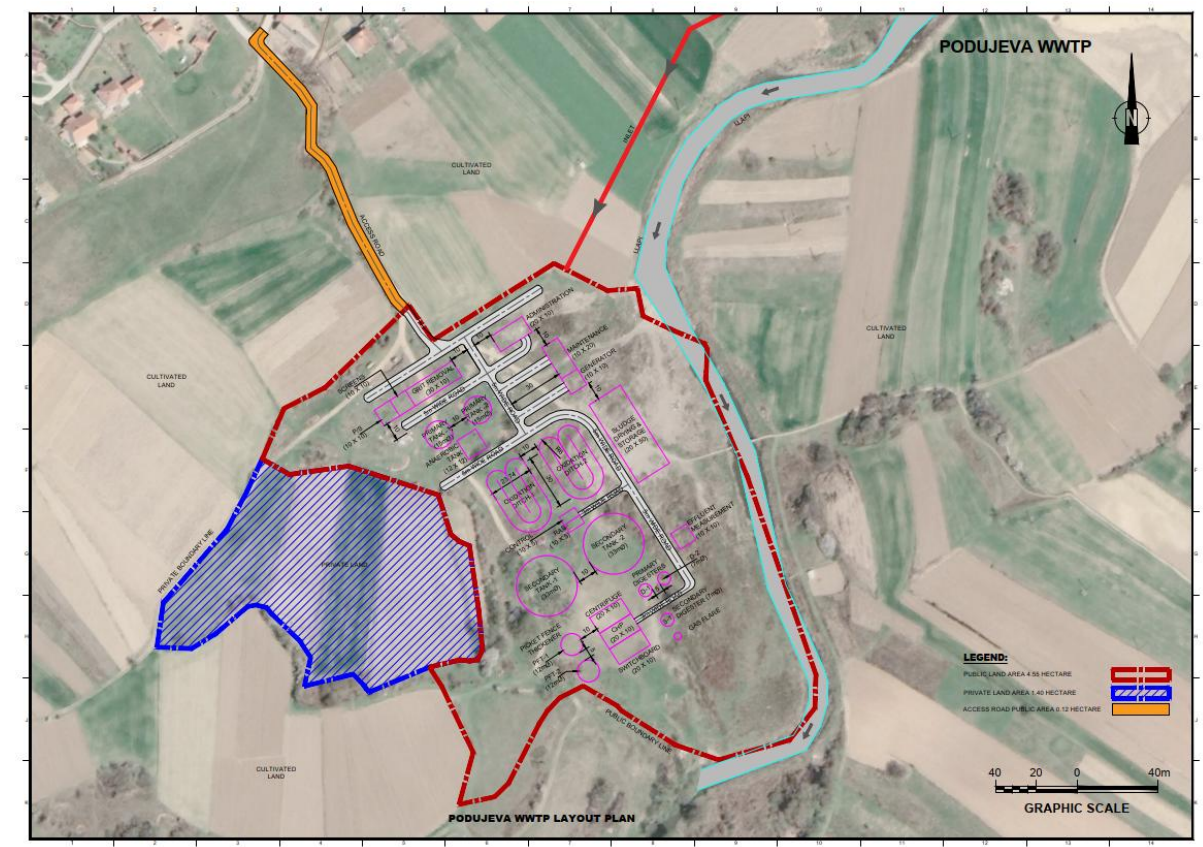


KOSOVO

PODUJEVA WASTEWATER PROJECT



Non-technical Summary

November 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CESMP	Construction Environmental and Social Management Plan
E&S	Environmental and Social
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESP	(EBRD's) Environmental and Social Policy
EU	European Union
FS	Feasibility Study
GBVH	Gender-Based Violence and Harassment
GHG	Greenhouse gas
NBS	Nature-Based Solution
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
OESMP	Operational Environmental and Social Management Plan
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
RWCP	Regional Water Company Prishtina
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

1 INTRODUCTION

Project context. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the “EBRD” or the “Bank”) is providing financing to the Government of Kosovo for the **construction of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and wastewater infrastructure in the Municipality of Podujeva** (the “Project”). The Project has been categorised as **Category “B”**¹ according to the EBRD E&S Policy (ESP) (2019).

The water and wastewater infrastructure in the Municipality of Podujeva is operated and managed by the public entity **Regional Water Company Pristina** (“RWCP” or the “Company”). In addition to Podujeva, the Company also provides services in seven other municipalities in Kosovo. RWCP’s **Operational Unit in Podujeva** conducts a limited number of operational and financial activities such as collection and payments, distribution of invoices and regular maintenance of water supply and sewerage systems. All other works and actions are delegated to the staff at the headquarters in Prishtina.

Currently, the urban population and most residents in rural areas of Podujeva lack access to municipal wastewater treatment facilities. However, significant progress has been made from 2016 to 2024, including the commencement of construction of the main sewerage collector for the urban center and major villages in the area. This collector is designed to transport wastewater to the proposed site in the south for the future WWTP, which has yet to be built.

In 2024, the EBRD initiated the development of the Feasibility Study (FS) which examined the available technical options and recommended key components for EBRD financing, including:

- completion of the main sewerage collector and connections to major villages,
- construction of the central WWTP and
- construction of a nature-based solution (NBS) WWTP for the village of Dumnicë e Poshtme which will not be connected to the main collector.

