EBRD-CSO Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with the EBRD

#78 | Summer 2026

European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Foreword

Dear readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of the CSO newsletter, in which we bring together highlights from the EBRD Annual Meeting in Riga alongside updates on key areas of the Bank's work with civil society

This year's Civil Society Programme at the Annual Meeting saw a record level of participation, attracting 244 civil society organisations (CSOs) from 48 countries. The strong turnout reflects the continued interest in engaging with the Bank's work and discussing shared priorities across its regions of operation.

On page 2 we highlight the key themes emerging from the Annual Meeting, with a closer look at the CSO open panel on civil society engagement.

The Programme also featured dedicated sessions on accountability and evaluation, reflecting the importance of transparency, learning and institutional effectiveness.

Beyond the Annual Meeting, we update you on the Bank's work on the EBRD Green Cities programme, marking 10 years of implementation, as well as recent developments in the Bank's evolving strategic priorities.

Happy reading and have a lovely summer!

The CSE team

HAVE YOUR SAY

Provide your feedback on the EBRD CSO Newsletter

Civil society voices from Riga

Held alongside the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum under the theme "From volatile to versatile: economies innovating in a changing world", the CSO Programme in Riga provided a platform for meaningful dialogue on some of the most pressing issues facing our regions, including the civic space, accountability, reconstruction and recovery, inclusion, fragility and conflict, and the EBRD's growing engagement in sub-Saharan Africa.

Civil society engagement took place through a range of exchanges – from meetings with the EBRD President and Board of Directors to bilateral discussions with senior management and a high-level exchange between Ukrainian CSOs and the Speaker of the Latvian parliament. Together, these interactions provided a platform for dialogue on strategic priorities and the role of civil society in shaping more inclusive, accountable and sustainable results

Across these discussions, four key themes consistently emerged:

- **Strengthening participation and moving towards partnership.** There was a clear emphasis on moving beyond consultation towards more structured and sustained partnerships with civil society. This includes earlier and more systematic engagement in project design, while ensuring that the civic space enables meaningful participation and accountability.

- **Inclusion, gender equality and human capital.** Discussions highlighted the importance of embedding inclusion, including gender equality and human capital priorities, across the Bank's operations. Ensuring that projects respond to the needs of diverse and often marginalised groups – as well as improve access, affordability and participation – was a recurring theme.

- **Resilience in crisis and conflict.** The role of civil society in supporting resilience and recovery featured prominently, particularly in relation to Ukraine and other conflict-affected areas. Discussions underscored the value of civil society's local knowledge, ability to deliver and role in ensuring transparency and accountability in complex environments.

- **Green transition and sustainable development.** Environmental sustainability and the green transition were also a key focus, including how investments support low-carbon, climate-resilient development. Civil society was highlighted as an important partner in supporting implementation and strengthening accountability in this area.

In addition to these exchanges, the Civil Society Programme featured dedicated sessions on accountability and evaluation, including the **Independent Project Accountability Mechanism (IPAM)** panel, "Strengthening accountability – lessons learned, benchmarks and the future", and the **Independent Evaluation Department (IEvD)** panel, "How evaluation supports transition to resilient and inclusive economies". These panels contributed further to discussions on transparency, institutional learning and effectiveness.

MEDIA CORNER

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

EBRD PHOTOS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

EBRD LIVESTREAMS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

RIGA 2026

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAMME

From volatility to resilience: civil society as a catalyst for impact

This year's open panel brought together voices from across the EBRD ecosystem – senior management, civil society and government – for a conversation grounded in real-world experience and urgency. Drawing on lessons from Ukraine, panellists reflected on how civil society was not only responding to crisis, but also actively shaping more resilient, inclusive and effective solutions on the ground. The discussion highlighted a clear shift from viewing civil society as a stakeholder to recognising it as a partner in delivering impact.

Moderated by Lorenzo Ciari, Director for Impact at the EBRD, the panel featured Nadia Petkova, EBRD Managing Director for Impact and Partnerships; Oksana Filonenko, Head of the Free People Employment Center in Ukraine; Viktor Liakh, President of the East Europe Foundation; and Liga Kļaviņa, Deputy State Secretary on Financial Policy Issues at the Ministry of Finance of Latvia, Alternate Governor for Latvia at the EBRD and the World Bank Group, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Nordic Investment Bank

Key takeaways from the discussion:

- **Civil society is a core partner in delivering impact, not just a stakeholder.** Across the EBRD's operations, engagement is shifting from consultation to co-creation and co-delivery, with civil society contributing to strategy design, project implementation and accountability. This more systematic, earlier engagement is strengthening the relevance, credibility and impact of the Bank's work.

