

## 5. Social impact

### Economic inclusion

The EBRD works with the private sector, governments and municipalities to address inequality in line with the Bank's [Economic Inclusion Strategy](#). It supports the economic inclusion of all people – whatever their gender, place of birth, socio-economic background or age.

To this end, the Bank offers high-quality local training, improved access to finance, employment opportunities and the promotion of equitable access to fundamental services to help clients across all sectors. This unique approach – working together with the private sector to unleash the potential of all members of society – has made the EBRD a key partner for economic inclusion in many of the 38 economies in which it invests.

#### Key highlights in figures

From 2019 to 2020:	Since 2017:
An increase of 23.7 per cent in inclusive TI projects and 14.8 per cent for gender projects.	An increase of 51.6 per cent in inclusive TI projects and 121.4 per cent for gender projects.

Most of the Bank's work on inclusion in 2020 has focused on its Covid-19 response, as highlighted by the following case studies.

#### Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on employment policy



##### Western Balkans

The joint regional EBRD and International Labour Organization (ILO) Task Force assessed the impact of Covid-19 on employment and advised Western Balkans countries on appropriate policy responses. North Macedonia has since relaxed the eligibility criteria for unemployment benefit.<sup>4</sup> Recommendations also included supporting those most in need in Serbia<sup>5</sup> and a redesign of internship schemes targeting young graduates in Montenegro.<sup>6</sup>

**Amount:** €27,000

**Donors:** Supported by the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund



#### Supporting the tourism sector



##### Jordan

The EBRD, the Sector Skills Council and the tourism ministry developed standard operating procedures to [support the tourism sector](#) through the Covid-19 crisis. These included health and safety regulations and were made into an internationally accredited online training programme that more than 8,000 people have accessed.

**Amount:** €290,000

**Donors:** Supported by the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund



#### Care economy

##### Turkey

The EBRD signed a loan with the private developer of the Başakşehir Çam ve Sakura City Hospital in Istanbul to support the Covid-19 response. The project offers technical employment opportunities to women and a gender audit of hospital facilities to promote women's access to healthcare services. A gender-responsive healthcare infrastructure will support healthcare workers who are at greater risk of gender-based violence.

**Amount:** €74,950

**Donors:** Supported by the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund



<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2020/ebrd-and-ilo-advise-north-macedonia-on-labour-market-after-coronavirus.html>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.ebrd.com/documents/admin/covid19-and-the-world-of-work-rapid-assessment-of-the-employment-impacts-and-policy-responses-in-serbia.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2020/ebrdilo-advise-montenegro-on-labour-market-policies-after-coronavirus.html>

In 2020, the Bank also focused on strengthening institutions to improve access to finance for women's entrepreneurship in Central Asia and the southern and eastern Mediterranean region. The EBRD is leading policy dialogue in these regions to bolster gender-intelligent policies and regulations and to break down the financial and non-financial barriers affecting women entrepreneurs. Highlights include:

- In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, an inter-agency task force was created to guide the development and implementation of a gender-responsive SME Development Strategy. It also conducted a Gender Responsive Investment Climate Assessment – an assessment of how the country's legislative and regulatory frameworks affect women entrepreneurs.
- In **Tajikistan**, the EBRD contributed to a review of policies impacting women entrepreneurs that led to new tax incentives and a streamlined business registration process for women entrepreneurs working from home.
- Policy engagement is being extended to Egypt and Morocco and aims to respond to the disproportionate pressures that women-led SMEs face in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.

## Human rights

In January 2020, the Bank's new Environmental and Social Policy (2019 ESP) and performance requirements came into effect, with resources aimed at rolling out new and updated guidance and tools to facilitate their implementation. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, resources had to be redirected to addressing the most pressing needs exacerbated by the crisis, such as responding to social and human rights risks.

### Covid-19 response

Three priority areas emerged as requiring immediate attention. The EBRD released a [short video with key messages and briefing notes](#) for clients to support their efforts in addressing the following areas:

- **Health and safety:** A workplace health and safety risk-assessment checklist was produced to help assess Covid-19 risks in the workplace.
- **Labour:** Guidance was produced on the protection of workers and their employment, engagement with workers and prevention of collective dismissals. Jointly with the IFC, guidance was also issued on addressing the disproportionate impacts on migrant workers, including women and supply-chain workers.
- **Stakeholder engagement and data protection:** Guidance was produced on information disclosure and developing Covid-19 engagement and communication plans, including appropriate social-distancing measures and data-protection requirements.