For detailed information on the Project scope and planned activities, please refer to Chapter 2 below.

Project implementation arrangements. The Project will be managed by a Project Implementation Unit (PIU), which is yet to be established. Third-party Contractors will be engaged for construction works and supervised by the PIU, which will also oversee post-construction operation and maintenance. A PIU E&S Support Consultant will be engaged as well.

Project benefits. The Project is anticipated to yield significant benefits during its operation phase, including improved surface and groundwater quality, particularly in the Llapi River, by treating municipal wastewater from approximately 60% of Podujeva’s population. The Project is also expected to lead to increased customer satisfaction due to extended sewerage network connections. Additionally, it will contribute to climate change mitigation by significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80%. The Project promotes the use of NBS in wastewater treatment, which will facilitate capacity building for RWCP employees and enable the replication of these solutions in other villages. During the construction phase, the Project may create temporary employment opportunities, enhance the skills of the local workforce, especially in constructing the NBS WWTP, and provide opportunities for local subcontractors and businesses.

Compliance with local requirements. Project implementation aligns with key strategic documents of Kosovo, including the National Energy and Climate Plan 2025-2030, National Water Strategy 2017-2036, and Climate Change Strategy 2019-2028. To fully comply with local requirements, a set of permits will need to be obtained from the National Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and the Municipality of Podujeva. The Municipality of Podujeva is currently developing a new Municipal Development Plan and plans to incorporate findings from the FS regarding the proposed central WWTP site. As the planned central WWTP will have a capacity below 100,000

¹ According to the EBRD Environmental and Social Policy (ESP), a project is categorised “B” when its potential environmental and/or social impacts are typically site-specific, and/or readily identified and addressed through effective mitigation measures.

population equivalents, it will undergo a preliminary assessment to determine if a full Environmental Impact Assessment is needed.

Compliance with EBRD and EU requirements. The Project will be fully designed and implemented in accordance with the EBRD ESP and its Performance Requirements. It will also adhere to various EU directives on water and wastewater management and climate change, including Water Framework Directive, Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, Sewage Sludge Directive, and European Climate Law.

This document is a Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the E&S Assessment of the Project carried out in 2024. The NTS provides a Project summary in non-technical language covering the Project background and description, legal requirements, E&S benefits and impacts with mitigation measures needed to structure the Project to meet the EU requirements, EBRD ESP (2019), and the disclosure and communication requirements of the Project.

2 BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project includes three main components (the main sewerage collector and connections to major villages, the central WWTP and the NBS WWTP), addressing both wastewater collection and treatment. These components are detailed below.

2.1. Wastewater Collection

For the future wastewater treatment plant to operate effectively, it is essential to have a complete wastewater collection system. This will be achieved by finishing the main sewerage collector, whose construction started in 2016, as well as connections to the major villages.

The figure below shows both the completed and planned sections of the main collector. Currently, there are gaps in the built portions, and only a few village connections have been made to these sections. However, these connections are not yet fully integrated with the main collector and are discharging into the river instead. Proper connections will be established once the entire route is completed. Approx. 21 km of the main collector needs to be constructed as part of the Project.

