

# EBRD-CSO Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with the EBRD



Welcome to the  
CSO Newsletter

*Annual  
Meeting  
Edition*

May 2023

## Foreword

**Dear CSOs partners,**

It was our pleasure to welcome you to the 2023 EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in May. The Civil Society Programme attracted an impressive 125 civil society representatives from 32 countries.

We were delighted to meet those of you attending in person, be it at our panel discussions or our CSO welcome reception at the beginning of the first day.

This year's open panel focused on promoting civil society resilience in Central Asia. We also hosted the EBRD Evaluation department's panel on "Improving resilience in times of crises", as well as an Independent Project Accountability Mechanism (IPAM) session on "Remedy and sustainability through conflict resolution".

The meetings with the EBRD Board of Directors, the EBRD President and civil society representatives allowed for constructive dialogue, giving you the chance to present issues of concern and make recommendations to us on key strategic themes and operations.

This year we also held two special sessions – one to present the EBRD's new strategic approach to civil society engagement for the next five years, and the other to launch the Pilot CSO Steering Committee as part of this approach



In this special edition of the CSO newsletter, we share key highlights from our Civil Society Programme in Samarkand. We found it a useful and thought-provoking experience, and we hope to see you at our 2024 Annual Meeting in Armenia.

In the meantime we will be back with the next regular edition of the newsletter in July.

Happy reading!

The CSE team

# CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAMME

## Promoting civil society resilience in Central Asia

Our open panel featured a multi-stakeholder discussion focused on the crucial role that civil society plays in building resilient and prosperous societies in Central Asia. The event included an opening keynote speech by our Vice-President of Policy and Partnerships, Mark Bowman, on promoting civil society resilience in Central Asia.

Members of the panel included: Aziza Umarova, Coordinator of the Delivery Unit at the Agency for Strategic Reforms; Barbara Rambousek, Director for Gender and Economic Inclusion at the EBRD; Ashita Mittal, UNODC Regional Representative to Central Asia; Tolekan Ismailova, Director of human rights movement Bir Duino; and Vadim Ni, Chairman of the Board for the Socio-Ecological Fund.



### Key takeaways from the panel

- **Several challenges remain in the region.** Climate change, conflict, recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, corruption and weak governance are affecting various parts of Central Asia. It is important that civil society partners are engaged in developing good governance practices, as well as in creating anti-corruption measures. Therefore, we need to ensure that resources go towards legislative reforms, and that the voices of people and vulnerable groups are heard in the decision-making process.
- **Women have a huge role to play in building economic resilience.** They have ingenuity and can understand the needs of society. We need legal environments that enable women to enter the workforce, allow them to work within different sectors and provide them with access to the right skills.
- **Development policies need a human-rights- based approach.** This should not just be about formal reporting by governments; it should also involve the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) principals. This way, everyone will know what has been done, where the funding is going and where we can get information about the results and outcomes of development policies and projects. This information should also be common knowledge, easily accessible to all, and customisable to the local context of each country.
- **There is also a need to experiment.** We know the vital role civic space has in promoting and protecting our values, including bringing democracy to life, advocating for public interest, and encouraging citizen participation. We need to have citizens as part of the participatory monitoring mechanisms to also enhance local innovation and develop solutions on the ground.



**Replay the session**



# CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAMME



## A new strategic approach to civil society engagement

In Samarkand we presented the objectives of our new EBRD Strategic Approach to civil society engagement for the next five years (2023-28).

The strategy is under development and subject to internal consultations.

With this strategy we are looking to transform how we engage with civil society, from risk mitigation to impact generation, and to advance civil society engagement across the Bank's operations by:

- supporting and engaging with civil society via meaningful mechanisms
- responding to global crises through civil society engagement
- protecting and promoting civic space
- strengthening the Bank's internal incentives for civil society engagement, effectiveness, and accountability.

This session served as an early opportunity to hear feedback from CSOs on the new approach. We will be providing more information about this and the consultation process in the coming months.

## Pilot CSO Steering Committee launched



We also launched our Pilot CSO Steering Committee as part of our new approach to civil society engagement.

The Steering Committee aims to create an additional platform for a two-way collaboration between the Bank and civil society to achieve common goals. Each cycle of the Committee will last two years, and we will be inviting representatives from CSOs from across the EBRD regions to put themselves forward for election to the Committee.

We are planning to open the election process in June, so please contact us if you would like to be notified once the application process starts.

We will provide more information in the summer



To join the Strategic Approach consultation and participate to the selection process for the CSO Steering Committee, email us at: [cso@ebrd.com](mailto:cso@ebrd.com)



# SPECIAL SESSIONS



The 2023 CSO Programme featured a session on the Bank's Independent Project Accountability Mechanism (IPAM), entitled "Remedy and sustainability through conflict resolution". The Bank's Chief Accountability Officer, Victoria Marquez Mees, gave an interesting insight into how the EBRD handles complaints about environmental, social and disclosure matters related to its investments. She underlined the importance of understanding the context of any problem to identify the root causes, and that talking and listening to people on the ground was key. During the session, the new IPAM 2022 Annual report was also launched.



At the Evaluation Department session, we introduced attendees to the independent evaluation functions at the EBRD and its role in ensuring accountability and learning at the Bank. We also presented the findings of the EBRD Annual Evaluation Review for 2022.

**Read the IPAM  
2022 Annual  
Report**



**Read the Annual  
Evaluation  
Report 2022**



# MEDIA CORNER

**VIDEO  
HIGHLIGHTS OF  
THE 2023 ANNUAL  
MEETING**



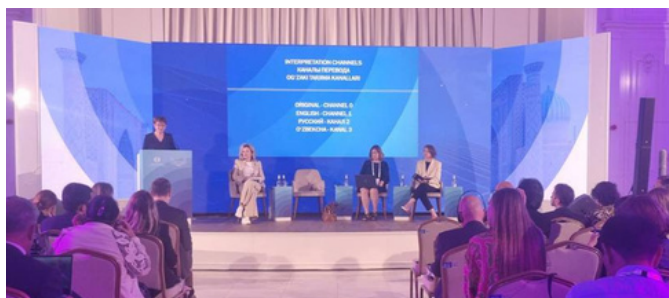
**EBRD PHOTOS  
FROM THE  
ANNUAL MEETING**



**EBRD  
LIVESTREAMS  
FROM THE  
ANNUAL MEETING**



# OTHER HIGHLIGHTS



**We look forward to  
welcoming you in  
Armenia in 2024!**

## Contacts

### Civil Society Engagement

Tel: +44 20 7338 7982

Email: [cs@ebrd.com](mailto:cs@ebrd.com)

### European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Five Bank Street  
London E14 4BG,  
United Kingdom  
[www.ebrd.com](http://www.ebrd.com)

## Find us on social media



[www.youtube.com/ebrdte](http://www.youtube.com/ebrdte)

[www.facebook.com/ebrdhq](http://www.facebook.com/ebrdhq)

[www.twitter.com/ebrd](http://www.twitter.com/ebrd)

[www.linkedin.com/company/ebrd](http://www.linkedin.com/company/ebrd)

[www.instagram.com/ebrd\\_official](http://www.instagram.com/ebrd_official)

[www.flickr.com/photos/ebrd](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ebrd)