round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points
- At the beginning of the meeting, community members expressed their wish for future consultations to be scheduled in the afternoon, as the current timing made it difficult for some residents to attend. Several participants also voiced dissatisfaction with the municipality, stating that they had not been adequately informed about the consultation in advance. - During the consultation in Paraćin, participants primarily raised questions related to: land acquisition and expropriation, access across the railway (particularly in Žabare), road safety, potential impacts on local businesses and settlements, as well as environmental concerns related to the Crnica River. - Key questions and responses included the following: - Railway crossing in Žabare and Šumadijska Street: Residents requested a vehicle crossing between the two sides of the railway. The PPF9 designer explained that a pedestrian underpass with lifts, approximately 4 meters wide and 2.5–3 meters high, is planned at that location. Residents insisted that a vehicle underpass be considered. The designer explained that both underpass and overpass options were analyzed at that location, but neither is feasible without resulting in the demolition of at least 30 houses and blocking access to the “Paraćinka” factory. The designer invited them to submit a formal written proposal to the project email address for further review. - Participants asked whether trains would travel at 200 km/h and how many trains would operate daily. The designer clarified that 200 km/h represents the maximum design speed and that approximately 200 trains (both passenger and freight) are expected to pass through the section per day. - Residents from Žabare stated their support for modernization but expressed concern that the project may negatively affect them due to possible displacement and physical barriers between parts of the settlement.

The designer explained that all feasible engineering solutions for the area had been reviewed and optimized to minimize social impacts.

- A participant asked whether they could request expropriation if their property is not included in the project. The SRI legal representative explained that expropriation can only apply to parcels required for project purposes, unless damage occurs during construction.
- Questions were raised regarding the connection between Šumadijska and Branka Krsmanovića streets. The designer responded that a bypass of approximately 1,000 meters will connect to the nearest overpass. Residents noted concerns about the longer route compared to their current access. The designer also stated that the city plan defines a transversal connection with Kosovska Street and a bridge over the Crnica River. In this way, the connection to the city center would be significantly shortened.
- Crnica River bridge: Participants asked whether the bridge in Kosovska Street is planned for construction. The designer confirmed that it is not part of the current project, but it should be addressed in coordination with the relevant ministry.
- Dankovo and Striška Street underpasses: Residents asked which of the two planned underpasses would be constructed first, as one is currently the only legal crossing. The designer explained that temporary access routes or alternative crossings would be ensured during works. The underpass in Majora Gavrilovića Street will include pedestrian and bicycle lanes, with a clearance height of 4.75 m and a roadway width of approximately 6 m, while the Striška Street underpass will include only a pedestrian path with the same clearance height. The access road length to each underpass will be about 200 m.
- Impact on businesses in Žabare: Local business owners expressed concern that they might have to close due to limited access after the railway fencing is installed. They reiterated their demand for a vehicular crossing or the construction of the bridge over the Crnica River.
- Environmental concerns: Participants highlighted frequent flooding of the Crnica River and requested that the project take additional measures to regulate the riverbed and prevent overflow.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Participants were encouraged to send additional questions and proposals via the official project email address and were assured that all received inputs would be reviewed and responded to accordingly.
- Several residents expressed concerns about limited prior notification and requested that future consultations be organized in the afternoon hours to allow broader participation.
- The demand for an additional underpass or bridge in Žabare was repeatedly raised as a key issue, reflecting the community's concern about connectivity and access to essential services (school, health center, and local businesses) once the railway fencing is installed.
- Participants also raised questions regarding train speed, frequency, and safety, as well as expropriation procedures, property impacts, and temporary access arrangements during construction. Environmental issues related to the Crnica River were noted, with residents requesting adequate river regulation to prevent future flooding.
- Overall, participants expressed support for railway modernization but requested that the design be adjusted to preserve local access routes and minimize negative impacts on residents and businesses.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the municipality, and residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Striža, Sikirica, Ratare, Gornje Vidovo, Donje Vidovo, and Drenovac
Location:	Paraćin, at the Paraćin Theatre Hall, Dr Dragoljuba Jovanovića St., no. b.b.
Date and time:	September 23, 2025, at 13:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
- The second round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.
2. Discussion points
- At the beginning of the discussion, citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the way the Municipality had informed them about the public consultations, stating that they had not been adequately notified. - Key questions and comments raised by participants included the following: - Residents from the settlement of Gornje Vidovo emphasized that the closure of the railway crossing in Ravnagorska Street represents their main concern. They stated that they had repeatedly raised this issue with the local authorities but had received no feedback, which made them feel discriminated against compared to residents of other settlements. Their proposal was for the existing crossing to remain operational or be connected with the neighbouring settlement of Ratare, and they confirmed that this proposal had already been submitted to the project team via email. Residents underlined that if their request was not reconsidered, they would organize protests. They stressed that the closure of the crossing would have significant consequences on daily life, particularly for those commuting to work, accessing health services, or transporting agricultural produce. According to them, the closure would require a detour of 10–12 km, effectively cutting them off from the only local pharmacy and other essential services. - Farmers raised concerns about potential economic losses due to loss of access routes, even for those whose land is not directly affected by expropriation. They asked who would compensate such indirect impacts. The SRI legal representative clarified that compensation rates for expropriation are determined by the Tax Administration, and that affected persons dissatisfied with the offered compensation have the right to file a court claim at the expense of SRI. - Residents of Drenovac expressed strong opposition to future expropriation, stating that the new railway alignment would divide the settlement into two parts, disrupt community life, and potentially cause depopulation. One