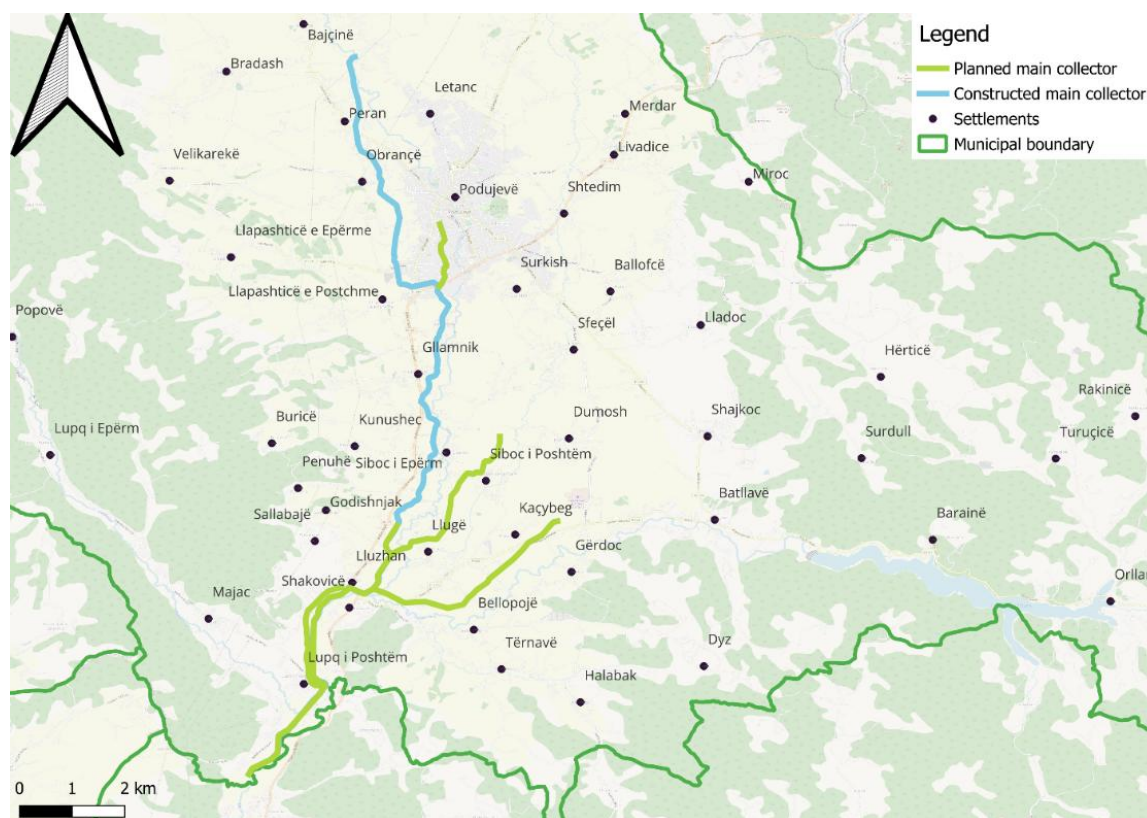


Figure 2-1: Map of the main collector

The following figure illustrates the villages planned for connection to the main collector. Some villages already have partial connections, while others do not have any. To ensure the Project's financial, technical, and sustainable viability, 10 of the 77 villages, along with the City of Podujeva, have been selected for connection. This selection will be confirmed in the later stages of Project preparation. It is currently estimated that approx. 17 km of connection pipes will need to be installed.

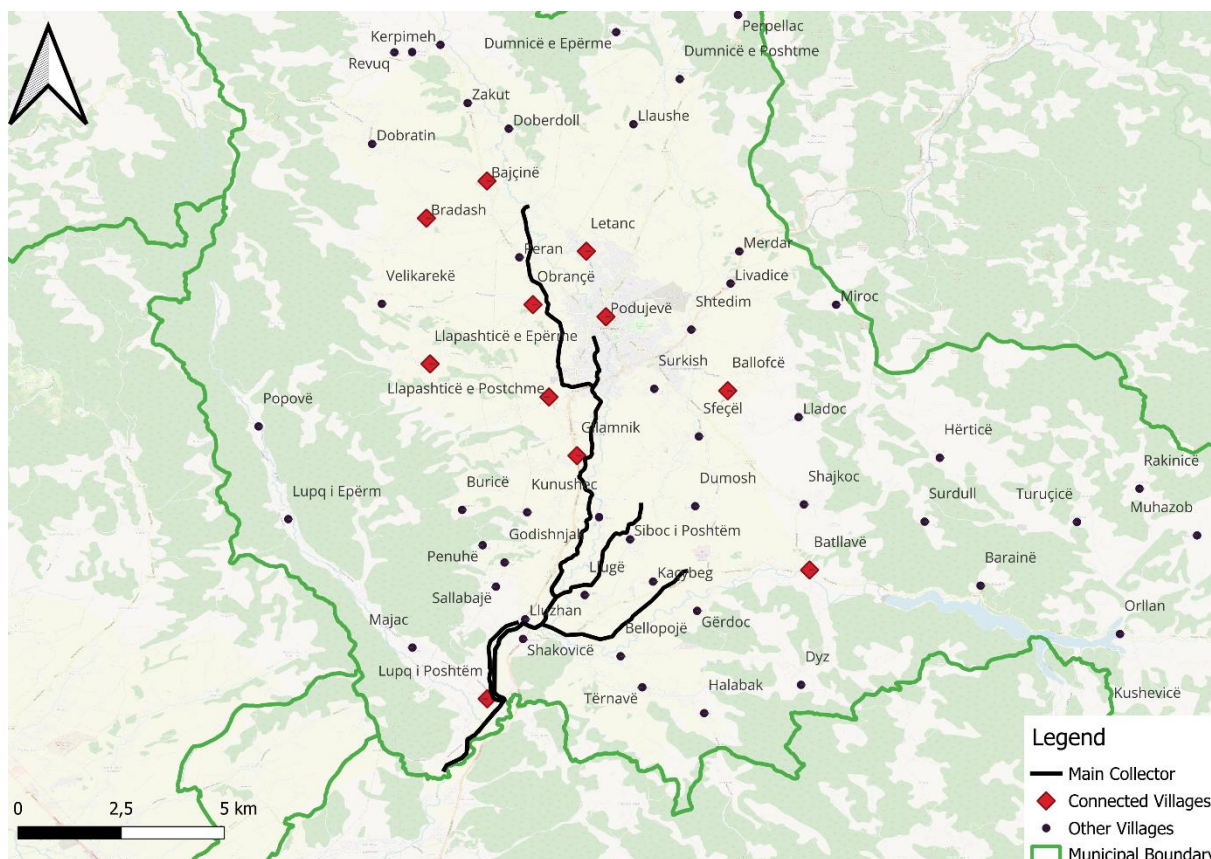


Figure 2-2: Villages to be connected to the main collector

2.2. Central WWTP

The planned WWTP is designed to accommodate a capacity of 50,000 people. The Municipality of Podujeva initially proposed two main locations for the central WWTP in the Lupçi i Poshtëm village, as shown on the map below.

Although **Location 1** is owned by the Municipality and was initially designated for the WWTP in the Municipal Zoning Map (2022-2030), it is too small at 2 hectares, while approx. 5 hectares are needed for the new central WWTP. Therefore, an alternative site had to be found.

