Building resilience in host countries

The EBRD is an important investor in Jordan and Turkey, two countries that are hosting millions of displaced people who have fled the civil war in Syria.

The EBRD’s response to the challenges posed by the sudden surge in the population of both countries is to help build their economic resilience to cope with the crisis, now and in the years ahead.

Through investments, technical cooperation and policy dialogue, the EBRD enhances access to basic services, promotes livelihood opportunities and economic inclusion, and supports small businesses in refugee-hosting communities. With 25 years of experience, the Bank focuses on areas where it has the expertise, know-how and networks to improve lives as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

A €900 million investment plan has been prepared, combining EBRD funds and donor contributions, to alleviate the refugee crisis. The plan strengthens strained municipal infrastructure, improves access to finance for individuals and small businesses, and supports vocational training, skills verification and pathways to jobs, with a particular focus on women refugees.

The EBRD’s total investments in Jordan and Turkey, as at September 2016, amount to €615 million and €7.9 billion respectively. The large majority of these transactions were in energy, infrastructure, industry, commerce, agribusiness and the financial sector.

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THE REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

The EBRD’s inclusive response to the refugee crisis will have an immediate impact on host communities and refugees alike by addressing their economic conditions and prospects while promoting community cohesion. Our plan of activities, which relies on essential donor support, covers three urgent priorities in Jordan and Turkey.

- INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
To alleviate the already significant strain on public services in these countries, the EBRD is investing in municipal infrastructure to support critical improvements so the services can meet the increased demand in refugee-hosting communities. Investments include upgrades to water, wastewater, solid waste management and urban transport. The EBRD complements its loans with technical assistance designed to put infrastructure service provision on a more sustainable pathway. Technical cooperation programmes with utility companies promote the adoption of best practice in areas such as financial management, tariff regimes and corporate governance, as well as ensuring robust community engagement.

- SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES GROWTH
Promoting the growth and competitiveness of small businesses is a key component in strengthening economic resilience in refugee-hosting communities. Many refugees have found work in small enterprises or possess enough entrepreneurial skills to start up businesses of their own. Under its Small Business Initiative, the EBRD helps improve access to finance and know-how for small businesses in underserved areas of south-eastern and central Turkey and Jordan. The Bank is working with local financial institutions to develop credit lines for on-lending to small and medium-sized enterprises in refugee-hosting communities, as well as providing direct financing to businesses in sectors where refugees have found employment.

- ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS
In support of refugee-hosting countries, the EBRD is building on its private sector-led economic inclusion approach as well as its strong commitment to promote gender equality to enhance access to better skills, formal employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The Bank is working to increase the quality of local vocational training based on employers’ skills requirements and providing opportunities and support for job-seekers with pre-employment training with prospective employers and career guidance. The EBRD is also exploring ways to enhance financial inclusion in local communities by providing financial products to people outside the formal banking system, including refugees.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

The EBRD could not attempt to meet the challenges of the refugee crisis without the support of donors. The Bank works with international donors, including the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations and other international financial institutions and stakeholders to ensure coherent refugee response efforts by both the host countries themselves and the international community.

Grant support from donors is vital for the continuation of the Bank’s activities in refugee-hosting regions to ensure that cash-strapped municipalities do not take on the burden of excessive debt, that basic services remain affordable to the population at large, and that small businesses, financial institutions and business-supporting agencies have the resources to reach the refugee population.

Thanks to a strong presence in Turkey and Jordan, the EBRD has an extensive network of direct relationships with municipalities, financial institutions and local businesses, as well as institutions such as chambers of commerce and industry. The Bank is therefore in an ideal position to deliver projects swiftly and with immediate benefits for the affected communities.

Donors such as the European Union and the United Kingdom have supported the EBRD to rapidly respond to the urgent needs of host communities and refugees. In order to accelerate the implementation of operations the Bank is also using grants from its net income allocation. The EBRD is actively seeking more donor support to implement its refugee response plan, which will impact millions of lives, and to ensure this vital work can continue over the medium and long term.

For more information

PROJECT EXAMPLES

IN JORDAN, the Bank is supporting the city of Amman to modernise the landfill which serves the capital (home to half of the Jordanian population and 30 per cent of all refugees present in the country) as well as the cities of Zarqa and Rusayfeh, home to a significant number of refugees. The investment will help expand the capacity of the landfill to accommodate the increase of waste generated by the population growth.

IN TURKEY, the population of the city of Gaziantep has increased by 36 per cent since 2013 due to refugee inflows, placing an unprecedented strain on public transport as well as on the city’s finances. Thanks to an EBRD loan, the city has acquired 50 new buses to provide a more reliable service for all residents. The Bank is now working on extending another loan to continue improving urban transport.