INVESTIGATION REPORTS RELEASED

The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors discussed the Panel's investigation reports into complaints from Uganda and Kosovo on November 22 and December 13, respectively, and approved Management Action Plans in response to both reports.

The Panel’s investigation of the Uganda Transport Sector Development Project’s — Additional Financing, which funded the upgrading of the 66-kilometer Kamwenge-Fort Portal road, responded to a complaint from the Bigodi and Nyabubale-Nkingo communities living along the road. They expressed concern about serious harm to their children and communities, including many cases of child sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies caused by road workers, an increased presence of sex workers, the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment of female employees, inadequate resettlement practices, inadequate road and occupational health and safety measures, and negative construction impacts. The Panel confirmed extensive and severe harm to the communities along the road, and identified many instances of the Bank not complying with its own policies and procedures. The Panel found that Bank management’s oversight was not sufficiently robust, its supervision missions did not result in effective problem-solving, and it was late in recognizing and responding to issues after receiving an initial complaint from the communities in December 2014. The Board approved the Management Action Plan in response to the Panel’s report. Bank management also issued a report on lessons learned and proposed actions to address internal systemic issues, strengthen oversight of high-risk projects and prevent the recurrence of the types of failures that emerged in the Uganda project, which was canceled by the Bank in December 2015.

The Panel’s investigation of the proposed Kosovo Power Project (KPP) and the Second Additional Financing for Energy Sector Clean-Up and Land Reclamation Project (CLRP-SAF) responded to a complaint from residents of Hade village, the New Shkabaj resettlement site and Obiliq Municipality about the Bank’s energy-sector technical assistance to Kosovo and preparation for the proposed KPP. They alleged harm from loss of land and livelihoods, restrictions on economic development because of a designated economic zone, and forced displacement. The Panel found the Bank was not responsible for the main harm arising either from a 2004/2005 emergency evacuation of households or from the adverse impacts related to the restrictions stemming from the Zone of Special Economic Interest. The Panel, however, found the Bank in non-compliance for not applying its policy on involuntary resettlement during the preparation of a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and the Resettlement Action Plan for the Shala neighborhood of Hade village. Shortcomings in these documents contributed to delays and led to protracted stays in temporary housing for affected households. Moving forward, the Bank will provide technical advice to the government with specific recommendations on how to more effectively address environmental and social issues that result from mining operations. This will include advice to revise the RPF to allow for better management of the mining-related resettlement process and of the economic zone. Should the Bank finance the proposed KPP, it would ensure that all relevant environmental and social issues are addressed as required under Bank policies, including appropriate safeguards instruments for mining-related resettlement.

Management Action Plans — Status Overview

World Bank management in December released its second report on the implementation of action plans prepared in response to findings in Inspection Panel investigations, as approved by the Bank’s Board of Executive Directors. Management, as requested by the Committee on Development Effectiveness of the Board, has begun submitting these reports to the Board twice a year. The first report was released in the spring of 2016. The latest report is available on the Panel’s website. The Panel welcomes the effort to strengthen the Bank’s transparency and accountability through the release of the biannual management reports.
Colombia: Rio Bogotá Environmental Recuperation and Flood Control Project (Recommendation Not to Investigate Approved)

The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors on January 18 approved the Panel’s recommendation not to investigate two complaints about the Rio Bogotá Environmental Recuperation and Flood Control Project. The complaints alleged environmental, public health and social harm as a result of the expansion of the Sallitre Wastewater Treatment Plant, as well as shortcomings in the consultation process. After doing its due diligence, which included an eligibility visit, the Panel noted Bank management’s proposed actions to address the issues raised in the complaints and did not recommend an investigation. This recommendation does not preclude the possibility of a future complaint based on new evidence or circumstances not currently known.