Location 2 was selected for the Central WWTP Podujeva for two main reasons: (i) technical feasibility, as it is located at the end of the main collector and has sufficient land for the WWTP, and (ii) social impact, as it minimises the need for land expropriation compared to other technically feasible locations. The new Municipal Development Plan, expected to be adopted by mid-2025, will designate the selected location as the site for the central WWTP.

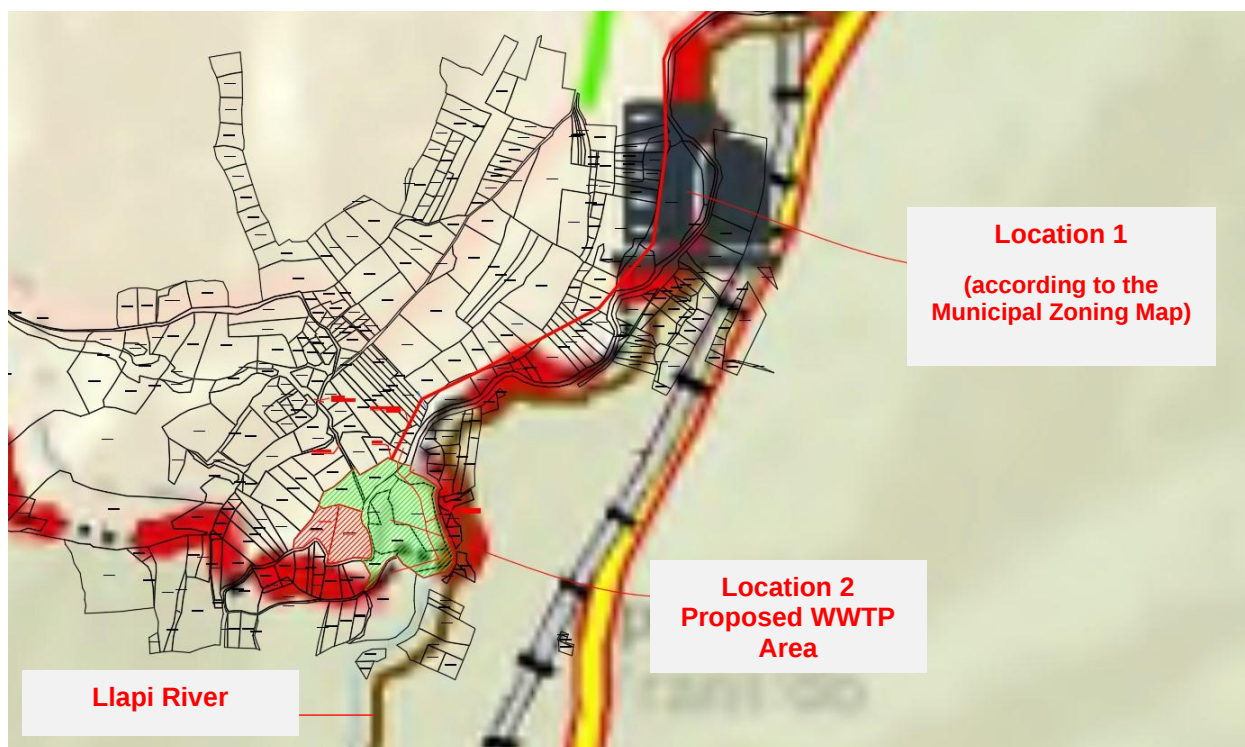


Figure 2-3: Central WWTP site according to Municipal Zoning Map 2022-2030 (Location 1) and second preferred site (Location 2)

The selected WWTP design uses an Activated Sludge process and anaerobic digestion to treat sludge and generate biogas for on-site electricity. This setup reduces the amount of sludge, lowers electricity costs, and cuts GHG emissions. The site can temporarily store sludge for six months and has enough space for five years, but a long-term plan for sludge disposal, ideally for agricultural use, is needed. To enhance the use of renewable energy sources, the Project will include installation of solar panels (about 326 kW of installed capacity) on the WWTP's roof and/or tank surfaces.

The existing paved access road is about 5-9 meters wide and 1.95 km long. There is also a 150-200 meter section of the road that is unpaved and needs to be rebuilt to reach the WWTP. The land needed for this road extension is publicly owned.

Since the site is located in a flood-prone area, it will be necessary to construct a flood protection bund along the eastern border of the site, adjacent to the Llapi River. To minimise visual and odour issues, the WWTP will be surrounded by a green buffer zone, including planted trees and grass areas. This is considered best practice for WWTP design.

The electricity supply from the Kosovo Electricity Supply Company does not currently reach the WWTP site. Therefore, approval from the Electricity Authority will be required to extend the power supply to this location, with the associated costs proposed to be covered by the Project. Additionally, it will be necessary to establish connections to the water supply system and to establish telecommunication infrastructure. The technical details for these connections will be determined during the Project design stage.

2.3. Nature-Based Solution WWTP

According to the *EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive*, all urban areas with populations exceeding 2,000 are required to collect and treat wastewater. The village of Dumnice e Poshtme, with a population of 2,975, is the only large village in the Municipality of Podujeva that will not be connected to the main collector due to the distance, making integration into the centralised WWTP system impractical. Therefore, an additional (smaller) WWTP using nature based solution (NBS) is selected to be included in the Project.