participant noted that “our villages will die out after the railway is built,” adding that she wishes to remain in her home and does not support the high-speed railway if it requires resettlement.

- Participants also raised concerns about drainage and flood risks, explaining that rainwater flowing from surrounding hills could cause flooding, and asked who would be responsible for maintaining the planned drainage and pumping systems.
- In addition, residents questioned why no representatives of the Municipality were present at the meeting to support them. They requested that their concerns be reconsidered and that they receive official minutes from previous consultations, noting that several errors had been identified in the ESIA report and consultation records. Specifically, they pointed out a misleading statement claiming that two level crossings would be closed and replaced by an overpass, whereas the actual plan foresees an underpass at the settlement edge.
- Summing up their position, residents stated that:
 - They will face longer travel times and loss of property and farmland;
 - The project divides their settlements and increases flood risk;
 - The only clear benefit is improved safety, while all other effects are negative.
 - They demanded written answers, official meeting records, and in-person communication rather than email correspondence. Citizens also asked when the next round of consultations and meetings would take place.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- Overall, the discussion reflected strong dissatisfaction and mistrust, particularly from Gornje Vidovo and Drenovac residents, who emphasized that they are not against modernization, but that it must not come at the expense of their livelihood and daily life.
- The discussion primarily focused on the following topics:
 - closure of the railway crossing in Ravnogorska Street in Gornje Vidovo and the resulting access problems;
 - difficulties for farmers and other residents whose access routes to land or workplaces would be disrupted;
 - expropriation process and compensation rates;
 - division of settlements and resettlement concerns (especially in Drenovac);
 - potential flood and drainage risks;
 - perceived lack of municipal support and presence during consultations;
 - requests for corrections and clarifications in ESIA and consultation documentation.
- Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the way they had been informed about public consultations, claiming that notifications from the Municipality had been insufficient or delayed. They requested clearer, earlier, and more direct communication channels.
- While citizens stated that they support modernization of the railway and understand its broader benefits, they emphasized that it must not lead to deterioration of their living conditions, loss of property, or reduced access to services.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Tešica, Lužane, Bankovac, Grejač, and Veliki Drenovac
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Tešica
Date and time:	September 29, 2025, at 09:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
The representatives of the Project team arrived at the scheduled consultation as agreed with the representatives of the Municipality. However, the entrance to the announced meeting venue was locked. The team waited for 30 minutes, but no one arrived.
2. Discussion points
3. Observations and Conclusions

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Prčilovica, Moravac, Žitkovac and Nozrina
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Žitkovac
Date and time:	September 29, 2025, at 13:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
The representatives of the Project team arrived at the scheduled consultation as agreed with the representatives of the Municipality. However, the entrance to the announced meeting venue was locked. The team waited for 30 minutes, but no one arrived.
2. Discussion points
3. Observations and Conclusions

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Trnjane and Korman
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Trnjane
Date and time:	September 30, 2025, at 09:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
The representatives of the Project team arrived at the scheduled consultation as agreed with the representatives of the Municipality. However, the entrance to the announced meeting venue was locked. The team waited for 30 minutes, but no one arrived.
2. Discussion points
3. Observations and Conclusions

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Vitkovac, Donji Ljubeš, Srezovac, Gornji Ljubeš and Donji Adrovac
Location:	Aleksinac, Cultural Center Vitkovac
Date and time:	September 30, 2025, at 12:30 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction
The representatives of the Project team arrived at the scheduled consultation as agreed with the representatives of the Municipality. Only the President of the Local Community and two citizens attended.
2. Discussion points
They asked about the possibility of legalizing structures located within the railway protection zone. The SRI legal team explained that legalization is not permitted by law, as construction within the railway zone is prohibited. Participants also mentioned the problem of groundwater. The citizens asked the designer to show them certain crossings and clarify issues related to their plots on the map.
3. Observations and Conclusions

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting parties:	SRI, TA to PIU, PPF9, ENOVA, representatives of the municipality, representatives of the local communities, and residents of the respective settlements.
Subject:	Public consultations on ESIA disclosure – Section 3, Local communities Trupale, Mezgraja, and Vrtište
Location:	Niš, Trupale Cultural Centre, 4 Nišavska St.
Date and time:	October 02, 2025, at 10:00 CET

