

8. Health and safety



Road safety

The EBRD is committed to improving road safety in its regions of operation. The Bank's health and safety policy stipulates that all projects must identify, assess, monitor and control potential traffic and road-safety risks to workers and affected communities. In a boost to the EBRD's commitment to road safety, its President this year joined the Friends of the [United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety](#). The Bank will support the Special Envoy's mission by mobilising resources to further road safety initiatives and advocating for the promotion of inclusivity, youth engagement and gender equality in road-safety efforts.

Annual health and safety meeting

The EBRD took part in this year's development finance institution health and safety meeting in Manila. The meeting culminated in a joint resolution committing the institutions to focus on:

- Working together to ensure a complete ban on the use of all forms of **asbestos** and asbestos-containing materials in all transactions and development financing.
- Developing a standardised approach for the collection, analysis and presentation of **accident data** on project investments. Consistency will enable trend analysis across sectors and regions to inform harmonised interventions for greater impact.
- Developing a joint programme to increase collaboration between development finance institutions to **improve knowledge sharing** and the prioritisation of high-risk sectors and regions.

The EBRD is actively working with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the IFC, the World Bank and others to achieve these goals.

EBRD hosts health and safety roundtable

The EBRD hosted a roundtable event in February together with the [Institution of Occupational Safety and Health](#) (IOSH) on how the sector can respond to global emergencies, including war and natural disasters.

Much of the discussion centred on the war in Ukraine, which has significantly impacted the delivery of critical services and has put some workers at risk of occupational health and safety hazards not experienced in peacetime. The EBRD has financed a local consultant in Ukraine to assess the impact of the conflict on businesses and the potential risks to workers.

Mental health

The Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and spiralling living costs have led to anxiety and poor mental health among people in the economies where the EBRD operates. Understanding mental health as a business risk is key for our clients. Increased absenteeism and low worker morale reduces productivity. Workers who are stressed may also be distracted, with accidents more likely as a consequence.

In 2023, the Bank, in collaboration with the ADB and IOSH, published a [Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace e-learning course](#). Available in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#), the course aims to raise awareness about the wellbeing of workers, as well as organisational factors, such as workload and isolation, that can impact outcomes. The training also offers strategies and advice on how to manage mental health in the workplace.

Case study: Occupational health training supports gender equality in Azerbaijan



The EBRD and the World Bank are developing training on gender and occupational health and safety to support changes to employment legislation in Azerbaijan. Before the reforms in 2022, women were prohibited from more than 600 jobs, including laying asphalt, working as train engineers or driving buses with more than 14 seats. The restrictions were probably intended to protect women's health, but had not changed to consider developments in technology or occupational health.

Training will be provided to stakeholders including the Labour Ministry, trade unions and occupational health and safety groups. Further training will follow across Central Asia, as laws prohibiting women's access to certain jobs are still prevalent in many countries.

Training will address the areas in which gender is irrelevant in terms of risk in the workplace. However, certain hazards may have a different impact on the health, safety and wellbeing on specific genders. Guidance will be provided to support gender considerations in the workplace, including risk assessment, worksite design and personal protective equipment.

Table 3. Accident data for 2023

High-level figures	2023
Total fatalities reported All fatalities reported to the Bank in 2023, including those that occurred in previous years but were only reported in 2023	49
Total fatalities Fatalities that occurred and were reported in 2023	36
Worker fatalities Of the total fatalities that occurred and were reported in 2023	34
Third-party fatalities Of the total fatalities that occurred and were reported in 2023	2
Total vehicle-related deaths Of the total fatalities that occurred and were reported in 2023, three were vehicle-related deaths, including one worker and two members of the public	3
Total active projects in 2023 as of 31 December 2023	2,333
Total fatalities per 1,000 active projects	15.4
Worker fatalities per 1,000 active projects	14.5
Third-party fatalities per 1,000 active projects	0.9

Note: Data can fluctuate due to late reporting.

Antimicrobial resistance

AMR is one of the 10 global public health threats facing humanity, according to the [World Health Organization](#). Around [1.27 million deaths](#) were directly attributable to bacterial AMR in 2019, more than HIV/AIDS or malaria in the same year. AMR poses significant challenges to EBRD regions and their potential for attaining the SDGs.

The Bank is addressing urgent AMR issues across the healthcare, hospital infrastructure public-private-partnership (PPP), pharmaceutical, livestock and water infrastructure sectors through the intersectoral [One Health](#) approach. The approach is critical to integrating AMR health threats at the animal-human-environment interface and to promoting collaboration between different disciplines to achieve better public health outcomes.

The EBRD is a pioneer among MDBs for its work on AMR. It was the first MDB to make specific reference to AMR, stating in its 2019 ESP that Bank clients would adopt antibiotic stewardship in the healthcare setting and use antibiotics on food-producing animals in accordance with EU substantive environmental standards.

In November 2023, the Bank showed its public support for [World AMR Awareness Week](#) (WAAW), a global campaign to raise awareness and understanding of AMR and promote best practices among One Health stakeholders. The WAAW aimed to galvanise support for the critical [High-level Meeting on AMR](#) taking place at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024. The meeting will be an opportunity for the world to renew its political commitment to addressing antibiotic resistance.

This year, the Bank's long-term client, the [Georgia Healthcare Group](#), was the EBRD gold award winner for environmental and social best practice for its engagement on AMR. The company is the largest healthcare services provider in Georgia, operating hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, medical insurance and laboratory services. It accounts for 20 per cent of the healthcare services sector in Georgia by number of beds and has over 15,000 full-time employees. Given its leading position in the country's health sector, its AMR engagement is critical.

Georgia Healthcare Group is the Bank's first client to address AMR, participating in a pilot programme facilitated by the EBRD and the British Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy. Improvements in practices for the prevention and mitigation of AMR will support the objectives of Georgia's AMR National Action Plan.

In a further show of support for tackling AMR, the EBRD participated in a €6 million loan to Georgia's [BioChimPharm](#) under the flagship [EU4Business-EBRD Credit Line](#). The package supported the modernisation of the company's bacteriophage manufacturing factory to obtain accreditation of a critical international standard, Good Manufacturing Practice.

[Bacteriophages](#), also known as phages, are viruses that specifically target bacteria. [Phage therapy](#) involves using phages to treat bacterial infections. In contrast to many antibiotics, phages target bacterial strains or species more narrowly, making phage therapy an attractive alternative for managing infections. Modernising BioChimPharm's manufacturing plant in compliance with GMP will enable it to scale up production and potentially export phage products.

In the face of AMR, phage therapy is of increasing global interest among researchers and doctors, with Georgia now in a position to contribute to further [clinical trials](#) and research.