NBS is an innovative approach that leverage natural processes to address complex wastewater treatment challenges while promoting sustainability and resilience. By mimicking natural ecosystems and using elements such as plants, soil, and microbes, NBS reduce reliance on mechanical systems and efficiently remove pollutants like solids, organics, nitrogen, phosphorus, pathogens, and emerging contaminants such as steroid hormones, biocides, and pesticides, thereby improving overall treatment results.

Specifically, a Multi-stage Treatment Wetlands system has been chosen for its flexibility and environmental benefits. The example of the NBS WWTP utilising this system, which has been used in Croatia since 2016, is presented below.



Figure 2-4: Multi-stage Treatment Wetlands system in Croatia – Kastelir treatment plant²

Previous similar projects in Europe have demonstrated the effectiveness of NBS technologies in achieving the treatment efficiencies required by the *EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive* for plants serving fewer than 10,000 people.

The exact location of the NBS WWTP within the village Dumnice e Poshtme will be determined in the further stages of Project development.

² Nature-Based Solutions for Wastewater Treatment – A Series of Factsheets and Case Studies (2021). IWA.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The identified negative E&S impacts of the Project are site-specific and can be effectively avoided, reduced or remedied through the implementation of **mitigation measures** outlined in the Project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and the Environmental and Social Action Plan. The Contractors will be required to prepare and implement a **Construction Environmental and Social Management Plan (CESMP)**, while RWCP will be responsible for the development and implementation of an **Operational Environmental and Social Management Plan (OESMP)**, both of which will be based on the developed ESMP. The PIU will oversee the implementation of specified mitigation measures.

A summary of E&S impacts and risks during the construction and operation/maintenance (O&M) phases is provided below, followed by measures to be put in place to mitigate any such impacts/risks. The only impact anticipated during the pre-construction phase pertains to land acquisition, which will be managed during the Project preparation phase.

3.1 Pre-construction Phase

Land acquisition

A Land Acquisition and Livelihood Restoration Framework (LALRF) has been developed for the Project to comply with Kosovo legislation and EBRD's Performance Requirement 5: *Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement*. A preliminary analysis of Project impacts has shown that the Project will lead to land acquisition. However, the exact nature or magnitude of impacts will be known once the Main Design has been prepared. The LALRF has therefore been developed at an early stage of the Project to define the key principles, procedures and entitlements.

According to the preliminary analysis, the proposed central WWTP will occupy 5.7 hectares in Lupci i Poshtem village, involving nine land plots of which two privately owned. The main collector will be installed on public land as well as private properties. In addition, temporary land use for construction camps and materials storage may be needed, as to be decided by the future Contractors. The extension of the existing asphalt road will not require land acquisition. The exact location of the WWTP in Dumnice e Poshtme is not currently known and the impact on private land is yet to be determined.

Based on the LALRF, a detailed Land Acquisition and Livelihood Restoration Plan will be developed once the exact nature and scope of land acquisition become known (i.e., upon the development of the Expropriation Study based on future design documentation). The Plan will be developed on the basis of reliable and updated information and shall include basic information on the Project, impacts, affected persons and properties, as well as the rights of all categories of persons affected.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

3.2 Construction Phase

Water

Although unlikely, water contamination can occur due to the spillage of chemicals, oil and oil derivatives from heavy machinery, improper disposal of excavation materials, construction, and municipal waste, as well as leakage or spillage of wastewater from temporary sanitary facilities for workers.

In the CESMP, measures to mitigate risks will include securely storing hazardous substances, maintaining equipment to prevent leaks, prohibiting on-site servicing and refuelling, and implementing emergency excavation if needed. Additionally, other measures defined below under *Materials and waste* will be implemented.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Materials and waste

Construction activities will generate construction and demolition waste (inert earth material, soil and concrete). Presence of hazardous waste (such as waste fuel, lubricants and oil filters) may also be expected.

As part of the CESMP, a *Construction Waste Management Plan* will be developed. Set of measures is proposed to be included in the *Construction Waste Management Plan* that are aimed to reduce, reuse, recycle and properly dispose of waste generated during construction. These include on-site separation and classification of waste, reusing concrete waste for road construction, sending scrap and metal waste to recycling streams run by companies registered for metal waste management, etc. Final disposal of waste will be conducted by engagement of companies registered for management of special waste categories.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Soil and land

During construction of all Project components, the surrounding soil may be impacted by accidental spills of hazardous substances, such as oils from machinery. This is a localised and accidental situation with limited spatial extent, not expected during regular construction activities.

The CESMP will include measures such as sediment barriers and silt fences as needed. Construction will be scheduled during dry periods to reduce rain-related risks. Hazardous substance management protocols, outlined in the *Water* section, will be implemented during construction.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Climate factors and climate change related impacts

During the construction phase, small-scale GHG emissions are expected, as a result of the production of construction materials that will be used, as well as due to the use of construction equipment and machinery. Additionally, there is potential for damage to construction machinery, equipment and materials due to flooding.

The CESMP will include developing a *Construction Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*, storing equipment above flood heights, relocating materials from flood-prone areas, and establishing communication with emergency services. Additional mitigation measures will include those defined under *Air quality* below.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Air quality

During construction works, air quality will temporarily be affected by increased dust emissions from site preparation and emissions from equipment such as trucks and rock drills.

