

Gender mainstreaming in urban mobility investments under the EBRD Green Cities programme



Photo: Canva

In recent years, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has been improving its approach to gender equality through gender mainstreaming. Following its Gender Action Plan from 2009, in 2016 the EBRD strengthened its commitment to achieving gender equality by adopting its first Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SPGE) 2016–2020. The most recent update of the SPGE, which covers the period from 2021 to 2025, emphasises ‘the importance of strong internal processes, implementation tools, knowledge creation and sharing, and continuous capacity building to enable Bank staff and clients to integrate gender considerations into a growing number of projects’.¹ The EBRD has also pledged to integrate gender equality components in at least 40 per cent of its annual investment operations by the end of 2025.

In parallel, the EBRD has drastically increased its commitment to support climate action, recognising the important role of municipal investments in reaching the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the

¹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-2025](#), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1, November 2021.

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United Nations in 2015. The launch of the EBRD's flagship Green Cities programme, specifically designed to support cities bring about a green transformation, coincided with that of the first SPGE. Since 2016, the Green Cities programme has expanded to include more than 50 cities in 24 countries,² increasing its reach and potential for positive change.

Through the process of monitoring the Green Cities programme, specifically the sector of urban mobility, which can have a significant and decisive impact on women's economic and social empowerment, Bankwatch has identified deficiencies in the EBRD's implementation of gender mainstreaming. These shortcomings can be traced back to planning practices at both programme and project levels. This paper presents findings that support this conclusion and provides recommendations for the EBRD and its clients to improve gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation of urban mobility projects.

Gender in urban transport investments and policies

For vulnerable people, a group that includes women, gender minorities, older people, low-income earners and people with disabilities, moving freely, safely and without constraint is more of a daily challenge than a means of overcoming social, physical and economic obstacles. While urbanisation should offer urban residents with easier and quicker access to public services and employment, the poor state of mobility in many cities around the world prevents them from availing of these opportunities.

Several factors hinder women's economic independence, including the burden of family care and domestic work, limited time due to these responsibilities (time poverty), systemic discrimination, and reduced access to opportunities. Therefore, providing women with safe and reliable mobility options, which improves access to education and employment, is essential for protecting and upholding gender rights and women's empowerment.

In cities, the transport sector is a primary source of carbon dioxide emissions and the biggest global contributor to emissions of fine particulate matter, which are associated with a number of debilitating health conditions.³ Since its flagship Green Cities programme was launched in 2016, the EBRD has financed a significant number of urban transport projects, totalling EUR 1.18 billion as of October 2022.⁴ Most of these projects have primarily focused on modernising and decarbonising public transport fleets, which has led to greenhouse gas emissions savings. However, there is a lack of recognition and acting upon different mobility needs of public transport users. As a result, these projects squander a significant opportunity to empower women, who often face greater challenges when it comes to mobility due to their roles and position in society.

Investors and financiers often claim that their projects have gender-related benefits. Yet, they typically lack the analysis and gender-disaggregated data needed for proper planning, monitoring and evaluation. This is particularly the case with public transport investments, which are labelled as gender-beneficial based on gender measures aimed at enhancing the client's workplace policies. However, Bankwatch's research in

² European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Our Cities](#), *EBRD Green Cities*, accessed 8 April 2024.

³ Bianca Bianchi Alves, Lama Bou Mjahed, Joanna Moody, [Decarbonizing Urban Transport for Development](#), *World Bank Group*, 20 September 2023.

⁴ EBRD Evaluation Department, [Supporting Green Transformations in Municipalities: The EBRD Green Cities Programme interim evaluation \(2016–21\)](#), 71, *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, May 2023.

cities like Sarajevo⁵ and Tbilisi⁶ reveals a different reality from the female travellers' perspective. Despite considerable investment, women in these cities continue to experience unreliable, unsafe and inaccessible public transport services.

Investments backed by development banks still largely prioritise commercially viable projects that deliver sound financial returns. This severely limits support for active mobility and connectivity, which is crucial for addressing the complex needs of women, who frequently take multiple, shorter trips within peripheral areas of the city where public services are less accessible.