## Gender-based violence and harassment

Many have called gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) a shadow pandemic that has emerged during the Covid-19 crisis. The United Nations Population Fund estimates there were an additional 31 million incidents of GBV globally during the first six months of the pandemic alone. In July 2020, the EBRD launched a [major new report](#) on emerging good practice for addressing GBVH in the private sector. Co-produced with CDC Group and the IFC, the report sets out the overarching principles that must underpin all efforts by companies and investors to safely and effectively assess, prevent, monitor and respond to GBVH.

The Bank also introduced internal procedures defining requirements for GBVH risk screening, assessment and monitoring of investment projects. These are supported by reporting protocols for project-related allegations and incidents of GBVH and a legal requirement to report any GBVH incidents or allegations in projects. Designated GBVH focal points support the safe and ethical handling of reports. During the year, the Bank provided introductory GBVH training internally and held a [webinar](#) with the IFC and CDC for a large external audience.

### Human Rights Working Group

In 2020, the EBRD built on the 2019 ESP, which strengthened its commitment to respect human rights in line with international standards. The Bank also revised its risk-assessment methodology and E&S due diligence and monitoring tools in order to align internal processes with the new policy.

The EBRD established a cross-departmental **Human Rights Working Group** to put into practice the commitments in the new ESP. Its objective is to create a forum for Bank experts across departments to discuss challenges and solutions and to address stakeholder concerns and expectations on human rights issues. Supported by external human rights experts, the Bank has also developed internal human rights guidance to ensure human rights are firmly embedded in project E&S appraisals and monitoring.

### Other highlights

- A variety of technical cooperation and capacity-building projects were initiated during 2020 to support stakeholders in identifying and addressing human rights risks and social impacts in projects. These were adapted to address the new challenges that emerged during the pandemic. Examples included supporting agribusiness and infrastructure clients in Central Asia through an e-learning programme and toolbox to effectively manage labour risks in their core operations, as well as child labour and forced labour risks in their supply chains.
- New and ongoing partnerships included continued engagement through the Trade Union Communication Mechanism on project-related labour issues, close collaboration with the ILO on a Third-Party Monitoring programme in Uzbekistan, work with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Tajikistan on child-friendly infrastructure and a cooperation with Save the Children to address transport-project risks for children.

## Civil-society organisations

The EBRD recognises the importance of engaging with civil-society organisations (CSOs) to implement its transition mandate and build effective coalitions that address challenges faced by the economies in which it invests. Civil society contributes to the EBRD's work by:

- highlighting issues related to ESG challenges
- offering valuable technical expertise and insights to supplement the Bank's capabilities
- suggesting innovative approaches to and providing important perspectives on the EBRD's projects, policies and policy dialogue initiatives.

As part of the Bank's Solidarity Package to tackle the impacts of Covid-19, the EBRD maintained regular strategic dialogue with civil society over the course of the year. The Bank organised consultations and workshops to gather information on how the pandemic is affecting vulnerable groups and identified areas where the EBRD can support the resilience and capacity-building of CSOs through its [Civil Society Capacity Enhancement Framework](#).<sup>7</sup> Due to the pandemic, the latter were held online.

The EBRD's findings on the effects of Covid-19, informed by its digital engagement with CSOs throughout 2020, identified digital transformation and CSO digital capacity-building as fundamental to supporting local community resilience. The EBRD included this aim as a fourth and cross-cutting pillar of the EBRD's Civil Society Capacity Enhancement Framework. The Bank also launched the Digital Civil Society Programme to increase economies' resilience and adaptation to the new realities. The Programme will be piloted in Turkey and may be replicated in 2021.

Dialogue between the EBRD and its CSO partners prompted changes to the Bank's standard operations and practices. A new practice of online engagement with CSOs balances the need for broad participation with concerns over confidentiality and the possibility of reprisal. The Bank prepared guidelines on how to engage with CSO stakeholders safely and changed its own safety measures for digital consultations with civil society. This new practice will be utilised in 2021 to conduct public consultations with external stakeholders as a part of the EBRD Country Strategy adoption process.

Partnership agreements with NGOs, including Oxfam, Save the Children and the Open Contracting Partnership, and with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supported the implementation of joint projects.

