

Cluster Evaluation: EBRD projects with Water Supply components (2016–2025)

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Access to safe, reliable and sustainable water services remains a major global development challenge. Persistent gaps in service provision, system sustainability and resilience continue to affect water supply systems, particularly in emerging and transition economies. Water supply systems play a central role in protecting human health, enabling inclusive economic activity and strengthening resilience to climate-related risks. This info sheet outlines IEvD's approach to the upcoming cluster evaluation of EBRD projects with water supply components.



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development



Independent Evaluation
Department

What does IEvD do?

IEvD is an independent department within the EBRD charged with assessing whether the Bank's products and services are achieving the results expected of them.

The Department reports directly to the Executive Board of Directors to ensure objectivity in its work. IEvD assesses performance, identifies lessons and makes recommendations to improve future performance of the EBRD.

Further information on IEvD's work is available at www.ebrd.com/evaluation

Purpose and rationale

As set out in the IEvD Work Programme 2026–2028, IEvD is conducting a cluster evaluation of EBRD projects with water supply components.

Water supply investments address challenges related to service provision, sustainability and resilience, and are supported through investment finance, technical cooperation and policy engagement. The evaluation will draw lessons from EBRD's experience and identify cross-cutting patterns and factors influencing project performance to inform future operations.

Objective and Scope

The objective is to provide the Board, Management and wider public with evidence-based insights and lessons on EBRD's contribution to transition through water supply projects.

This is not a thematic, sectoral or strategic evaluation of EBRD's engagement in the water sector, nor of the overall approach to water. It is a cluster evaluation focused on water supply projects.

The scope covers water supply projects and integrated water supply and wastewater projects where water supply is a principal

component, signed between 2016 and 2025.

The assessment will cover the relevance, coherence, additionality, efficiency and effectiveness of these projects and related activities, including how finance, technical cooperation and policy engagement support intended results and transition outcomes. The cluster comprises 11 purposefully selected projects reflecting diversity across signing periods, regions, project sizes, framework and standalone operations, sovereign and non-sovereign financing, and transition objectives.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is guided by the following overarching question:

How do EBRD water supply projects contribute to transition impact in economies where the Bank invests?

This question is addressed through three evaluation questions aligned with internationally established OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

- To what extent do the objectives and design of EBRD water supply projects and related activities respond to the needs and priorities of their clients, and countries/economies of investment more broadly? (Relevance/Coherence/Additionality)
- To what extent are EBRD water supply projects and related activities designed and implemented efficiently? (Efficiency)
- To what extent are EBRD water supply projects and related activities achieving, or demonstrating credible progress towards, their intended results and transition outcomes, and what unintended effects, positive or negative, have emerged? (Effectiveness/Sustainability)

Methodology

IEvD will adopt a mixed-methods cluster evaluation approach to generate cross-

cutting insights from a group of comparable water supply projects. Cluster evaluations use a bottom-up approach, combining individual project assessments to identify patterns, recurring issues and lessons across a group of projects with shared characteristics. Projects are the primary unit of analysis, supported by portfolio-level and contextual analysis.

The evaluation will combine a desk-based review of project documentation and monitoring data with interviews with EBRD staff, clients, implementing agencies and other relevant stakeholders. Evidence will be triangulated across sources and interpreted in light of different levels of project maturity.

External technical experts will support the assessment, and geographic information systems (GIS) analysis may be used to contextualise projects and triangulate available evidence.

Timing

The evaluation will be conducted over 2026 and early 2027, with the final report expected to be distributed to the Board in Q1 2027. Publication and dissemination activities will follow thereafter.

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