The CESMP will include measures such as controlling dust with regular spraying, transporting materials in covered trucks to prevent overloading and emissions, enforcing vehicle speed limits, ensuring equipment permits and maintenance, and using high-quality fuels to reduce emissions.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Noise

Noise levels will temporarily increase due to construction activities, machinery and equipment on site.

The CESMP will include measures to manage noise, such as scheduling noisy activities between 8 am and 6 pm, avoiding simultaneous use of loud equipment, informing residents about planned work durations, equipping all machinery with sound-control devices, ensuring workers near high noise wear protective gear, and using barriers for noise control where practicable.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Biological and ecological resources

Potential risks and impacts include habitat loss at the central WWTP and NBS WWTP sites, vegetation removal at these locations, pollution during construction, disturbance of plant functions due to dust, and risks of roadkill and collisions. However, there will be no permanent loss of natural ecosystems or habitats of rare and protected species. Field surveys indicate that the area has a low diversity of plant and animal species, with none identified as rare or endangered. The area is already influenced by human activities, such as farming, so the overall sensitivity of the site is considered low.

In the CESMP, measures will include using designated access roads and laydown areas solely for equipment and materials, promptly revitalising disturbed areas post-construction and performing vegetation clearance in phases. Upon completion of construction activities, mechanical and biological remediation of all sites will be provided, including restoration of fertile soil and vegetation.

The Project will compensate for the lost habitat by managing similar habitats nearby. This will involve low-intensity grazing and maintaining the existing hydrological regime. Local farmers will be involved to graze livestock in these areas.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Landscape and visual aspects

Localised negative visual impacts may occur during the construction phase.

In the CESMP, measures will include keeping the construction site clean after completion, parking construction machinery in designated areas, minimising land and vegetation clearance where possible, and restoring disturbed areas as required. Other measures defined under *Materials and waste* will also be implemented.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Cultural heritage

Due to the large size of the land designated for the Project and construction activities involving excavation, there is a possibility of unexpected discoveries at the site.

Contractors will therefore develop a Chance Finds Procedure and train their workers on the Procedure.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Occupational health and safety (OHS)

During the construction of the WWTP and its access road, workers may face risks such as accidents from heavy machinery such as cranes and excavators if not handled properly. There is also possibility of falls from heights or unstable surfaces, and hazards related to excavation such as cave-ins or encountering dangerous underground conditions. Vehicular accidents are another concern both on-site and on public roads. Additionally, unexpected encounters with underground utilities such as gas lines or electrical cables pose risks of explosions, shocks or flooding, putting workers in danger.

Contractors will adhere to Kosovo's health and safety regulations, employ qualified personnel, and provide OHS training to their workers. The Contractors will develop and implement an OHS Plan and maintain records of incidents, while also utilising EBRD guidelines on safe implementation of works.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Labour and working conditions

Based on the nature of the construction industry (seasonal work patterns, multiple subcontracting levels, cost-cutting practices, etc.), there are potential risks of inadequate implementation of labour regulations by Contractors which may include undeclared work, long hours of work, delayed payments or unavailability of a worker grievance mechanism if not properly managed. In the context of public procurement for solar panels, potential risks also include non-compliance with labour standards by suppliers.

Contractors will be required to comply with all Kosovo labour legislation, including fair payment practices, anti-discrimination policies, and providing access to HR policies and procedures. They will establish a grievance mechanism, and will be monitored by Supervision Engineers. If worker accommodation is needed, the Contractors will develop and implement a Workers Accommodation Management Plan, following International Finance Corporation/EBRD standards and national requirements. To minimise any risks in the supply chain, the PIU will require Contractors to submit a self-declaration from the manufacturer stating their products are free from child or forced labour, along with evidence of the manufacturer's policy prohibiting such practices in their operations and supply chain.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Community health and safety

Dust and exhaust emissions from site preparation, earthworks and machinery movement will impact air quality, especially near residential areas during sewerage network and access road construction. Safety concerns may include unauthorised access to construction sites and increased traffic risks in the Pireva settlement, where narrow roads and the absence of sidewalks pose hazards. Additionally, accidental spills of hazardous substances may affect the soil quality around the WWTP site, although these are expected to be limited in extent. In general, based on the predominantly rural setting of the Project area with lower population density and the nature of the planned activities, the anticipated impacts on community health and safety are not expected to be significant.

The Contractors will develop a Community Health and Safety Plan, which will include provisions for installing sturdy fencing for security, managing traffic with pedestrian bridges and crossings, displaying information boards for community inquiries, and enforcing a workers Code of Conduct with zero tolerance for gender-based violence. Also, the Contractors will develop a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan before commencement of any transportation activities related to the Project execution to ensure that the transportation process is properly and adequately managed.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

3.3 O&M Phase

Water

Damage or malfunction of the central WWTP can result in the discharge of untreated wastewater. Additionally, spillage of chemicals used for treatment purposes can lead to contamination. Minor or major repairs or periodical check-ups of the sewerage network can also cause disruptions, resulting in similar impacts as those experienced during construction.

