



Outcome of the Civil Society Outreach Meeting of the EIB Complaints Mechanism held in Kiev on 8-9 November 2016

INTRODUCTION

On 8-9 November 2016 the accountability mechanisms of six International Financial Institutions, together with CEE Bankwatch, met with 65 civil society organisations (CSOs) and organisations representing local populations in a 1½ day workshop in Kiev on “**Citizens-Driven Accountability of International Financial Institutions**”. The Independent Accountability Mechanisms represented were the EIB-CM, the EBRD-PCM, the WB-IP, the IFC/MIGA-CAO and the complaints mechanisms of the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation and of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank.

THE WORKSHOP

As is customary in the network of Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAM), one of the IAMs took the lead in organising an Outreach event and other IAMs interested in the event participated and contributed to its organisation and cost. In this Outreach event in Kiev, the EIB-CM took its turn in leading and notably engaged with the Ukrainian chapter of CEE Bankwatch and the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU) in preparing and establishing a database of interested NGOs/CSOs and local population groups and in the process to motivate NGOs/CSOs and other groups to participate. The EBRD-PCM provided support notably in terms of logistics, translators and the selection of the facilitator, through the EBRD’s local office in Kiev.

The agenda of the workshop covered (1) introductions of the IFIs and MDBs and their responsibility to facilitate and respond to citizens-driven accountability, and in-depth presentations of the accountability mechanisms that the IFIs and MDBs have created for that purpose; (2) an overview of the CSOs’ challenges in the social/environmental space in an interactive dialogue between CEE Bankwatch (co-organiser of the workshop) and the CSOs, with active input and experience-sharing from the CSOs and local populations’ audience; (3) and possibly the key point of the agenda, the discussion and dialogue between CSO and IAM representatives in a ‘World Café Tables’ format, with each group chaired by CEE Bankwatch Network or an affiliated CSO, on the role and work of IAMs including: how to access; complaints eligibility criteria; operating procedures; mediation/investigation processes; community impact; exchange of information between mechanisms on co-funded projects, etc.

The debates and presentations were supported by a facilitator and accompanied by simultaneous translation into and from English, Ukrainian and Russian.

The 'World Café Tables' sessions dealt with subjects such as "Security of the complainants" (e.g. retaliation from promoters), "Access to IAMS", "Complaints eligibility criteria" and "Community impact"; the World Café Tables were split between Russian/Ukrainian language tables and English language tables. The key issues that were discussed were (i) promoter/community pressure for projects, including cases where the community is not unanimous and pressure might develop between community groups with, at times, recourse to indirect or direct violent promoter persuasion methods; (ii) awareness of (a) which IFI/MDB is funding the project and (b) which accountability mechanism to access, also in cases of IFI/MDB co-financing, complementarity between local recourse mechanisms (local courts) and the IAMS, ease and simplicity of access to IAMS – low vs. high thresholds – and possible non-admissibility of complaints by the IAMS, facilitation of regional NGOs such as CEE Bankwatch; (iii) lack of effective public hearings and communication, quality and reliability of information provided by promoters, specific primary and secondary impacts of specific sectors on communities and the monitoring of impacts, splitting of communities into pros and contras, proof (photos/statistics) of impacts.

Two further sessions dealt with case studies and conflict resolution as an alternative or a complement to compliance reviews. One session handled two case studies presented respectively by the WB-IP and the EIB-CM, and by the EBRD-PCM Adviser and two case studies presented by CEE Bankwatch. The last session addressed conflict resolution techniques, notably with the participation of the IFC/MIGA-CAO, the EBRD-PCM and the EIB-CM.

RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

The EIB-CM, as lead organiser, had prepared feedback forms, but the 1½ day workshop ended in a feedback question and answer session led by *David Simpson*, head of the EBRD Project Complaint Mechanism, *Felismino Alcarpe*, head of the EIB-CM, and *Anna Rogenbruck*, of CEE Bankwatch Network. This feedback session yielded positive comments about the existence and possibilities of the IAMS and the support that local NGO/CSO and local populations can receive from regional NGOs such as Bankwatch; criticism was aired at the disparity in IAMS' admissibility criteria and procedures and IAMS' sensitivity for (very small-scale) local situations and circumstances and the lack of balance in terms of local NGO/CSO and communities' capabilities in data collection and expertise; the NGOs/CSOs asked for volunteer help such as, for instance, could be provided by larger, regional NGOs, and for communication in the form of videos and modern social media to be made more accessible to the potential affected communities and potential complainants. A general challenge was seen in involving communities earlier in the project stages, e.g. from the design phase onwards, in order for communities to make informed decisions.

According to the feedback from the whole of the workshop as provided through the prepared feedback forms, (i¹) participants found that indeed NGOs/CSOs and local communities did become better acquainted with the role & work of the IAMS; CSO respondents found the

¹ The three key objectives and their outcomes are reported here – more detail is available upon request.

workshop relevant and useful; (ii) 65 NGOs/CSOs and local communities attended the workshop, so the workshop helped strengthen contacts between IAMs, NGO/CSO local organisations and communities; (iii) as outlined above, an interactive dialogue took place between IAMs and NGOs/CSOs in which they actively exchanged views on past engagement and accountability trends in participating countries.

LESSONS LEARNT

Lessons learnt from this outreach event in which six Independent Accountability Mechanisms participated and which was co-organised with a large, regionally operating NGO were (i) the usefulness of regular meetings with Europe-based and region-specific CSOs; (ii) the usefulness of co-organising this kind of outreach event together with IAMs of other IFIs/MDBs active in the specific region. This usefulness is demonstrated in terms of the outreach itself as well as in terms of logistics and finances; and (iii) the great value of co-organising outreach events with a larger, regionally operating NGO enabling the IAMs to reach out to smaller local NGOs/CSOs and local communities.

Moreover, taking the lead in organising an outreach event in a region where the EIB is active enables the EIB-CM to reach out in terms of accountability. It is part of an ongoing series of outreach events in other regions where one of the IFIs/MDBs is active but where other IFIs/MDBs may have a more conspicuous presence. Therefore, IAMs take turns in coordinating this kind of outreach event and the Kiev Outreach workshop is a continuation and a run-up to future outreach events with an emphasis on a specific region.