The EBRD-Oxfam partnership aims to improve cooperation in economies where both organisations have a presence, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and West Bank and Gaza. It enhances their ability to deliver their mandate and objectives in line with SDG 17 (partnering for the SDGs). The EBRD and Oxfam also jointly manage two projects: stakeholder participation in solid-waste management in Jordan and enhancing refugee and local women's participation in business, civil society and local development in Turkey.

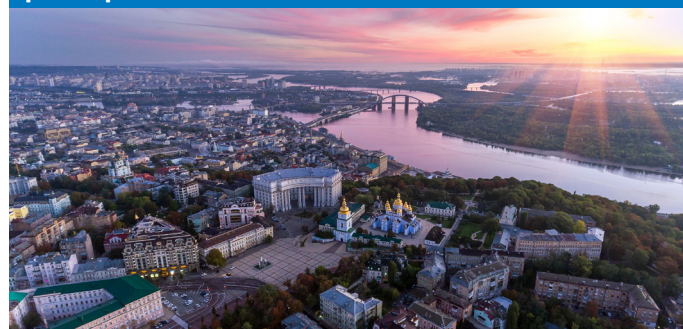
The EBRD-Save the Children partnership aims to support both institutions in developing inclusive and equitable skills and vocational training, gender equality and inclusive economic growth and effective and inclusive infrastructure development. In 2020, the institutions shared experience and knowledge on the nexus of climate change adaptation and gender and social inclusion. A project to raise awareness among children and communities on road and railway safety is also being designed.

In late 2020, the EBRD and the UNODC began a pilot project to support the implementation of Uzbekistan's 2018 Law on Public Control and to promote external and independent oversight with the aim of setting a benchmark for the Central Asian region.

### Highlights in 2020

- As a part of the Covid-19 response, the Bank successfully organised 19 online consultations reaching out to 220 CSO participants from more than 20 countries.
- Almost 70 CSOs representing 19 countries participated in this year's virtual meeting with the EBRD's Board of Directors.
- The Bank's Civil Society Capacity Enhancement Framework was adapted to the Covid-19 response. In 2020, it comprised 29 technical cooperation projects, totalling around €7 million, covering sustainable energy and resources, economic inclusion and good governance.

### Improving transparency and effectiveness of public procurement



#### Ukraine

In 2020, the EBRD finalised a capacity-building project for CSOs in Ukraine aimed at strengthening the monitoring role of civil society over public procurement. The project supported local organisations in Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi and Vinnytsia in monitoring local procurement in the areas of transport, construction, education and health.

**Impact:** 113 CSOs were trained and 12 local procurement procedures were monitored.

**Donors:** Ukraine Stabilisation and Sustainable Growth Multi-Donor Account



<sup>7</sup> The Civil Society Capacity Enhancement Framework is an instrument through which the Bank seeks to establish partnerships and provide support to a wide range of civil-society actors.



## Health and safety

The EBRD ramped up efforts to improve road traffic safety as part of the second United Nations Decade for Action on Road Safety. The Bank launched two online resources to support [SDG 3 target 6](#), which aims to halve all road traffic deaths by 2030, and [SDG 11 target 2](#), to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems. Two e-learning courses, the [Occupational Road Risk Toolkit](#) and the [Road Safety Engineering Course](#), were launched in 2020 and are gaining traction among clients and local consultants.

As part of the Bank's broader training remit, the EBRD is currently developing the online Asbestos Training for Building Managers course, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank. This is now [available](#) on the Bank's new E&S e-Learning Platform where a number of training courses will be accessible. The EBRD is working to ensure synergy between training opportunities and investment projects across a number of development banks.

Analysis of accident and incident data reported by clients to the Bank highlighted higher risks in the electrical distribution and rail sectors. In light of this, the EBRD offered remote video health and safety (H&S) training to an electrical distribution company in Lebanon. The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health [Managing Safely](#) training was attended by engineers and supervisors of Butec Utilities Services. The EBRD is planning further H&S training in 2021.

As part of the Bank's response to the Covid-19 crisis, the EBRD produced six videos in five languages covering key E&S messages and guidance between April and October. The videos, which shared key E&S messages for all clients, as well as other, more specific videos targeting safe working on construction sites, achieved significant interest across the EBRD regions:

- [support and guidance](#)
- [risk assessment](#)
- [cleaning](#)
- [alternative working arrangements](#)
- [social distancing](#)
- [mental health](#)

