

(Un)sustainable transport in Kyrgyzstan: protecting the initial agreement with ADB

Bishkek is one of the most polluted cities in the world, and we need real action to prevent this disaster and protect ADB's investment in climate mitigation and adaptation, especially for vulnerable groups.

To reduce air pollution in Bishkek, ADB supported an energy transition project in the transport sector to replace fossil fuel transport with electric transport. Initially, ADB agreed to purchase 120 battery electric buses. But it is very strange why the Grutter consultant company concluded to have this procurement, when they did not use enough local data, including local and international expertise. Previously, Bishkek had renovated its trolleybus system thanks to EBRD loans. In total, we had 180 vehicles, more than 200 km of overhead lines. However, since 2024, the Bishkek City Hall has started to discontinue the trolleybus system, in violation of the initial agreement. So, instead of increasing the number of carbon-neutral vehicles, now we have less electric transport than before ADB started the project of electrification of public transport.

ADB project expectation:

- **To support the transition to carbon-neutral public transport and electrify it.**
- **Replacement of polluting diesel buses with battery electric buses.** Energy transit from export to local electricity (costs 23% less).
- **Total fleet should be around 280 electric buses (160 trolley buses existing + 120 ADB battery electric buses).**
- **Reduced emissions, cleaner air.**

Reality: Purposeless implementation of the ADB investment.

- **Discontinuation of a trolleybus system by the City Hall, confirming that they are doing this because they are replacing EBRD trolleybuses with ADB e-buses.**
- **No trolleybuses on the street, only ADB e-buses now.**
- **Violation of the agreement by Bishkek City Hall**
- **Air pollution remains**
- **Less sustainable transport than even before the ADB project started**

How to protect ADB's investment:

- **Negotiate the realisation of the initial agreement with the Kyrgyz Government**
- **Monitoring of the implementation process throughout the whole project.**

In the Trolleybuses Depot Reconstruction Plan, we can see that new e-buses should be built in addition to the trolleybuses that have been in their places.

Project information:

***Kyrgyz Republic: Urban Transport Electrification Project
Sovereign Project | 54123-001***

Grant 0808-KGZ: Urban Transport Electrification Project, Asian Development Fund - US\$ 25.00 million

Grant 0809-KGZ: Urban Transport Electrification Project, High Level Technology Fund - US\$ 650,000.00

Loan 4149-KGZ: Urban Transport Electrification Project, Concessional ordinary capital resources lending - US\$ 25.00 million