The following table lists the main points and conclusions covered during the meeting:

1. Introduction	
- The second round of public consultations on ESIA disclosure was opened by the SRI representative, who welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending. - The purpose of the consultations was explained as providing local communities with information about the project, ensuring access to the ESIA documentation, and gathering feedback, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. - The SRI representative emphasized that, in line with EBRD and EIB standards, a grievance mechanism is available throughout all phases of the project and encouraged community members to submit their suggestions, concerns, and comments at any stage. - The floor was then handed over to the engineers, environmental and social experts who presented key aspects of the project relevant to local communities. In addition, a legal representative from SRI explained the procedures for land acquisition and expropriation. - Participants were requested to hold their questions and comments until the discussion session following the presentation.	
2. Discussion points	
- Questions raised by community members primarily concerned the potential impacts of the railway reconstruction on property access, land acquisition and expropriation, resettlement, local infrastructure (particularly water supply), the visual and environmental impact on the settlement, and the location of planned crossings. - Key questions and responses included the following: - One citizen, the representative of the Local Office of Vrtište, expressed pleasant surprise with the Project presentation and the predicted impacts, and thanked the team for coming to provide explanations in person. He noted that residents generally support the railway reconstruction but are also concerned about several issues. He attended the meeting on behalf of himself and his fellow citizens to seek clarifications—many of which he had already received during the presentation of the Project (for instance, regarding the existence of the Grievance Mechanism, the future consultations on expropriation, the design of crossings.). He raised concerns about how residents will access the city once construction begins, the process of land expropriation and possible resettlement, and the fact that lawyers have already started visiting residents and offering legal services even though the expropriation process has not yet begun. He also mentioned worries about the visual changes to the village, which will be divided by the railway fence, and asked why citizens were not consulted about the overpass location and what the planned height of the overpass will be. Additional questions included what will happen to the village water supply system, particularly the Urvin fountain, which is considered a cultural and communal landmark. Residents were also concerned about potential impacts on birds and natural water flows, fearing that sources could dry up as a result of the planned works. Finally, they expressed sadness that the planned alignment would pass over the children's playground and noted that billboards already advertise houses for sale along the railway corridor.	

The Main Engineer explained that the location of the overpass had been discussed with the Municipality about a year and a half ago and was also presented during the public review and previous consultations in Jagodina, where the proposal for the overpass location in Vrtište originated. He emphasized that all options had been carefully analyzed, but the topographic conditions of the area are highly complex, which often requires the demolition of several houses or a longer connection route if the alignment is moved to the outskirts of the settlement. The selected option represents the most balanced and logical solution, connecting efficiently to the highway while minimizing impact. He also explained that the designer's obligation is to ensure access to each residential property; if providing such access is not technically feasible, the property will be included in the expropriation plan.

In response to questions about the village water supply, the Engineer clarified that the Project includes the relocation and protection of all affected hydrotechnical installations, and no utility will be disconnected without being properly reconnected. Regarding the sports playground, he stated that the design team had tried to retain it in its original location but was unable to do so, and it should therefore be relocated to another site.

The Environmental Expert added that the team had been monitoring the area for a year, tracking animal movements, and that the design includes underpasses to allow the safe passage of wildlife as well as culverts to maintain natural water flows and prevent flooding. The field research did not identify any protected bird species in the Vrtište area.

The citizen thanked the team for their detailed explanations.

- A question was raised regarding the expropriation process, compensation, and court expenses in case of dissatisfaction with the valuation made by the Tax Administration. The SRI legal representative clarified that such costs would be borne by SRI.
- Another citizen, from the settlement of Trupale, asked whether the expropriation would take place on the left or right side of the railway and mentioned another local fountain that is hundreds of years old. The designer asked that the exact location of the fountain be submitted so that the issue could be analyzed and responded to in detail.
- Citizens also repeatedly asked about the specific parcels to be expropriated and whether it would be possible to legalize houses located within the railway protection zone. The Project team reiterated that expropriation will be the subject of a next phase of the Project and that a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) will be prepared once the Expropriation Design is finalized. Also, the SRI legal team clarified that legalization of buildings in the railway corridor is not permitted by law and requires explicit consent from SRI, which is not possible within this Project.

3. Observations and Conclusions

- The key concern of citizens remains the expropriation process, including the clarity of information on affected parcels, compensation amounts, and resettlement procedures.
- Concerns were voiced about maintaining access to homes and agricultural plots, preserving local water sources (notably the Urvina fountain), and protecting the visual and social integrity of the village.
- Participants expressed appreciation for the Project presentation and the responsiveness of the team, recognizing that their questions were answered in detail and that a mechanism exists for further communication and complaint submission.
- The overall atmosphere of the meeting was constructive, with residents showing general support for the Project objectives while emphasizing the importance of continued dialogue, transparency, and community engagement.