Although it is easier to track and evaluate progress on gender mainstreaming in the area of policymaking, significant challenges remain. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁷ despite the increasing integration of gender perspectives in climate-related national plans and policies, nearly 60 per cent of long-term low-emission development strategies remained gender-blind in 2022. Even when policies do consider gender mainstreaming, successful implementation is hampered by a lack of expertise and financing, limited capacity, an absence of political will, and the inadequate involvement of stakeholders. All of these issues prevent policies from being translated into improved practices.

Institutional versus programme-level gender mainstreaming

According to UN Women,⁸ gender mainstreaming, which incorporates gender perspectives into institutional policies, programmes, functions and structures, is widely acknowledged as the most practical means of achieving gender equality and empowering women.

UN Women differentiates between two types of gender mainstreaming: institutional and programme-level. At the institutional level, an organisation strengthens human and financial resources, implements gender-related policy instruments, and establishes accountability mechanisms to promote gender equality. At the programme level, gender mainstreaming consists of the following steps: gender analysis, programme design, resource allocation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Table 1).

⁵ Amina Dizdar, Dajana Bakic, Emina Bosnjak, [Gender-related issues in the urban mobility sector in the Canton of Sarajevo](#), CEE Bankwatch Network, December 2023.

⁶ CEE Bankwatch Network, [Urban public transport reform in Tbilisi](#), CEE Bankwatch Network, 29 September 2022.

⁷ Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, [Implementation of gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies and action as reported by Parties in regular reports and communications under the UNFCCC](#), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 16 September 2022.

⁸ UN Women, [Gender mainstreaming: A global strategy for achieving gender equality & the empowerment of women and girls](#), UN Women, 2020.

Table 1. Institutional and programme-level gender mainstreaming.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL	GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender analysis • Programme design • Human and financial resource allocation • Implementation • Monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish institutional arrangements to support gender mainstreaming such as gender units and gender focal points system • Allocate financial and human resources to support gender mainstreaming efforts • Implement accountability mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality

Source: UN Women, [Gender mainstreaming: A global strategy for achieving gender equality & the empowerment of women and girls](#), 4, UN Women, 2020.

Though the EBRD has taken important steps in institutional gender mainstreaming since 2009, additional effort is needed for consistently integrating gender equality as a cross-cutting issue at a sectoral level. As stated in the introduction to sustainable infrastructure on the EBRD website, the Bank’s ‘core objective in the municipal sector is to promote greater efficiency and higher quality in the provision of municipal services through investment and the promotion of independent, well-managed and financially sustainable operations, based on commercial principles and in a sound and market-oriented institutional and regulatory framework’.⁹ The MEI strategy¹⁰ notes that gender inequality is a transition challenge and a key driver influencing MEI activities. Moreover, as part of the MEI strategy’s priority to improve corporate governance, the EBRD lists the identification and addressing gender gaps, and considering the needs of male and female municipal service users in terms of availability, safety, reliability and affordability of provided services, and improving their access to economic opportunities.

The EBRD’s approach to gender mainstreaming in the transport and urban infrastructure sectors outlined in the 2021–2025 SPGE demonstrates strong focus on the workforce. This is also true of the EBRD’s Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure Sector Strategy and Transport Sector Strategy (both published in 2019), where the focus is mainly on women’s employment and protection in the workplace. The Bank’s decision to develop a combined Sustainable Infrastructure Strategy in 2024 provides an important opportunity to improve gender mainstreaming at the sectoral level by emphasising the service user’s perspective, particularly the needs of women and vulnerable groups.

⁹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [The EBRD and sustainable infrastructure](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, accessed 8 April 2024.

¹⁰ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure Sector Strategy](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, April 2019.

The 2021–2025 SPGE specifies strategic focus areas, as well as key operational instruments, for each of the three strategic directions for achieving gender equality. Safe transport is defined as a strategic focus area for ‘creating inclusive and gender-responsive services and public goods’.¹¹ However, although Green City Action Plans (GCAPs) and Equal Opportunities Actions Plans (EOAPs) are listed among the key operational instruments (Table 2), there is no mention of Gender Actions Plans (GAPs) either at the programme or project level. Identifying GAPs as a key operational instrument would ensure greater consideration and accountability for gender mainstreaming, but also enable a more comprehensive and systematic approach to achieving gender equality.

