

EBRD Civil Society Steering Committee 2026 -27

Terms of Reference

1. Background and Purpose

The **EBRD Civil Society Steering Committee** (the “Committee”) serves as an additional advisory and consultative platform designed to strengthen dialogue and partnerships between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Established in 2024 following a successful pilot in 2023, the Committee reinforces the EBRD’s commitment to transparency, accountability and meaningful stakeholder engagement across all regions of operation. CSO representatives on the Committee are expected to act as a bridge between the EBRD and civil society in the Bank’s regions, with a particular emphasis on engaging local, grassroots organisations and communities. Members should reflect and relay the views and concerns of CSOs and communities within their respective networks and geographies.

The Committee does not advise or provide input on individual project work, nor does it replace or duplicate any existing EBRD processes, mechanisms or grievance channels. Its role is strictly advisory at the policy and strategic level, with a primary focus on civil society consultations and active contributions to the planning and delivery of the Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum (AM).

2. Roles and responsibilities of members

Working in close collaboration with the Civil Society Engagement (CSE) team, Committee members will contribute in the following ways:

2.1. Annual Meeting support

- Support the organisation of Annual Meeting (AM) discussion panels by identifying and highlighting issues of importance to civil society in the host country and region.
- Coordinate the participation of CSOs during the AM.
- Engage early in the planning process by providing input on the agenda and panel discussion topics for the Civil Society Programme at the AM.

2.2. Consultations

- Contribute to the consultation processes for EBRD country and sector strategies and to broader CSO consultation meetings.
- Propose new ideas for enhancing stakeholder engagement and provide feedback on initiatives presented by the EBRD.

2.3. Engagement and advice

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- Act as a conduit between the EBRD and the wider CSO community, particularly local and grassroots organisations across the EBRD regions.
- Provide advice from a civil society perspective on key issues such as inclusive consultation processes, safety concerns and protection against retaliation, working with the CSE team to identify effective solutions.
- Serve as a forum for dialogue on the functioning of the Committee itself, including recommending adjustments to improve its effectiveness.

Committee members are expected to actively engage with civil society in their respective regions and dedicate sufficient time to Committee activities. This includes participation in calls, email exchanges, meetings, and other engagements. A higher level of involvement is anticipated during the preparation of the Civil Society Programme for the EBRD's Annual Meeting.

3. Structure and Membership

The Committee will consist of **12 to 14 CSO members**. Membership is determined based on the following criteria:

1. **Geographical representation** across EBRD economies where the Bank is currently operating.
2. **Country-level representation** from the host country of the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum during the relevant Committee cycle.
3. **Representation by the EBRD's international NGO (INGO) partners who have an MOU with the Bank.**

Membership is held at the organisational level, rather than by individual representatives.

Chair and Co-Chair of the Committee

The Committee shall elect a Chair and a Co-Chair from among its members. Their responsibilities include:

- Leading and facilitating Committee meetings from the CSO side.
- Supporting communication and coordination among Committee members and with the CSE team.

Attendance and Replacement

Committee members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. If a member is unable to attend, they may nominate a **proxy** from their organisation to participate in their place.

Failure to attend **two consecutive meetings** by a representative or their proxy without a valid explanation may result in replacement. In such cases, the CSE team, in consultation with the Committee, will identify a suitable replacement from the pool of candidates formed during the selection process, ensuring continued balanced representation.

Rotation and Term Limit

Committee members may serve for a maximum of **two consecutive terms**, equivalent to **four years** in total. After completing their term(s), members are expected to step down and are encouraged to nominate other CSOs from their networks to ensure renewal and broader representation.

Withdrawal or Resignation

If a Committee member or their organisation wishes to withdraw before the end of their term, they must **notify the CSE team in writing**. The CSE team, in consultation with the Committee, may appoint a replacement from the original shortlist to maintain balanced representation and continuity.

