



2021

Welcome
to the CSO
Newsletter

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Foreword

This newsletter reaches you as the world prepares for the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow. While we still do not know how the Covid-19 pandemic will impact the event itself, we know for certain that it will be a crucial meeting. The debate has moved on from whether we need to do anything about global heating to the realisation that radical action is no longer an option but a necessity.

As more and more countries adopt increasingly ambitious goals towards net-zero emissions, the multilateral development banks (MDBs), too, have a major role to play. We must lead by example and act as a catalyst, providing know-how and mobilising finance. The EBRD was established in 1991 to support the transition to a private sector-based market economy. Thirty years on, we seek to crowd in the private sector and make it a central part of the transition to a green economy.

This is our next big task and it will be no less challenging than the economic transition we have championed over the last 30 years. Civil society will again play a major role by articulating concerns as well as by proposing solutions. As you will see in this newsletter, EBRD President Odile Renaud-Basso, who joined the Bank in 2020, has started a very ambitious course of civil society engagement, seeking our partners' counsel as much as listening to their contributions.

This engagement is in the DNA of the EBRD and we are pleased to report today on our most recent activities, of which the Annual Meeting at the end of June and early July was undoubtedly a highlight. In many ways, the Meeting paved the way for a very busy fourth quarter of 2021, with the approaching finalisation of a number of significant country and sector strategies.

In policy engagement, as well as in investment projects, we are guided by the conviction that civil society's contribution makes our activities better. In this spirit, I am pleased to draw your attention to this overview of our latest activities.



Olena Koval

EBRD Head of
Civil Society
Engagement

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

The Civil Society Programme during the EBRD's 2021 Annual Meeting

The 2021 Civil Society Programme took place virtually on 28-29 June 2021, as part of the EBRD's Annual Meeting. In this 30th anniversary year for the Bank, the Programme attracted a record number of more than 200 civil society representatives.

The Programme consisted of two dedicated sessions between civil society representatives, the Board of Directors and the EBRD President, an open panel focusing on private-sector partnerships and a special session on the first year of implementing the Bank's Independent Project Accountability Policy (IPAM).

During the meetings with the Board and the EBRD President, Odile Renaud-Basso, civil society representatives had the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue and present issues of concern as well as to make recommendations on the Bank's key strategic themes and operations. The Board and President recognised the importance of working together with civil society organisations (CSOs) to achieve greater impact.

The 2021 Civil Society Programme also featured a multi-stakeholder panel dedicated to building resilience through private-sector partnerships. The panel looked into how deeper coordination between multiple players could foster new opportunities for growth and deliver a bigger impact in the civic space. Panellists from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, The Coca-Cola Company and Save the Children, as well as the EBRD, had an insightful discussion focusing on the following key points.

The response to Covid-19 brought with it a noticeable shift towards an increased state role in managing economic affairs and supporting growth and employment. Civil society organisations have a crucial role to play, too. They fill in at the local level where the state and the market are

unable to support local communities with essential services, and ensure that state and private-sector entities are held to high standards of transparency and good governance.

CSOs are likely to become a crucial source of accountability but also to work in partnership with the state and business to promote a sustainable, inclusive and climate-friendly future. Development finance institutions, including the EBRD, are instrumental in facilitating CSO engagement and promoting far-reaching stakeholder participation.

Partnerships have become a central feature of the Bank's delivery model.

We strive to be more conscious of how we can boost impact, in order to create healthy and vibrant societies through collaboration. To this end, we look for ways to develop and expand our partnerships so that we can scale up impact, enhance governance, combat climate change, and address inequality, inclusion and digitalisation, to name just a few priorities.

Lastly, the civil society programme included a special session on the EBRD's Independent Project Accountability Mechanism. Through the lens of IPAM casework, this panel reviewed the first year of implementing the mechanism. Both case requesters and IPAM staff had the opportunity to share their insights, based on experiences of three active cases, in order to foster discussion among attendees. In July, IPAM also published its first annual report, providing detailed information on the new mechanism.

Read the IPAM Annual Report 2020



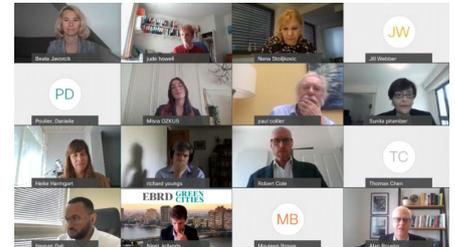
Bringing civil society back in – transition after the pandemic

The ultimate goal of the Bank is to improve the lives of all citizens in the EBRD regions. “We invest in changing lives”, and we do this either through direct investment, policy dialogue and advisory work, or indirect engagement, namely by establishing transition mechanisms that support inclusion and economic growth.

For this reason, and to understand the environment in which the EBRD operates, it is vital that we engage with CSOs. With this in mind, the Civil Society Engagement Unit organised a high-level event on fostering the role of CSOs in policy, titled “Transition after the pandemic: bringing civil society back in”. The event focused on how to build more inclusive and vibrant societies, where civil society serves as a crucial ‘third pillar’ that balances the role of the state and the private sector in sustaining market economies. It also looked at how the EBRD can support transition in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Key takeaways from the event:

- The EBRD will ensure that it engages with governments, the private sector and civil society representatives of the people whose lives we seek to change.
- We aim to work in partnership with civic organisations who share our objective of bringing better, cleaner and greener employment opportunities to communities that depend on highly carbon-intensive industries, to enhance entrepreneurship opportunities and to retrain and reskill workers whose current skills are “stranded”.
- Broad engagement with stakeholders is critical if we are to ensure that countries commit to ambitious emission-reduction targets and act in response to climate change. We aim to help economies transition to net-zero carbon emissions.