Table 2. The EBRD’s key operational instruments for creating inclusive and gender-responsive services and public goods.

KEY OPERATIONAL INSTRUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming into Green City Action Plans (GCAPs) • Equal Opportunity Action Plans (EOAPs) across infrastructure investments • Gender Facility Audits • Deepen the exploration of investments in municipal care facilities (including child / elderly care), public-private partnerships • Gender and Socially Responsive Procurement as part of infrastructure investments • Safe Transport Initiative • Opening up occupations banned to women in infrastructure sector • Promoting GBVH policies through ESAPs, TCs, on GBVH and Bank’s other operational tools
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Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-2025](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, 36.

At the programme level, gender mainstreaming is also a work in progress. The EBRD Green Cities programme aims to improve the access of cities to financial resources and technical expertise, which are often inadequate for addressing environmental and social challenges. Although the initial GCAP methodology was updated in 2020 to improve gender mainstreaming, the early adopters of the Green Cities programme, notably Tbilisi and Sarajevo, still refer to GCAPs, which are gender-blind. According to the 2016–2021 interim evaluation report on the Green Cities programme, only ‘55% of GCAPs consider gender and 45% of GCAPs consider disadvantaged population groups in diagnostics’.¹² The report also assesses the integration of gender considerations into the GCAPs as ‘relatively unsatisfactory’.¹³ In our view, the GCAPs

¹¹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-2025](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, 2021.

¹² EBRD Evaluation Department, [Supporting Green Transformations in Municipalities: The EBRD Green Cities Programme interim evaluation \(2016–21\)](#), 124, *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, May 2023.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 127.

are overly formalistic, lack substance, and fall short on actions aimed at building capacity in gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs)

The prioritisation of private vehicles in the planning and implementation of urban transport systems is considered another form of gender discrimination, given that women tend to drive less and rely more on mass transport and non-motorised modes of transport. According to the European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, an initiative of the EU Urban Mobility Observatory, ‘the inclusiveness of transport systems should be one of the major objectives of urban networks if the aim is to address environmental challenges and create socially cohesive communities’.¹⁴

Since 2013, the European Commission has encouraged the widespread adoption of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) as ‘a cornerstone of European urban mobility policy’.¹⁵ In 2023, the Commission updated its SUMP concept, integrating new EU strategies and policy priorities. Therefore, as foundational EU documents for planning and implementing public and private urban mobility investments, SUMPs should reflect the implementation of gender mainstreaming practice and gender planning principles.

Considering the EBRD’s level of investment in urban mobility, it has both interest in and leverage over the development and revision of sectoral plans, such as SUMPs, Public Transport Development Plans and Non-motorised Transport (NMT) Network Plans, regardless of whether they are defined as policy actions in a GCAP or not. The EBRD has supported the development of a significant number of SUMPs, which has accelerated the creation of bankable projects in the urban mobility sector. Therefore, the Bank also has its share of responsibility for incorporating a gender perspective into SUMPs, in line with best practice examples and Commission guidelines. While gender-sensitive planning requires more human and financial resources compared to traditional planning practices, it is still more cost-effective than building urban infrastructure which is not safe and inclusive.

The European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans has issued guidelines on addressing gender equity and vulnerable groups in SUMPs.¹⁶ They provide advice on how to incorporate gender considerations into each of the 12 planning steps of ‘the SUMP cycle’ with the aim of setting priorities, timelines, objectives, expected outcomes and/or targets for achieving gender equity and inclusiveness. Their recommendation is that the ‘planning process should be accompanied by information and awareness campaigns, media strategies and regular reviews’. A lot of attention needs to be given to stakeholder engagement, as many women and people belonging to vulnerable groups do not have the time, capacity or resources to participate in consultations.

¹⁴ Ana Dragutescu, Paula Land, Elma Meskovic, [Addressing gender equity and vulnerable groups in SUMPs](#), *European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans*, 7, September 2020.

¹⁵ European Commission, [Sustainable urban mobility planning and monitoring](#), *European Commission*, accessed 8 April 2024.

¹⁶ Ana Dragutescu, Paula Land, Elma Meskovic, [Addressing gender equity and vulnerable groups in SUMPs](#), *European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans*, September 2020.

