

EBRD-CSO Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with the EBRD



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development



April – June 2019

Welcome to the CSO Newsletter

In this issue we report back from the Civil Society Programme 2019, which was held from 8 to 9 May in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as part of the 28th EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum. We also give you a snapshot of the upcoming EBRD strategies and policies, the Board of Directors' visit to Morocco, and general Civil Society Engagement Unit news from this quarter. And we bring you the latest news about the Bank's dialogue with CSOs on strategies, recent projects and initiatives.

56

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[www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/
civil-society/news-and-events](http://www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/civil-society/news-and-events)

An insight into the 2019 Civil Society Programme

In the spirit of this year's Annual Meeting theme "Connecting Economies for Stronger Growth", we tried to break down silos between civil society organisations (CSOs), business and government by putting into action an integrated and inclusive Civil Society Programme. This took place from 8 to 9 May in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the 28th EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum.

Record participation

A record number of 184 CSO representatives attended the Programme. This was the highest attendance since the idea for a dedicated civil society programme was first initiated in the context of the EBRD Annual Meeting in 2000. Participants attended from 35 countries, two-thirds of whom were from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans. As the EBRD is the region's largest investor, we particularly appreciated the turnout.

Why did we put so much effort into the organisation of the Civil Society Programme?

Civil society organisations are not only key stakeholders who contribute to the Bank's mandate, they are also some of our most valuable partners. They play a crucial role in translating global agendas into national priorities, working through networks and with their members. They advise us on their areas of expertise and on local circumstances, alert us when a project is not going the way it should, and make an impact in their communities together with us. We aimed to design a programme that reflects the major issues of interest of civil society's engagement with the Bank in 2019 and beyond.

Strategies, policies, projects and more

The 2019 Civil Society Programme provided a platform for dialogue about the upcoming revision of sectoral strategies, such as those for transport and for property and tourism. It was also

an opportunity to discuss the newly approved Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure Sector Strategy and to exchange views about the participatory processes that underpin the Green Cities Framework across the EBRD regions. The Programme also hosted the launch of the new good governance policies during a dedicated event opened by the EBRD President. EBRD staff were also available for in-depth discussions about projects in various sectors, including energy and natural resources.

Discussion panels

The 2019 Civil Society Programme featured four multi-stakeholder panels during which CSOs discussed with representatives of businesses, governments, the EBRD and other international organisations the role of civil society in promoting:

- impact investing to bridge the trade-off between financial returns and social and environmental impact
- just transition towards low-carbon, inclusive and resilient economies in the Western Balkans and beyond
- equal access to employment and training as well as inclusive opportunities for entrepreneurs



- more transparent public procurement processes.

The Programme also featured a “Coffee with FAIRR” (Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return Initiative), which was open to all participants of the Annual Meeting

and Business Forum. We discussed the need for better antibiotics management, with a view to preventing damage to the profitability and viability of companies, as well as negative impacts on complex ecosystems and conditions that are critical to global food security.



Meeting with the EBRD President and the Board of Directors

The EBRD President and the Board of Directors had two dedicated meetings with civil society organisations to discuss challenges in relation to the working environment in the economies where the EBRD invests, the implementation of institutional strategies and policies and concerns about the environmental and social impacts of specific EBRD projects.

CSOs raised concerns relating to political conditions in certain EBRD recipient countries and application of the Bank's Article 1 mandate; the shrinking space for civil society, and retaliation against stakeholders; governance, integrity and transparency issues in the Bank's engagement with its clients; and climate and energy-related issues, with a particular emphasis on the Western Balkans and the Caucasus.

CSO exhibition ‘Connecting for solutions’

Our CSO exhibition ‘Connecting for solutions’, hosted in collaboration with the Paris Peace Forum, attracted a lot of attention among Annual Meeting participants. Over two days, 13 CSOs from six countries presented solutions to global and regional challenges, including training disadvantaged women in traditional handicrafts and assessing the water risks in investors' portfolios.

All the exhibitors participated pro-bono and we would like to take the opportunity to thank them once again for their participation. Exhibitors included Embark, Synopia, Bhcrafts, the Centre for Civil Society Promotion, the Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return Initiative, the Mozaik Foundation, the National Alliance for Local Economic Development, Needs Map, the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), Save the Children International (Bosnia and Herzegovina), SHURA Energy Transition Center, Transparency International Ukraine and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Civil Society Consultation Hub

This year's Programme also featured the launch of the [Civil Society Consultation Hub](#). The Consultation Hub provides a platform for feedback on upcoming consultations about EBRD policies and about country and sector strategies.



Thank you all for making the 2019 EBRD Civil Society Programme a success. We look forward to welcoming you again in 2020.

Feedback

For any suggestions on how to improve the EBRD Civil Society Programme, send us an email at cso@ebrd.com. We welcome your views and feedback.

DIALOGUE

Dialogue on country strategies and more

Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure Strategy

The EBRD Board of Directors approved the new Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure Sector Strategy for 2019-24 on 25 April 2019. The Bank organised four public consultation meetings that took place in Istanbul, Kiev, Belgrade and London. One of the changes to the strategy that resulted from this consultation process was adding “integrity risks” to the key sector drivers to address concerns about corruption. Please visit the [EBRD strategies and policies](#) page to access the final strategy and full report on public comments.