Uganda: Private Power Generation (Bujagali), Water Management and Development, and Energy for Rural Transformation Phase III (Kalagala Offset) Projects (Eligibility Report Submitted)

The Panel has submitted its Eligibility Report to the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors in response to complaints related to the Private Power Generation (Bujagali) Project, the Water Management and Development Project, and the Energy for Rural Transformation Phase III Project, and is awaiting a Board decision. The complainants raise concerns about potential social and environmental harm caused by the construction of the Isimba dam reservoir and the consequent flooding of the Kalagala Offset Area (KOAS). While the Bank is not financing the dam, complainants allege the flooding will undermine the management of protected natural resources in the Koa, which is a requirement of an Indemnity Agreement signed between the International Development Association and the government of Uganda as part of the Bujagali project.

India: Proposed Amaravati Sustainable Capital City Development Project (Notice of Non-Registration)

The Panel on December 19 issued a Notice of Non-Registration of a complaint against the proposed Amaravati Sustainable Capital City Development Project. The Panel had received the complaint on October 8 from residents of Amaravati, which is proposed to be the capital of Andhra Pradesh after its bifurcation. They stated they were likely to suffer harm as a result of the Bank’s failures or omissions with respect to environmental and social impacts related to a land-pooling scheme being used to acquire land for the capital city. After conducting its due diligence, the Panel learned that the proposed project was in the early stages of preparation. Consequently, key safeguards documents and relevant studies were not ready and had not been reviewed by the Bank. Since there was no action or omission by the Bank that could be plausibly linked to the harm alleged by the complaintants, the Panel did not register the Request. The Panel noted that the complaintants could approach the Panel in the future as the project progresses and as new evidence becomes available.

Kenya: Water and Sanitation Service Improvement Project and Additional Financing (Notice of Registration)

The Panel on January 12 registered a Request for Inspection of the Water and Sanitation Service Improvement Project and its additional financing. The Panel had received the complaint on November 29 regarding a water-transfer scheme to be carried out using the under-construction Northern Collector Tunnel Phase 1 (NCT 1) in Muranga County, Kenya. The complaint was submitted by 47 residents of the county who authorized two residents to represent them in the Panel process. They asked that their identities be kept confidential. The complainants allege that the water transfer from the rivers in their area will have irreversible environmental impact and cause water shortages, leading to food insecurity and domestic scarcity. They claim that the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of the water transfer was not comprehensive and that community participation in the process was insufficient. They express concern about the impartiality of an Independent Expert Panel established under NCT 1. Bank management has until February 15 to issue its response.

Bangladesh: Modern Food Storage Facilities Project (Notice of Receipt)

The Panel on December 8 received a Request for Inspection of the Modern Food Storage Facilities Project from 26 people in Bangladesh. The Requesters, who asked for confidentiality, allege financial loss and adverse environmental and health impacts from the household-level, plastic grain silos to be provided to farmers under the project. In line with its Operating Procedures, the Panel is reviewing the Request to determine its admissibility.

Serbia: Floods Emergency Recovery Project (Notice of Receipt)

The Panel on January 6 received a Request for Inspection of the Floods Emergency Recovery Project sent by two people from Serbia. The harm alleged by the complainants includes the taking of land for project use without adequate compensation and a lack of meaningful consultation. The Panel is reviewing the Request to determine admissibility.

Vietnam: Livestock Competitiveness and Food Safety Project and Additional Financing (Notice of Receipt)

The Panel on January 12 received a Request for Inspection from the Humane Society International and Yeu Dong Vat, two animal protection organizations operating in Vietnam. The complaint relates to the Vietnam Livestock Competitiveness and Food Safety Project and its additional financing. The complainants claim that the project has failed to consider animal welfare issues and that animal welfare organizations have not been consulted. The Panel is currently reviewing the complaint to determine its admissibility.

About the Inspection Panel: The Board of Executive Directors created the Inspection Panel in 1993 to promote accountability and improve development results at the World Bank. The Panel is an independent complaints mechanism for people and communities who believe that they have been, or are likely to be, adversely affected by a World Bank-funded project and wish to seek redress.