Project-level gender mainstreaming in GAPs

To make cities and regions more inclusive, the EBRD has publicly stated its commitment to ‘gender-transformative urban and regional planning and design, and inclusive stakeholder engagement under the extension of the flagship EBRD’s Green Cities programme’.¹⁷ To this end, the EBRD provides technical assistance to clients tasked with planning and implementing projects as well as conducting institutional reforms. This typically involves compiling a wide range of assessments and planning documents, including Stakeholder Engagement Plans (SEPs), Environmental and Social Action Plans (ESAPs), Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRPs), Corporate Development Plans (CDPs), and various types of procurement plans, especially for municipal public and utility companies.

However, the number and type of assessments and planning documents required are contingent on whether the project is low-, medium-, or high-risk, the client’s capacity, and compliance with EBRD Performance Requirements (PRs). The development of GAPs, the most common tool for mainstreaming gender at the project level, is also dependent on meeting the PRs. Unfortunately, this means that GCAPs are mostly not compiled, even for projects with significant potential to advance gender equality.

Despite the EBRD issuing a gender guidance note in 2011¹⁸ outlining the possibility of integrating GAPs within ESAPs, gender gaps in urban mobility are continuously overlooked during environmental and social due diligence (ESDD). This results in the lack of both stand-alone and integrated project GAPs. In contrast, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) incorporates a gender perspective into its project categorisation, employing a four-tier system¹⁹ for measuring and reporting on the integration of gender equality issues into project design. For example, GAPs are mandatory for category I (gender equity theme) and category II (effective gender mainstreaming) projects.

GAPs are used not only to identify gender inequalities and constraints, but also to track progress and evaluate improvements at the project level. A baseline gender assessment should either be available at the outset or should be provided as an integral part of the GAP. We suggest that only those projects for which a GAP is available, and which report results based on a set of predefined quantitative and qualitative indicators, should be classified as projects contributing to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In line with the multiple-track approach (Table 3), gender aspects should also be integrated into actions that do not explicitly benefit women, girls, and women’s organisations. As stated in the ADB’s toolkit for gender mainstreaming in the transport sector, even for projects identified as likely to only indirectly benefit gender equality, ‘every opportunity should be explored to include gender-inclusive design features’.²⁰



¹⁷ Margherita Calderone, [Promoting Gender Equality: EBRD’s Approach](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, accessed 8 April 2024.

¹⁸ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [Gender 1: Urban rehabilitation and transport projects](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, June 2011.

¹⁹ Asian Development Bank, [Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects](#), *Asian Development Bank*, 31 March 2021.

²⁰ Asian Development Bank, [Gender Tool Kit: Transport – Maximizing the Benefits of Improved Mobility for All](#), 15, *Asian Development Bank*, June 2013.

Table 3. Multiple-track gender mainstreaming incorporates both gender-integrated and gender-targeted actions

GENDER-INTEGRATED PROJECTS	GENDER-TARGETED PROJECTS
	
<p>Projects that include gender equality in one or more ways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving facilities to remove education barriers and improve access to schools, which also increases access for girls. 	<p>Projects that have gender equality as the main objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing root causes of gender-based violence by increasing the effectiveness of the local justice sector.

Source: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Report 4 – International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality](#), Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2023.

Case studies

As explained in the previous sections, the results of a comprehensive and consistent gender mainstreaming approach should be reflected in gender-sensitive GCAPs, SUMP, and the availability of project-level GAPs. We used these three types of planning documents (strategic, sectoral, and project plan) to assess gender mainstreaming in urban mobility planning and its implications for the quality and impact of urban mobility investments financed by the EBRD under the Green Cities programme in Sarajevo and Tbilisi.

These two cities stand out when it comes to the number of signed sub-operations (SO), with 10 out of 26 total follow-on investments signed by October 2022, as per the Bank’s Green Cities programme evaluation report.²¹ Urban mobility has been recognised as a priority municipal sector in both cities and public transport improvements as priority actions within the sector, which is reflected in SO’s focus on public transport operations and infrastructure.

²¹ EBRD Evaluation Department, [Supporting Green Transformations in Municipalities: The EBRD Green Cities Programme interim evaluation \(2016–21\)](#).

