Background

A household waste sorting and recycling programme was introduced in the city with international technical assistance. In selected areas of the city, marked containers were installed in buildings for the collection of recyclable waste, and corresponding notices were displayed. An agreement was made with a communal company that has the appropriate permits and technical resources to transport the sorted waste. The municipality informed residents about the launch of the programme by displaying posters near the respective buildings and delivering leaflets to individual mailboxes. As a result of the programme the city expected to be able to lower the cost of waste transportation and landfilling, and also to increase budget revenues by increasing the volume of recycling. The plan was to use the savings and the additional income to install waste recycling containers in all apartment buildings and private homes in the city. In addition, to accompany its waste-sorting programme, the city planned to begin the construction of a new waste recycling plant during the year, with the aim of decommissioning the existing dump.

In the year in which the programme was launched, the city encountered multiple problems that jeopardised its successful realisation. It became clear that the city was not ready to provide regular waste collection, or to encourage citizens to participate. In turn, citizens could see no advantage in sorting waste and were not ready to devote any time or effort to it. In addition, the city was not ready to work with private companies to solve its waste problem.

The following facts became clear:

- Only 20 percent of waste does not require additional sorting. At the same time, expenditure on container maintenance increased: every third container for sorted waste requires, on average, one routine repair per month as a result of being damaged. Ten percent had to be replaced because of major damage.
- There was an increase in the number of complaints received from residents of buildings with recycling containers regarding irregular waste collection. This was because, when the containers for unsorted waste were full, people were forced to leave their waste next to the containers, creating unsanitary conditions in the courtyard. In addition, there were complaints about the containers being damaged or overturned by homeless people, who removed the sorted waste in order to take it to waste collection points.
Communities in the vicinity of the site chosen for the new waste recycling plant opposed its construction. Due to problems related to the acquisition of the site for the sorting station and the low financial efficiency, the most important element of the programme is also under threat — that is, the construction of a new waste recycling plant and the gradual decommissioning of the existing dump.

Discuss the potential conflicts and possible ways to resolve them, using the viewpoints of the different parties. Justify the viewpoints. How do you think the problem might be solved?

Conflicts of interest

- The city lacks the funds to realise the programme. The town hall plans to drastically raise tariffs on land adjoining the buildings, or even refuse to take part in the programme, because of the increased expenditure on container maintenance, the deterioration of sanitary conditions in the building courtyards, and the considerably lower level of income from selling recyclable waste.

- City residents consider that they are already paying a high price and refuse to agree to an increase in their utilities tariffs as a result of implementing the waste-sorting programme. They do not understand how they benefit from sorting their waste. They demand that the town hall provide the whole city with an appropriate number of containers and keep them in good condition. They also demand that lighting be provided near the containers to ensure security after dark and to help prevent the containers from being vandalised. At the same time, most citizens do not know how to correctly sort their waste and often use the wrong containers for the different types of waste.

- Community organisations demand that the waste sorting programme continue and support residents regarding the improvement of the waste management programme and the provision of regular waste collection.

- Local communities near the site selected for the new waste recycling plant oppose its construction. They do not believe that it will be safe for the environment or that it will provide real employment for local inhabitants.

- Private companies would like to participate in programme realisation but do not see any willingness on the part of the city to work with businesses under transparent and clear conditions.

Positions of the different stakeholders

**Local authorities**

The city tries to do all it can to ensure good quality of life for its citizens. It simply lacks funds. In the case of unsanitary courtyards, the building residents are guilty, as they are unwilling to put their rubbish into the containers and deliberately damage them.

**Local community**

City residents think that the city is not doing enough to solve the waste collection problem. The tariffs are too high, but communal services are not efficient.
### Environmentalists, public activists

Community organisations support the full implementation of the waste-sorting programme.

### Businesses

Private companies are ready to support the city in developing a waste-sorting programme, but they demand transparent rules and open dialogue with the city authorities. From the point of view of businesses, if they collect the waste then they are its owners and have full rights to handle it however they want. They want a guarantee that the funds they have invested in infrastructure will be returned.

### Possible solutions

- Change the content and target location of the programme according to its results. For this, a thorough analysis would be needed of the type and amount of municipal solid waste that is produced in different areas of the city. It would also be necessary to survey city inhabitants so as to determine key barriers to the programme; evaluate the volume of investments required for programme realisation; determine the optimum number of containers for each courtyard; change the design of the containers; and optimise the routes used by the waste collection vehicles.

- Develop an investment plan and engage local businesses in its realisation.

- Engage local communities in the city in the development and realisation of the programme. This will make it possible to determine what inhabitants want, to identify optimum waste sorting tariffs, and to motivate city residents.

- Carry out an information and education campaign among city residents regarding the rules for waste sorting and the use of the special containers.

- Develop an incentive programme for residential buildings/private houses and city residents who will take part in the city's waste sorting programme.

- Organise explanatory meetings and public hearings with citizens who oppose the construction of the new waste recycling plant in their neighbourhood.

- Develop a plan for the modernisation of the old dumpsite in the event that it is not possible to open a new waste recycling plant.