Watch the video that talks about the Bank’s achievements and ambitions in the MEI sector here: <http://www.ebrd.com/news/video/preparing-cities-for-the-future.html>



The Bank approves country strategy for North Macedonia

On 22 May the EBRD Board of Directors approved the country strategy for North Macedonia, which will provide the strategic directions for the Bank’s investments and technical cooperation for the period 2019-23. In preparation for the strategy development a consultation meeting with civil society representatives took place on 17 July 2018 in Skopje.

Board of Directors meets with civil society representatives in Morocco

On the occasion of the first EBRD Board of Directors’ visit to Morocco, a meeting with representatives of civil society took place in Casablanca on 25 June 2019. A workshop was held in which experts from civil society organisations discussed a range of issues including youth entrepreneurship, women’s economic empowerment, and support for SMEs working on renewable energy.



EBRD starts review process of Property and Tourism Sector Strategy

The EBRD has started reviewing its Property and Tourism Sector Strategy 2020-24, which will guide the Bank’s investments in the sector. The main axes of the Strategy have been identified as follows:

1. Providing financing to private sector players to facilitate the development of sustainable and resilient real-estate projects; supporting the development of a green and inclusive tourism industry as well as supporting an urban regeneration model that maximises resource efficiency and encourages inclusivity.
2. Partnering with public institutions (such as United Nations World Trade Organization and the Smithsonian Institution) in order to implement policy dialogue that will promote the Bank’s transition goals.
3. Promoting higher standards of operations, governance and sector-wide collaboration through deployment of donor technical co-operation funds.

The draft Strategy is currently available to view on both the [EBRD website](#) and the [Consultation Hub](#), while consultation meetings will be tentatively organised in September (with locations to be confirmed).

Launch of new good governance policies

On 9 May the EBRD unveiled its good governance policies at the EBRD Annual Meeting in Sarajevo. The launch was hosted by the EBRD Civil Society Programme to highlight the fundamental role played by civil society in the review process.

The three policies represent the fundamental governance policies of the Bank. They outline the Bank’s commitments in these areas while promoting better understanding of the EBRD’s procedures and operations.

The Environmental and Social Policy guides the EBRD’s commitment to promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development in all investment and technical cooperation activities. The Access to Information Policy translates the Bank’s commitment to enhancing the transparency of its activities through information disclosure. The Project Accountability Policy outlines how environmental, social and transparency concerns regarding EBRD projects can be independently reviewed and addressed. The latter will be implemented by the Independent Project Accountability Mechanism.

Public consultations on the draft policies were conducted in Almaty, Belgrade, Cairo, Casablanca, Istanbul, Kiev, London and Tbilisi with outreach to civil society organisations, clients, other international financial institutions and international organisations. Over 500 EBRD stakeholders provided feedback.

The policies are expected to take effect from 1 January 2020. Operational procedures are being developed to ensure a smooth implementation of the new policies.

IN BRIEF



EBRD starts review process of Transport Sector Strategy

The EBRD has started the review of its Transport Sector Strategy, which will provide the strategic objectives for the period 2020-24. The Strategy will cover infrastructure and services for all non-urban transport modes in the economies where the Bank invests, taking into account specific investment needs and transition gaps, including the following:

- Roads: fleet, motorways, national, regional, local and rural.
- Railways: track, signalling, stations, rolling stock.
- Maritime: ports, inland waterways, shipyards, fleet.
- Aviation: airports, air navigation, airlines.
- Intermodal and logistics: logistics and intermodal platforms including fleets.

The draft [Transport Sector Strategy](#) was disclosed at the beginning of July. [Comments and suggestions](#) can be submitted either via email to TransportStrategy@ebrd.com or via the newly launched [EBRD Consultation Hub](#) by 6 September 2019. Please note that while all comments will be acknowledged by email, responses will be provided as part of the Report on Public Comments.

Consultation meetings were held as follows:

- Istanbul: 25 July
- Belgrade: 26 July
- Cairo: 29 July

Consultation Hub

The EBRD is working to encourage civil society organisations and members of the public to share their views on our work. To keep up with other international financial institutions it was proposed that we develop a forum to manage feedback on upcoming EBRD policies and strategies. Therefore the [Consultation Hub](#) has been developed to provide a platform for our stakeholders to comment on the EBRD's proposed new institutional and operational policies and strategies. The Consultation Hub is accessible via the [EBRD's CSO website](#). Please register and comment. We welcome your views and feedback.

Key dates and contacts

Country strategies: public comment periods

Armenia	Sept – Nov 2019
Bulgaria	Oct – Dec 2019
Albania	Nov – Dec 2019
Lebanon	Dec 2019

To have your say on strategies visit: www.ebrd.com/strategies-and-policies/have-your-say.html

Contacts

Civil Society Engagement Unit

Tel: +44 20 7338 7982
Email: csu@ebrd.com

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

One Exchange Square
London EC2A 2JN
United Kingdom
www.ebrd.com

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