EBRD-CSO Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with the EBRD

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European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development



HAVE YOUR SAY

Provide your feedback on the EBRD CSO Newsletter

Foreword

Dear readers,

Welcome to another edition of the CSO newsletter.

This issue reflects a year of dialogue, learning and partnership between the EBRD and civil society across the Bank's regions. Throughout 2026, civil society organisations have continued to bring valuable local knowledge, challenge established approaches and highlight the importance of transparent, inclusive and sustainable development.

We take a look at the shared priorities that have emerged from the President's meetings with civil society, including stronger governance and accountability, wider access to opportunity, and the need to build resilience into investments and reforms.

We also highlight practical examples of cooperation, from the Civil Society Steering Committee's work to strengthen its foundations for future engagement to the Central Asian Business Integrity Network's efforts to turn commitments on integrity into practical action. A new feature spotlights themes emerging from the CSO inbox, offering insight into the questions and concerns raised directly by civil society stakeholders.

As we look ahead to 2027, we remain committed to strengthening meaningful participation, listening carefully to diverse perspectives and improving how we understand and communicate the impact of engagement. We hope this edition provides a useful overview of the Bank's recent work and encourages continued exchange across our growing civil society network.

Happy reading!

The Civil Society Engagement team

MAIN ACTIVITY

What we heard from civil society in 2026



In 2026, EBRD President Odile Renaud-Basso met with numerous civil society organisations across the EBRD regions, including in sub-Saharan Africa, where the Bank is expanding its engagement. While those discussions reflected different national contexts and priorities, several common themes emerged.

Governance, accountability and trust

Across the Bank's regions, civil society organisations highlighted the importance of transparent institutions, the effective implementation of reforms and meaningful public participation. Discussions frequently focused on strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving transparency in decision-making and investment processes, and closing the gap between policy commitments and implementation.

Organisations also stressed the importance of civic space and constructive dialogue in supporting sustainable development.

Inclusion and access to opportunity

Participants emphasised the need to ensure that economic opportunities and development benefits reach a broader range of communities. Gender equality, youth empowerment, skills development and access to quality services featured prominently in discussions. Civil society organisations also highlighted the importance of designing investments and reforms in ways that reflect local needs and help to reduce inequalities.

Resilience and sustainability

Climate resilience, energy security and sustainable development were recurring topics. Participants highlighted the importance of balancing immediate economic and social needs with longer-term sustainability objectives and underscored the need for investments to be accompanied by strong governance, community engagement and long-term resilience planning.

Steering Committee strengthens its foundations for future engagement



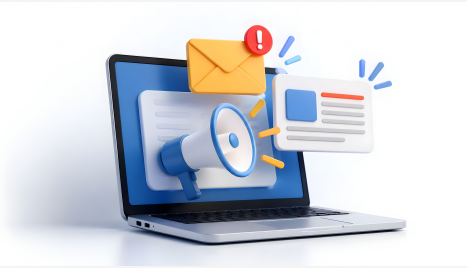
In 2026, the EBRD Civil Society Steering Committee began the first year of its second mandate. Alongside substantive civil society engagement issues, discussions focused on strengthening the Committee's structure, working methods and long-term effectiveness.

Committee members met regularly to exchange views on engagement priorities, discuss emerging issues and consider how to strengthen dialogue between the EBRD and civil society organisations across the Bank's regions.

The Committee reviewed how it operates in practice, including meeting arrangements, internal coordination and ways to make engagement more focused and effective. The aim was to reinforce the Committee as a platform for dialogue and as a source of practical advice for the Bank on civil society engagement.

The year also gave members an opportunity to build working relationships, agree priorities for the rest of the mandate and establish a foundation for future activities. In 2027, the EBRD expects to launch the selection process for the Committee's third mandate, which will begin in 2028. Further details will appear in future editions of the CSO newsletter and on the EBRD's corporate social media channels.

What we are learning from the CSO inbox



In this issue, we introduce a new feature that homes in on trends emerging from correspondence received by the Civil Society Engagement team.

Although the data are still partial, there appear to be three recurring themes in the correspondence received so far this year:

- **Project-related engagement extends beyond complaints.** Stakeholders also get in touch to seek project documents, information on environmental and social performance, and clarification of the Bank's involvement.
- **Environmental, social and human rights concerns remain prominent,** particularly in relation to project impacts, due diligence and affected communities.
- **Transparency and accountability are recurring expectations,** including access to information, monitoring of project commitments, and clarity about available review or grievance mechanisms.

We look forward to seeing how this section develops in 2027, as we continue to track the issues and interests that feature in correspondence from civil society stakeholders.



Building a culture of business integrity in Central Asia

Business integrity needs more than laws and regulations: it also depends on practical tools, trusted relationships and cooperation between businesses, civil society organisations and public institutions. To this end, the EBRD and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with donor support from the Government of Luxembourg, helped to establish the Central Asian Business Integrity Network (CABIN).

The first regional initiative of its kind in Central Asia, the network brings together representatives of the private sector, civil society, government and academia from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia. It enables participants to exchange experiences, strengthen integrity standards and identify practical responses to shared corruption and compliance risks.



FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

These discussions highlighted shared priorities, including accessible compliance guidance for small and medium-sized enterprises, whistleblower protection and peer learning across countries and sectors.

The network has translated these priorities into knowledge products and recommendations for businesses, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, including guidance on anti-corruption compliance and whistleblower protection. Its activities are also helping smaller businesses to manage integrity risks in their day-to-day operations.

BUILDING A REGIONAL COMMUNITY

By connecting local experience with international expertise, CABIN is helping to turn high-level commitments into practical action and building a regional community for fairer, more transparent and more sustainable markets.

Project highlights

160+

stakeholders engaged

11

knowledge products and recommendations developed

CABIN

is the first regional business integrity network in Central Asia



Regional cooperation for impact

CABIN was formed after regional consultations in March and April 2025, followed by a first regional conference in Almaty in July 2025 and further exchanges on the sidelines of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) Fast-Track Review Forum in Bishkek in November 2025.

OVERVIEW OF CSE ACTIVITY

In the 10 months to 30 October 2026, the CSE team held the following activities:

5 country/sector strategy consultation meetings

10 presidential CSO meetings

6 Board meetings with CSOs

HAVE YOUR SAY

Review our open consultations

ACCESS PROJECT INFORMATION

LOOKING AHEAD

Understanding impact: Building on lessons from this year's consultations, meetings and stakeholder exchanges, the Civil Society Engagement team will continue efforts to better understand, capture and communicate the outcomes and longer-term impact of civil society engagement.

Continued dialogue: We look forward to engaging with civil society organisations across the EBRD regions and strengthening the partnerships that contribute to more informed and inclusive development outcomes.

Country strategy consultations: The Civil Society Engagement team will continue to support consultations across the EBRD regions, including upcoming consultations on the country strategies of the Baltic states and further engagement in sub-Saharan Africa.

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