



Foreword

Dear readers,

Welcome to the May edition of our EBRD-CSO newsletter. As we head towards the EBRD Annual Meeting in Riga (5-7 June), we look forward to continuing an open and practical dialogue with civil society across our regions.

In the pages that follow, you will find details on the Civil Society Programme at the Annual Meeting, including how to register and the opportunities available to engage with the Board of Directors, the President, senior management and staff – both in person and online.

We also share reflections from our joint Civil Society Engagement - Digital Hub pilot scheme that supports Ukrainian civil society organisations (CSOs) in their work to strengthen cyber resilience, including lessons emerging from a recent training workshop.

Lastly, we are pleased to share a short case study highlighting how the Digital Transformation for CSOs programme in Türkiye is helping organisations embed digital resilience as a core capability, rather than just a set of tools.

We hope these updates are useful and, as always, we welcome any feedback or ideas for future issues.

Happy reading!

The CSE team

MAIN ACTIVITY

Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting 2026

Join us for the Civil Society Programme at the Annual Meeting from 5 to 7 June in Riga, Latvia. This year, the theme of the Business Forum is “Volatile to versatile: economies innovating in a changing world”.

The programme, which will take place both in person and online, is designed to offer opportunities for dialogue between civil society stakeholders and the EBRD Board of Directors, President, senior management and staff.

A range of events and panel discussions are set to attract prominent participants from around the world, from leading government officials and financial and corporate executives to entrepreneurs, civil society representatives and international media.

The Civil Society Programme will include:

- a meeting between the EBRD Board of Directors and CSOs
- a meeting between the EBRD President and CSOs
- an open panel: From volatility to resilience: civil society as a catalyst for impact
- an open panel from the Independent Evaluation team at the EBRD
- a panel from the Independent Project Accountability Mechanism team at the EBRD.

You can now register for the Annual Meeting by filling in the relevant [CSO registration form](#). Registration will close on Monday 1 June.



Updates to the programme will be available at the official [2026 Annual Meeting website](#).

CSOs attending the EBRD Annual Meeting may wish to consider participating in the Diversity and Inclusion Forum 2026, taking place in Riga the day before the Annual Meeting.

The forum offers a space for dialogue on resilience, inclusion and leadership, with participation from civil society, policymakers and international partners.

More information and registration are available here: <https://www.diversity.lv/diversityforum2026/>

Strengthening cyber resilience among Ukrainian civil society

In April we hosted an online training workshop to strengthen cybersecurity awareness and resilience among Ukrainian CSOs.

The workshop was part of the joint Civil Society Engagement-Digital Hub pilot project, which is supporting five Ukrainian CSOs as they navigate the growing digital and cybersecurity risks they face from operating in high-risk environments. The pilot is funded by the Ukraine Multilateral Donor Fund and implemented by Information Systems Security Partners.

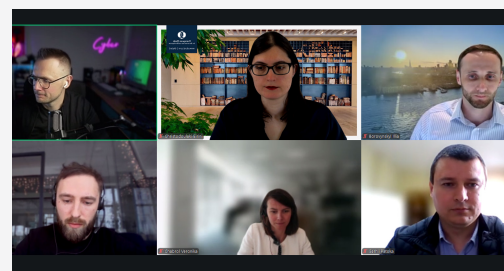
While the pilot project directly supports five beneficiary CSOs, the training was opened up to a wider group of Ukrainian CSOs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including those from partner networks and others engaging with the EBRD and its clients. This meant that organisations beyond the pilot could benefit from early lessons learned and practical guidance, reinforcing the notion that cybersecurity is not only a technical issue, but a broader operational and social challenge for civil society.

In total, **22 CSO representatives** attended the session, highlighting the strong demand for hands-on, realistic approaches to cybersecurity tailored to civil society's realities.

One participating CSO shared early reflections from the pilot, highlighting how proportionate, structured cybersecurity measures can significantly reduce risk without requiring extensive technical expertise.

There were three key takeaways:

- **Simplicity.** A clear 1-2 page guide is often more effective than lengthy technical documentation.
- **Resistance.** Initial staff resistance is normal, but once the process is introduced, resistance typically evolves into support and buy-in.
- **Money.** Cybersecurity is not primarily about expensive tools. Around 90 per cent of a team's cybersecurity resilience comes from behavioural change and the use of free online tools.



Building digital resilience in Türkiye's civil society

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the EBRD consulted with CSOs to gather information on how Covid-19 was affecting vulnerable groups, gain insights into how policies adopted at national level were working and identify areas to potentially support CSOs through capacity building. Digital transformation emerged as one area that could boost resilience in uncertain times. A pilot initiative to support digital transformation was implemented between 2020 and 2021, with the aim of testing approaches that could later be scaled up.

Building on the lessons from this pilot, after the 2023 Türkiye earthquakes, the EBRD launched a comprehensive digital transformation programme for CSOs in Türkiye that ran until March this year.

Project highlights

STAKEHOLDERS

153+

trained on digital transformation, strengthening digital skills, planning and decision-making across organisations.

USERS

8,000 +

were reached through crisis-response digital platforms as part of the EBRD's response to the earthquakes in Türkiye.



Engaging civil society, delivering impact

This programme, implemented with the Support Foundation for Civil Society (STDV), the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund and the Türkiye Mozaik Foundation, focused on treating digital resilience as an all-encompassing organisational capability – integrating strategy, skills, systems and people.

FROM TOOLS TO ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

A total of **21 CSOs** received tailored microgrants and mentorship to develop organisation-wide digital strategies. These plans emphasised data management, accessibility, security and digital decision-making, moving away from fragmented practices. Digital strategies were seen as living documents - prioritising sustainability and long-term resilience over one-off technical fixes. Participating CSOs worked across a range of areas, including environmental protection, disability rights and women's economic inclusion.

SCALING CAPACITY AND IMPACT

Beyond those organisations receiving direct support, open training and peer-learning sessions reached **58 additional CSOs** across the country. This helped to build digital confidence and skills across the sector.

CSOs were then able to apply digital systems to real-world needs, such as disaster response, health coordination, advocacy and engagement with donors. Embedding digital practices improves continuity, crisis response and evidence-based decision-making, demonstrating that digital resilience is about how organisations operate and not just the tools they use.

OVERVIEW OF CSE ACTIVITY

In 2026, the CSE team has so far held the following activities (as of 1 May 2026):

- 2 country/sector strategy consultation meetings
- 6 presidential CSO meetings
- 2 Board meetings with CSOs

LOOKING AHEAD



Our current and upcoming country and sector strategies will be available on our dedicated consultation page.

HAVE YOUR SAY

[Review our open consultations](#)



ACCESS PROJECT INFORMATION



EBRD PUBLICATIONS



[THE EBRD TRANSITION REPORT 2025-26](#)



[40 YEARS ON: MAKING CHORNOBYL SAFE](#)



HAVE YOUR SAY

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