- **Partnerships with civil society are driving systemic change, not just service delivery.** Working with institutions and the private sector, CSOs are helping to embed solutions into core systems – from labour market integration to organisational practices. This moves the focus beyond supporting individuals to achieving sustainable, long-term change at scale.

- **In Ukraine, this partnership is essential to recovery and resilience.** In a context of war and disruption, civil society brings local knowledge, trust and real-time insight that institutions cannot replicate. This enables more inclusive and effective responses that support areas such as veteran reintegration, gender inclusion and community resilience.

- **Strong institutions, trust and structured engagement are key to success.** Experience in Ukraine and Latvia shows that sustainable outcomes depend on embedding civil society into decision-making through legal frameworks, structured dialogue and mature partnerships. When combined with high levels of public trust and local capacity, this enables innovation, accountability and more resilient policies.

REPLAY THE SESSION

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CSO PROGRAMME

We look forward to welcoming you to Egypt in 2027!

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Green Cities at 10: marking a decade of impact

EBRD Green Cities, the Bank's flagship urban programme, is this year marking its 10th anniversary, highlighting a decade of supporting cities in becoming cleaner, more resilient and more sustainable.

Over the past 10 years, the programme has expanded to include 60 cities across three continents, helping to improve air quality, reduce emissions and raise living standards for more than 80 million people.

The anniversary was marked by the Green Cities Mayors' Meeting 2026, which brought together city leaders, partners and experts to reflect on lessons learned and discuss the next phase of urban climate action.

Discussions focused on how cities could move from planning to delivery, supported by investment, policy support and collaboration with stakeholders.

Topics covered electrification, cleaner energy, waste and water management, as well as emerging challenges such as heat stress and the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in urban resilience.

Several key insights stood out from the sessions:

- **Cities lead the transition:** EBRD Green Cities proves that cities can drive impactful, tailored climate action; there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but shared lessons accelerate progress across the network.

- **Beyond financing:** combining investment with strategy (such as a Green City Action Plan) and stakeholder engagement is key to moving from planning to delivery at scale.
- **Relevance in a changing world:** in a context of climate and geopolitical pressures, flexible, fast and collaborative approaches are more crucial than ever.

New strategies: strengthening economic governance, inclusion and human capital

The EBRD recently launched two major strategic frameworks – the inaugural Economic Governance Strategy and the new Gender Equality and Human Capital Strategy – reinforcing its commitment to inclusive, transparent and sustainable development.

The **Economic Governance Strategy,** the first of its kind for the Bank, sets out a structured approach to strengthening economic governance across its countries of operation. It focuses on supporting reforms that enhance transparency, accountability and institutional effectiveness, while helping to create an enabling environment for sustainable investment and growth.

A central element of the strategy is the shift from standalone policy dialogue towards more integrated and operational approaches, linking investment, reform and capacity building. This includes the development of Economic Governance Action Plans and Sector Reform Roadmaps, designed to embed governance improvements across key sectors and projects.

Complementing this, the **Gender Equality and Human Capital Strategy** places greater emphasis on improving access to economic opportunities, skills and employment. It builds on the Bank's existing work on equality of opportunity, with a stronger focus on what this work achieves in practice and how successful approaches can be expanded across sectors and regions

Together, the two strategies reflect a broader shift towards linking economic governance, inclusion and human capital development. By strengthening institutions and expanding access to opportunities, the Bank aims to enhance resilience, support long-term economic transformation, and ensure that the benefits of investment are more widely shared.

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY

OVERVIEW OF CSE ACTIVITY

As of 30 June 2026, the CSE team had held the following activities:

5	country/sector strategy consultation meetings
7	presidential CSO meetings
5	Board meetings with CSOs

LOOKING AHEAD

- The consultation on the draft country strategy for Montenegro runs until 21 August.
- Our current and upcoming country and sector strategies will be available on our dedicated consultation page.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Review our open consultations

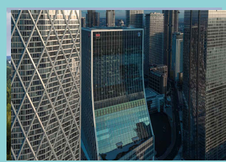
ACCESS PROJECT INFORMATION

EBRD PUBLICATIONS

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS JUNE 2026

EBRD APPROACH TO FRAGILITY

THE EBRD'S NEW DIGITAL APPROACH



EBRD SETS OUT NEW APPROACH TO FINANCIAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT

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