4. Code of Conduct

All Committee members, including the Chair and Co-Chair, are expected to uphold the following principles throughout their engagement:

- **Confidentiality:** Protect non-public information shared during Committee activities.
- **Integrity:** Act in the best interests of the Committee and the broader civil society community, maintaining transparency and ethical standards.
- **Impartiality:** Avoid and disclose any conflicts of interest.
- **Respect and Inclusion:** Promote a respectful, inclusive environment that values diverse voices.
- **Collaboration:** Engage constructively with peers and the CSE team.
- **Accountability:** Fulfil commitments and communicate proactively.
- **Transparency:** Be open about affiliations and relevant interests.
- **Professionalism:** Uphold high standards in all interactions, communications, and public representation of the Committee.

5. Reporting

At the end of each Committee cycle, a summary report prepared and published by the CSE team on the EBRD website will highlight the Committee's activities and promote its work both internally and externally.

Key activities may also be featured in the **CSO newsletter** and other relevant **EBRD publications** as needed.

6. Timeframe and meetings

Membership of the CSO Steering Committee will begin in January 2026.

The term of each Committee is a period of 2 years (2026 and 2027). The Committee will meet regularly, no fewer than 4 times per year and for any necessary ad hoc meetings. The dates of the quarterly meetings will be communicated in advance.

7. Eligibility criteria for application:

Entities seeking to join the CSO Steering Committee must meet the following criteria:

- **Alignment with EBRD values:** The organisation's mission and activities must be consistent with the EBRD's values and policies.
- **NGO status:** It must qualify as a non-governmental organisation under the [EBRD's definition](#).
- **Regional presence:** It must be based in or actively operating in one or more [economies where the EBRD](#) currently invests.
- **Thematic relevance:** It should reflect thematic areas aligned with EBRD priorities.
- **Technical capacity:** It must have reliable internet access and a working email account.
- **Language proficiency:** At least one representative must have a good working knowledge of English.

Organisations should complete the online application form and submit **two reference letters** (maximum one page each, in English). At least one letter must be from another civil society organisation and serve as peer recognition. References may also come from local or international partners and donor organisations, including the EBRD. Reference letters should be submitted to: csso@ebrd.com

The CSE team will not provide references for any applicant.

Exception: EBRD INGO partners are exempt from the reference letter requirement.

8. Selection criteria

Committee members will be selected through an open and transparent process, based on the following criteria:

- **Motivation and commitment** to the Committee's objectives.
- **Demonstrated reach and influence** within their sector or region.
- **Thematic and regional representation**, with attention to EBRD priority areas, Annual Meeting location, and geographic diversity.

Current Committee members are eligible to re-apply and will be evaluated using the same criteria as new applicants. They must also submit new reference letters.

9. Selection process information and timeline

The **Civil Society Engagement (CSE) team** will lead the selection process, including the evaluation and shortlisting of applications. The process will follow these steps:

- **Announcement and Application Submissions** (September 2025)
Interested organisations must submit their applications and reference letters within the specified timeframe.
- **Eligibility Check** (October 2025)
Applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria. Non-compliant applications will be excluded.

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- **Evaluation of Applications** (October – November 2025)
Eligible applications will be assessed based on the published selection criteria.
- **Shortlisting** (Late November – December 2025)
A shortlist will be prepared and reviewed internally by relevant EBRD departments, including the Office of the Chief Compliance Officer (OCCO).
- **Consultation with Existing Steering Committee** (December 2025)
The final shortlist will be shared with current Committee members for a no-objection review. Feedback will be considered before finalising selections.
- **Final Selection and Notification** (Mid-December 2025 – Early January 2026)
All applicants will be notified. Selected members must commit to the Terms of Reference, including attendance and participation requirements.
- **Publication** (By Mid-January 2026)
The final list of Steering Committee member organisations and their representatives will be published on the EBRD website.

10. Amendment and Review

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed **at least every two years** to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

11. Application and Contact Information

Link to apply: <https://forms.office.com/e/eiCzmnz378>

For any questions during the process, please contact the Civil Society Engagement team at: cso@ebrd.com