Tbilisi

List of urban mobility projects signed under the Green Cities programme:

Project 51207: Tbilisi Bus Extension (2019), EUR 80 million – repaying

Project 51392: Tbilisi Metro (2020), EUR 75 million – complete

Project 52565: Tbilisi Bus Phase III (2021), EUR 83 million – cancelled

Project 52586: Tbilisi Metro Modernisation (2023), EUR 50.6 million – disbursing

Tbilisi was the second city to join the EBRD Green Cities programme and the first to adopt a GCAP in September 2017. However, the early GCAPs revealed methodological deficiencies, particularly the absence of gender considerations. Six years into the implementation of the GCAP for Tbilisi, the lack of gender-sensitive planning in urban mobility has become tangible.

Tbilisi's GCAP²² proposed six measures for improving urban mobility. However, none of these were geared towards benefitting gender equality, even though a number of gender-related considerations could have been included at the programme level. As explained in Bankwatch's stories from 2022²³ and 2023,²⁴ these missed opportunities to add gender components to each of the proposed actions have led to negligible improvements in the mobility of women and vulnerable groups in Tbilisi. This is particularly concerning given the overall substantial investment in public transport, including EBRD financing of over EUR 200 million.

Recognising gender-related benefits in programme planning is important because it has an impact on the prioritisation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of urban mobility plans and projects. It also ensures that all stakeholders are made aware of gender implications at an early stage, enabling them to build capacity and plan activities that will have a wider reach and a more transformative impact on gender equality. Therefore, revising the early GCAPs would bring a valuable opportunity to introduce gender elements and lay the groundwork for gender actions at a higher level of the planning hierarchy, rather than just on the project planning level.

In 2022, the EBRD commissioned a baseline needs assessment report,²⁵ representing a welcome step forward towards understanding and addressing the needs of women public transport users in Tbilisi. Based on feedback obtained from passengers as well as employees of Tbilisi Transport Company (TTC), the report²⁶ proposes a framework for drafting and implementing a targeted gender mobility action plan and an inclusive transport strategy. The major concern Bankwatch has continuously pointed at, also confirmed by this report, is the frequent occurrence and 'normalisation' of gender-based violence and harassment on

²² EMPRESS, [Green City Action Plan: Tbilisi \(2017 – 2030\)](#), Tbilisi City Hall, September 2017.

²³ Mariam Patsatsia, [Tbilisi's public transport woes and faltering reforms](#), CEE Bankwatch Network, 28 September 2022.

²⁴ Mariam Patsatsia, [Tbilisi's transport policy conundrums: between resolution and resistance](#), CEE Bankwatch Network, 21 August 2023.

²⁵ Policy Consulting and Management Group, [Tbilisi Bus Phase II – Inclusive Transport Strategy and Respectful Workplace Tbilisi Metro Project](#), Policy Consulting and Management Group, accessed 8 April 2022.

²⁶ Application Européenne de Technologies et de Services, Policy Consulting and Management Group, Inclusive transport strategy and respectful work place. Tbilisi bus phase II and Tbilisi metro projects, *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, October 2022.

Tbilisi public transport. This issue affects women and girls using public transport as well as female employees of TTC.

However, the research findings presented in the report commissioned by the EBRD are unclear and even contradictory. For instance, less than 10 per cent of the respondents, including both men and women, confirmed personally experiencing sexual harassment on public transport. The report doesn't mention the percentage of women who gave a positive response. Additionally, other important data contained in the report is not disaggregated by both gender and age. While age categories are mentioned, it seems that disaggregated data on gender and age may have been collected but not consistently analysed and presented. The research also fails to test and analyse the effect of the data collection method on the willingness of participants to disclose sensitive information or their overall experience.

In a 2022 survey conducted by the Georgian non-governmental organisation Green Alternative, which featured in a Bankwatch report²⁷ on urban public transport reform in Tbilisi, 35.34 per cent of women said they had experienced offensive sexual advances while using public transport. This is in agreement with research commissioned by the ADB in 2015,²⁸ which found that 45 per cent of women had been subjected to sexual harassment, with rates as high as 80 per cent among daily public transport users. Data disaggregated by both gender and age shows that younger women are targeted much more often, with 70 per cent of women aged between 18 and 35 experiencing gender-based violence and harassment on public transport. These results indicate that disaggregation of data both by gender and age is extremely important for understanding the extent and specifics of the problem. Furthermore, the data collection method used needs to be carefully assessed and tested when compiling information on sensitive topics such as sexual harassment.