In the O&M phase, a *Procedure for WWTP Use, Monitoring and Maintenance* will be developed. In the OESMP, mitigation measures will include securely storing chemicals, using automatic dosing systems for chemical management, regularly inspecting storage areas, preparing for spills with absorbents, and developing an *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Materials and waste

Waste will be generated from various sources, including grit, sand, and grease from the grit chamber, sludge, and packaging/containers of chemicals used for wastewater treatment. Maintenance activities will also produce construction and demolition waste, such as inert earth material, soil, concrete, and old pipes. Except for sludge, waste is not expected to be generated during the operation of the NBS WWTP.

As part of the OESMP, an *Operational Waste Management Plan* will be developed and, in addition to practices outlined for the *Construction Waste Management Plan*, also include a *Sludge Management Procedure*.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Soil and land

Negative impacts during pipeline maintenance can be similar to those during construction. At the central WWTP site, wastewater runoff from paved areas could contaminate soil. Risks include chemical spills, poor sludge treatment, and accidental wastewater spills. For the NBS WWTP, risks include potential soil compaction.

In the OESMP, mitigation measures will include the same measures as mentioned in the construction phase. Measures will also include installing a surface water drainage system at the WWTP site and implementing the same measures defined for the O&M phase under *Water* and *Materials and waste*. Additionally, *Operation and Maintenance Guidelines for the NBS WWTP* will be developed, focusing on monitoring vegetation health and promoting deep-rooted plants to improve soil conditions.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Climate factors and climate change

Potential risks include GHG emissions from central WWTP operation and negative impacts of climate hazards, specifically extreme heat events and floods, on central WWTP operation and personnel health. However, considering the current situation in Podujeva area and the emissions generated by untreated wastewater discharge and uncontrolled sludge disposal, the Project is expected to contribute significantly to climate change mitigation

The Main Design will include climate resilience measures such as installing CHP plant and solar panels to reduce emissions, designing the WWTP to handle higher temperatures, ensuring staff facilities have water and air-conditioning, and building a flood protection bund. The OESMP will include measures for flood protection, controlling access to equipment, fire alarms, and an *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low or negligible levels.

Air quality

Minor repairs or regular check-ups may produce similar emissions and impacts as during construction. However, since these will involve only small-scale works, including the new sewerage network, the emissions will be shorter and less intense than during construction. Therefore, the impact on air quality is considered negligible and no mitigation measures during the O&M phase are deemed necessary.

Odours

The dispersion of odours emitted from the central WWTP is modelled using computer simulations to assess the extent of their spread. Based on the modelling results, odours from the central WWTP are expected to be noticeable only within 70 meters of the site. Beyond that, the impact is considered low. For the NBS WWTP, no modelling has been performed since the exact location of the plant is yet to be determined. Nevertheless, considering the modelling results for the significantly larger central WWTP, it is reasonable to assume that no significant impact will be observed.

To minimise odour transmission, the central WWTP will be surrounded by a green buffer zone of tall trees and shrubs. The OESMP will include mitigation measures such as regular inspections and maintenance of WWTP equipment to prevent leaks, cleaning aeration tanks to reduce odour, enclosing key processing units to control odours, using sealed systems for sludge treatment, monitoring community feedback for odour issues etc.

For the NBS WWTP, measures will include selecting the plant site away from residential areas, potentially using green buffers or aromatic vegetation like lavender for odour control and following NBS WWTP Operation and Maintenance Guidelines to prevent odour issues.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Noise

Temporary noise increases are expected during maintenance at the central WWTP and the new sewerage network. The NBS WWTP is not expected to cause significant noise emissions during its regular operation and maintenance.

During maintenance activities, mitigation measures in the OESMP will include the same measures previously defined for the construction phase.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Biological and ecological resources

The central WWTP site is not expected to harm local biodiversity in the long term. Inappropriate design and management of the NBS WWTP can cause nutrient build-up in the operational phase, leading to harmful algal blooms. Without regular invasive species control, invasive plants could potentially take over the reed beds.

Before the NBS WWTP construction, once the site has been selected, a biodiversity assessment will be conducted to understand local flora and fauna, ensuring the wetland design complements local biodiversity. Native wetland plants suited to the local climate and soil will be selected and planted. The wetland will have adequate capacity to prevent wastewater spillage and contamination of nearby soil and water bodies. Operation and Maintenance Guidelines for the NBS WWTP will be implemented to ensure regular inspections and monitoring to maintain plant health, manage water levels, control weeds, and monitor water quality to detect any pollution.

An external expert, engaged by the RWCP, will monitor the success of measures, with monthly checks in the first year after construction. If the desired improvements are not seen, the management strategy will be adjusted.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

Landscape and visual aspects

The central WWTP will permanently change the landscape with the introduction of new structures and access roads. It is important to note that these will be low-rise structures. The main WWTP building will have a maximum of two storeys, and the infrastructure for wastewater treatment, constructed at ground level, will reach up to approximately six meters in height. The proposed NBS WWTP is expected to integrate more seamlessly into the rural setting. This is primarily due to the absence of substantial built structures, allowing it to blend with the surrounding agricultural plots and natural features.

The OESMP will include a landscaping plan to be developed before the operational phase and put into action in the first growing season after construction. Planting will use native species from the Podujeva area to blend with the local landscape. A green buffer zone around the central WWTP will help mitigate any negative visual impacts.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to negligible.