Another tool that the EBRD uses to enhance capacity in community-based organisations is the Civil Society Capacity Enhancement Framework. The Framework covers four key areas, notably, sustainable energy and resources, economic inclusion, good governance and transparency, and digitalisation. This tool encourages collaboration among the EBRD’s civil society stakeholders (for instance, young people, groups focused on disability and gender, the rural population, local authorities, small and medium-sized enterprises, and others). At the same time, the EBRD shares its activities and concerns with civil society stakeholders and encourages them to provide feedback and participate.

The EBRD: an MDB looking to do more

In the summer, Alan Rousso, Managing Director for External Relations and Partnerships, wrote for Alliance magazine. Here, we summarise a few key points from the article.



The only multilateral development bank based in the UK, the EBRD stands out among its peers in the MDB community for a number of reasons. For the last 30 years, the uniqueness of the EBRD has stemmed from – among other factors – the Bank’s application of its mandate to foster transition to market economies in countries applying the principles of multiparty democracy and pluralism.

For the EBRD, collaborative partnerships are a key element of transformational change, and the business model it follows combines investment, policy dialogue and technical assistance. The global changes that are taking place have made the Bank adjust its policies and expand its portfolio, building climate

resilience, environmental sustainability and inclusive growth and accelerating the digital transition.

Accordingly, the EBRD’s Private Sector Partnerships team has been actively engaging with the philanthropic community over the last three years, aiming to identify the needs and priorities of EBRD economies and clients, enhance governance, and address inequality and digitalisation, as well as other issues.

Read the full article



HIGHLIGHTS IN POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Collaborating with civil society to create Jordan's first job portal dedicated to tourism and hospitality sector



Supporting an inclusive and green recovery from Covid-19 is at the core of our work. An EBRD project to support high-quality and inclusive employment in Jordan's restaurant industry successfully illustrates how the Bank interacts with and supports civil society to achieve a recovery that leaves no-one behind.

In partnership with the Jordanian Restaurant Association, we questioned how the Jordanian labour force and the tourism and hospitality sector should look in the post-Covid-19 era. Our answer was a workforce with stronger participation by underrepresented communities – especially women, young people and refugees – and companies that have adopted an inclusive recruitment process.

The EBRD therefore created a dedicated web portal in early 2021 to connect jobseekers with employers. The initiative aimed to provide a platform on which jobseekers – including all underrepresented groups – can apply for jobs and be trained. The portal, Ahlan.jobs, is Jordan's first online jobs platform dedicated to the tourism and hospitality sector. It includes not only vacancies and candidate profiles, but also online training on popular topics such as essential management skills, developing your workforce and coaching.

Visit [Ahlan.jobs](https://ahlan.jobs)



Digital Civil Society Programme in Turkey

In early 2021, the EBRD launched its first project under the Digital Civil Society Programme in Turkey.

The Bank has collaborated with civil society representatives in its regions to identify specific areas where the EBRD can support the resilience and capacity-building of CSOs and affected communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Supporting the digital transformation of the civil society sector was identified as a critical area.

In Turkey, the EBRD's Civil Society Engagement Unit is piloting a Digital Civil Society Programme that aims to facilitate a process of change for CSOs, using digital transformation to increase their resilience and help them adapt to the 'new reality'.

The Programme assesses the digital needs of selected organisations, provides them with core funding and matches each with experienced digital mentors. With this support, the mentees will develop their organisations' digital strategies to transform the way they work.

The strategies and related actions are tailor-made to address the specific challenges that each CSO faces.

Moreover, the Programme includes opportunities for participating CSOs to network and exchange knowledge and experience.

Read more about the programme



CONSULTATIONS

The first half of the year was busy in terms of sector consultations.

Over the summer, we held a public consultation with civil society on the EBRD's proposed methodology for alignment with the Paris Agreement, as well as on the Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-25 and the Equality of Opportunity Strategy 2021-25.

Paris
alignment
methodology



Gender
equality
strategy
2021-25



The updated Paris alignment methodology will also include sector-specific guidance on how to determine whether a project qualifies as being "aligned". In early 2022, other types of finance will be added to the methodology.

The two new strategies are milestones, introducing fresh areas of engagement for the Bank and setting ambitious targets for the next five years.

Lastly, in September, the EBRD organised a virtual consultation with CSO representatives to discuss its first position paper on the Bank's approach to digitalisation. The EBRD focuses on digital in relation to its six transition qualities while also trying to mitigate the risks that digitalisation can bring.

Position
paper on
digitalisation



The EBRD's
transition
qualities



The updated Paris alignment methodology, the two new strategies and the first position paper on accelerating digitalisation across our regions will be publicly available by the end of the year.

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IN BRIEF

By October 2021, the Civil Society Engagement team had held 15 consultations on country or sector strategies, organised 9 meetings between civil society representatives and the EBRD President Odile Renaud-Basso and arranged 6 meetings between Board members and CSOs, including Board country visits.

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Consultations on country
or sector strategies

Meetings between CSOs
and the EBRD President

HAVE YOUR SAY

The EBRD is reviewing its Financial Institutions Strategy. Send us your comments by 31 October 2021. The draft strategy – as well as various other policies and strategies – are open for public consultation.

Review all
our open
consultations



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