The ADB-commissioned 2023–2043 Transport Plan for Tbilisi,²⁹ outlining around EUR 500 million in urban mobility investments over the next five years, was finally prepared in 2023.³⁰ While the plan is based on the SUMP methodology, it lacks sufficient gender mainstreaming. Unlike the GCAP, which proposed no benefits for women resulting from urban transport projects, the Tbilisi Transport Plan automatically assigns gender benefits to projects designed to improve walkability. However, it provides no specific details on how these gender-related outcomes will be achieved or tracked.

Although the plan's strong support for active and shared mobility is encouraging, project-level GAPs, providing a detailed analysis of gender-related considerations, how they will be integrated into the project design and monitored throughout the implementation and use stages, are necessary for gender-related benefits to be claimed.

²⁷ CEE Bankwatch Network, [Urban public transport reform in Tbilisi](#), *CEE Bankwatch Network*, 29 September 2022.

²⁸ Asian Development Bank, [Policy brief: A safe public transportation environment for women and girls](#), *Asian Development Bank*, December 2015.

²⁹ Transport and Urban Development Agency, Asian Development Bank, Tbilisi Transport Plan 2023–2043, *Transport and Urban Development Agency*, provided to Green Alternative by Tbilisi City Hall on 22 January 2024.

³⁰ As of April 2024, Tbilisi Transport Plan 2023–2043 still hasn't been approved by the Tbilisi City Assembly.

Sarajevo

List of urban mobility projects signed under the Green Cities programme:

Project 50246: Sarajevo Public Transport (2020), EUR 15 million – status unknown

Project 51294: Sarajevo Public Transport Part 2 (2020), EUR 20 million – status unknown

Project 51784: Sarajevo Public Transport Part 3 (2020), EUR 10 million – repaying

Project 52520: Sarajevo Public Transport e-Mobility (2021), EUR 17 million – disbursing

Project 53118: Sarajevo E-tram extension (2022), EUR 25 million – disbursing

The Canton of Sarajevo joined the Green Cities programme in December 2018 and finalised its GCAP a year later. Although the process of adopting the plan took almost two more years, the Canton began implementing the programme during this time. Thus far, five projects aimed at improving public transport have been signed under the Green Cities programme, with a total of EUR 87 million in EBRD financing. Additionally, the European Investment Bank has supported separate urban transport projects in the Canton, mostly public transport infrastructure and vehicle upgrades.

Sarajevo's 2020 GCAP³¹ is a gender-blind document, starting from the lack of objectives related to social inclusion or gender equality. In fact, gender is only mentioned briefly, with some actions expected to have gender-related benefits. However, these benefits are not elaborated upon. This formalistic approach is also reflected in the Tbilisi Transport Plan, where any project supporting active or shared mobility is assumed by default to contribute to gender equality.

The Sarajevo GCAP outlines a total of 15 actions for sustainable transport, with five of these selected as priority actions. Unfortunately, all prioritised actions focus on infrastructure investments, with policy improvements completely overlooked. This lack of focus on active mobility at the investment and policy levels is clearly in conflict with the SUMP,³² which was developed at the same time as the GCAP. The absence of coordination on content across the two plans, along with a lack of gender mainstreaming in each, is an opportunity missed.

It also has real-world consequences. A September 2023 survey by Sarajevo Open Centre³³ revealed that an alarming 75.6 per cent of women in Sarajevo feel unsafe on public transport or walking to and from bus stops and stations. If the GCAP and SUMP had been formulated in tandem to maximise the social potential of investments through gender-sensitive planning, women's attitudes towards public transport would have improved and their safety would have increased, delivering tangible gender-related benefits.

One of the biggest challenges facing the reform of public transport in Sarajevo is the troubled state of the city's main public transport company KJKP GRAS, resulting from a decades-long accumulation of debt, negligence and operational challenges. Three processes overseen by the EBRD and supported from technical cooperation funds are taking place in parallel: the restructuring (or potential dissolution) of GRAS,

³¹ WS Atkins International Limited, [Green Cantonal Action Plan for Sarajevo](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, 11 December 2020.