OHS

During the O&M phase of the WWTP, workers will face several risks. Handling chemicals is a key concern, as improper management can lead to burns or poisoning. The wastewater itself is a potential hazard, carrying harmful substances that could cause infections. Operating plant machinery also presents risks, such as mechanical failures that might result in injuries. Maintenance activities add another layer of risk. Working in confined spaces can be dangerous without proper ventilation, and handling heavy equipment can lead to injuries.

RWCP will update its internal policies to include WWTP-related risks. Training will be provided to all O&M employees to address specific job risks. Personal protective equipment will be provided, with regular effectiveness assessments and incident records maintained.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

Labour and working conditions

RCWP is a large and well-functioning enterprise. However, to fully meet EBRD standards, several measures need to be implemented to enhance improved labour and working conditions.

RWCP will make HR policies available in both Albanian and Serbian and create an internal grievance procedure for employees. To enhance diversity, RWCP will encourage women to apply for management positions, introduce flexible working hours, and promote women's participation in the workforce. It will also implement a GBVH policy and ensure confidential reporting and proper handling of GBVH issues.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the labour conditions will be enhanced and any risks reduced to low.

Community health and safety

As mentioned previously, there are risks of wastewater runoff contaminating the surrounding soil and thus affecting the quality of agricultural land around. Additionally, odours from the wastewater and sludge treatment could impact local communities. Specific impacts and measures related to soil contamination and odours are addressed through the implementation of mitigation measures listed above under *Soil and land* and *Odours*.

There is also a risk that if tariffs need to be raised to repay the EBRD loan, it could make services less affordable for some residents. This increase might disproportionately affect vulnerable groups like the elderly, single women-headed households, or those already struggling financially.

To mitigate any tariff impacts, RWCP will work with the Municipality of Podujeva and social assistance centers to closely monitor the affordability of services for low-income households following any tariff increases related to the Project.

By implementing these mitigation measures, the risks will be reduced to low.

4 COMMUNICATIONS

A **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)** has been developed to identify relevant stakeholders, define stakeholder engagement methods and objectives and establish a Project-specific grievance mechanism.

The PIU will disclose this NTS, the Land Acquisition and Livelihood Restoration Framework, the SEP and the Project Grievance Form (which is an annex to the SEP) as early as possible in the Project development process. The documents will be publicly available in **Albanian, Serbian and English** language in electronic and printed forms at:

Name of institution	Website	Address
RWCP	kru-prishtina.com	Str. Hazir Shala No. 4, 10000 Prishtine Tel.: +383 (0)38 603 211 Mob.: +383 (0)44 520 270 (viber application) +383 (0)45 705 112 Call Center: +383 (0)38 606 020 Call Center 0800 900 09 (free) Email: info@kru-prishtina.com
Municipality of Podujeva	https://kk.rks-gov.net/podujeve/	Str. Nuhi Gashi, 11000 Podujeve Tel.: +383 (0)38 200 41018 Email: infopodujeva@rks-gov.net

The PIU will schedule and hold the following **public consultation meetings**:

- at least one community meeting in the Local Community Office of Lupç i Poshtëm (as the largest village in the area), after the selection of the Project designer and start of development of the Main Design – to present the Project to stakeholders with the purpose of receiving feedback from local stakeholders,
- at least one community meeting in the Local Community Office of Lupç i Poshtëm, prior to start of construction – to present the Project details defined in the Main Design to all stakeholders and to receive feedback from local stakeholders.

Meetings will also be organised to take into account times accommodating the needs of agricultural workers and women. As needed, the PIU will organise separate small group discussions with any vulnerable groups, or their representatives, and will identify whether any further specific assistance may be needed to ensure such groups or individuals are not excluded from or unable to participate fully in the consultation process.

The PIU will **inform all stakeholders about the exact date, time and venue where the meetings will be held** 10 days in advance through the channels listed in the SEP. All Project-related comments and proposals will be considered by the PIU. A **brief report (“comments matrix”) on comments/proposals received and responses from the PIU will be published on the websites of RCWP, and Municipality of Podujeva.**

The PIU will also provide **information on planned construction works**. This includes **specifics about the locations, anticipated commencement date, expected duration of planned works and any predicted disruptions in traffic flows and any other potential inconveniences** to the public at least 30 days before start of works through the channels listed in the SEP. Once construction starts, **information boards will be placed by the Contractors** at construction sites to clearly display contact information for third-party concerns.

Throughout the operation phase, RCWP will commit to addressing any odour concerns as essential for maintaining good relations with the surrounding community. To effectively manage these

concerns, RCWP will track community grievances through the Project-grievance mechanism and in case of complaints from local residents regarding unpleasant odours, assess the feasibility of installing effective odour control systems at key points in the WWTP where odorous gases are likely to be emitted. Simultaneously, on the WWTP information board containing essential information related to the plant, RCWP will include contact information for public grievances.

A Project-specific grievance mechanism has been set up a process for receiving, evaluating and addressing grievances from affected communities. The PIU will implement the grievance mechanism to ensure that it is responsive to any concerns and complaints particularly from affected communities. A detailed explanation of the mechanism is provided in the SEP.

Contact information for sending grievances:

PODUJEVA WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Project Implementation Unit

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