³² CEDES d.o.o. Sarajevo, Westport Consulting d.o.o. Sarajevo, NTSI-INSTITUT d.o.o. Sarajevo, [Plan održive urbane mobilnosti Kantona Sarajevo i Grada Sarajevo - SUMP](#), *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*, July 2020.

³³ Amina Dizdar, Dajana Bakic, Emina Bosnjak, [Gender-related issues in the urban mobility sector in the Canton of Sarajevo](#), *CEE Bankwatch Network*, December 2023.

the establishment of a completely new public transport company to operate trams and trolleybuses, and the development of a programme for awarding of bus and minibus lines to private companies.³⁴

This complex situation requires a detailed and comprehensive assessment to align these processes, their objectives, and their outcomes. On these points, the involvement and informing of citizens is crucially important, as the current jurisdictions are not clear. Additionally, public transport investments have failed to proportionally improve overall service quality and safety, which remain the key concerns of public transport users.

While access to substantial technical cooperation funds is welcome, proactive and timely disclosure of technical cooperation documents is essential in order to provide clarity on the future organisation of public transport in Sarajevo.

Recommendations

Although a lack of gender-sensitive urban mobility planning is not the only factor that contributes to the underwhelming impact of urban mobility investments on women, it still plays a crucial role. Effective gender integration goes way beyond gender-sensitive planning documents, which should be seen as just the start of an overarching multi-level process aimed at raising awareness, building capacity, and coordinating the contribution of all stakeholders, including decision makers, service providers and infrastructure users. The EBRD and its municipal clients are responsible for providing the framework and conditions conducive to optimising these joint efforts across all levels.

At the **institutional level**, we call on the EBRD to:

- integrate gender equality as a horizontal, cross-cutting issue across its sectoral strategies; and
- enhance its attention and consideration of municipal infrastructure users' different needs in the forthcoming Sustainable Infrastructure Strategy and SPGE revision with the aim of enhancing gender-sensitive planning.

At the **programme level**, we call on the EBRD to:

- revise GCAPs for 'early adopters' of the Green Cities programme to ensure continuous progress while effectively implementing gender mainstreaming as part of the planning process;
- strengthen reporting and monitoring by increasing the resources allocated to these areas, particularly given that future improvements to the GCAP methodology will heavily depend on the availability of this data; and
- include disaggregated data by gender, age, disability, income, and location for all stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, and programme implementation documents.

³⁴ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, [GrCF2 W2 E2 - Sarajevo E-Tram Extension](#), *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, accessed 8 April 2024.

At the **sectoral level**, we call on the EBRD to:

- ensure that SUMPs are developed in line with the European Commission’s gender mainstreaming guidelines;
- make gender-sensitive SUMPs a priority policy action in cities that do not have a SUMP developed yet or a revision of it is needed; and
- support the development of other gender-sensitive sectoral plans, such as Public Transport Development Plans and Non-motorised Transport Network Plans.

At the **project level**, we call on the EBRD to:

- set clear gender-related targets and outcomes on the project level and ensure gender mainstreaming is implemented thoroughly and consistently across urban mobility sector investments;
- introduce project gender categorisation and mandate GCAPs for certain project categories to address deficiencies in gender mainstreaming on the programme level, reflected in gender-blind GCAPs;
- include disaggregated data by gender, age, disability, income, and location for baseline assessments, while streamlining and enhancing the disclosure of technical assistance documents.

Key takeaways

- Disaggregated data collection and analysis is a prerequisite for a systematic, integrated, user-based and gender-sensitive approach to urban mobility planning, leading to attitude change, and eventually, behaviour change.
- In line with gender mainstreaming best practice, the EBRD must do more to adopt the multiple-track approach, incorporating a mix of gender-integrated and gender-targeted actions into its planning and operations. Infrastructure upgrades should deliver tangible, predefined benefits for women even if this group is not the primary focus.
- Finally, determining the success of urban mobility investments based solely on environmental benefits overlooks their significant potential to foster social inclusion and gender equality. On the other hand, it is arbitrary and misleading to claim that every investment in public transport and active mobility has gender benefits. Gender-sensitive and participatory planning is the key to providing safe, accessible, affordable and reliable public transport, and improved conditions for women’s active mobility.