The 2017 Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting in Cyprus

The 2017 Civil Society Programme (CSP) took place on 9-11 May in Nicosia, Cyprus. The Programme featured multi-stakeholder panels on the role of civil society in supporting transition resilience and in promoting green cities, in line with the EBRD’s updated transition concept. A CSO-led panel, hosted at the symbolic Home for Cooperation (H4C), also explored the topic of a long-term sustainable reconciliation process in Cyprus through the engagement of civil society. As every year, the CSP represented an opportunity for CSOs to discuss strategic issues as well as investment projects with EBRD staff, senior management, the President and Board of Directors. This year the project discussions focused on the following topics: EBRD investments in the Power & Energy Utilities, Natural Resources, Transport, and Agribusiness sectors. In addition, participants had an opportunity to discuss recent EBRD initiatives in the open format of “World Cafe Roundtables”.

The role of Cypriot civil society in promoting economic development for reconciliation

The first event of the CSP was organised on Tuesday 9 May by the civil society organisation NGO Support Centre, who were selected following a competitive call for proposals. The discussion was hosted at the H4C in the UN Buffer Zone in Nicosia, a unique site for civil society dialogue and peace-building. The panel brought together representatives from the business world, academia, civil society and journalism to discuss the role of Cypriot civil society in promoting economic development for reconciliation. The panellists presented innovative programmes that have been mounted by civil society in order to create stronger socio-economic ties between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island, including initiatives aimed at engaging young people by the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and Civic Space. Representatives from both chambers of commerce also shared their vision for a solution to the Cyprus dispute which builds on stronger economic integration between the two communities.

April-June 2017
Welcome to the CSO Newsletter

In this issue we report on the 2017 Civil Society Programme, held as part of the EBRD’s Annual Meeting and Business Forum in Nicosia, Cyprus on 9-11 May. You can also read about a workshop for IFIs’ accountability mechanisms and CSOs in the SEMED region, a workshop for Self-Funded Communities in Istanbul as part of the EBRD’s refugee response, and the Bank’s support of safe and sustainable transport in Tajikistan. As always, we bring you the latest news about the Bank’s dialogue with CSOs on country strategies, recent projects and initiatives.

For more information visit: www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/civil-society/news-and-events

The Civil Society Programme is the flagship event of the EBRD’s engagement with civil society and takes place every May alongside the EBRD’s Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors and Business Forum.
The role of civil society in promoting transition resilience

The 2017 CSP featured a panel discussion on the role of civil society in promoting transition resilience. Transition is not a linear process and there have been setbacks and reversals along the way in the EBRD region. Transition resilience refers to the stability of economic and political reforms, which is directly related to a societal buy-in for reforms and local ownership of transition. Civil society, operating in the space between the public and private sectors, can play an important part in this process.

Through its representation, intermediation and social service provision functions, civil society can reach out to the more vulnerable groups in society and promote democratic participation, policy accountability and good governance.

Civil society and green cities

The final panel discussion of this year’s CSP was dedicated to the role of civil society in contributing to successful green urbanisation that helps cities, which represent a significant source of environmental impact, to maximise their potential as drivers of climate-resilient growth. CSOs can promote behavioural change towards innovative green economy practices and also play a crucial advocacy role for improving municipal regulations and national legislation.

Workshop: IFIs meet with civil society

About 30 representatives of local CSOs from Jordan participated in a workshop organised by the EBRD’s and EIB’s Complaint Mechanisms with the support of the Phenix Center for Economics & Informatics Studies. The workshop, held in Amman on 24 May, provided an opportunity for CSO representatives to learn about how the Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs) can help people that are potentially affected by IFI-funded projects.

The IAMs receive complaints and address grievances from project-affected people about environmental and social impacts and access to information projects financed by the IFIs. IAMs have addressed a range of issues, including compensation for resettlement and livelihood restoration, impacts on culturally significant landscapes, engagement with local communities, environmental impacts, concerns over community health and safety, and labour issues.

CSOs often support communities in raising their concerns with the financiers of projects. The IAMs regularly conduct public outreach sessions in collaboration with CSOs in the areas where the multilateral financial institutions are active, in order to raise awareness of their services among civil society networks.

This workshop provided the IAMs and CSOs with an opportunity to exchange views on issues related to public and private sector development projects in Jordan. CSOs from Jordan learned how to file a complaint, which complaints are eligible and what they should expect as a result of a complaint.

Workshop participants stated that communities in Jordan face challenges arising from the pace of economic growth, competition for natural resources and climate change risks. IAMs together with CSOs have a major role to play in ensuring that IFIs meet the highest standards of transparency and accountability.
The EBRD has launched a new technical cooperation assignment in Tajikistan to support a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of wearing seatbelts and the benefits of eco-driving, working with the traffic police and civil society in Dushanbe. The campaign is being organised by the Young Generation of Tajikistan and EASST, focusing on young people.

In a car crash you are twice as likely to die if you don’t wear a seatbelt, and unbelted back seat passengers can kill drivers during an impact. Despite this, seatbelt-wearing rates in Tajikistan are low – possibly as low as 5 per cent. Eco-driving also has a role to play in road safety: lowering speeds and smooth, attentive driving reduces road risks. It also reduces wear-and-tear on vehicles and cuts fuel consumption by up to a quarter, saving money for drivers, and reduces CO2 emissions.

In order to lay the groundwork for the campaign, observational surveys on seatbelt equipment and use are being conducted in Dushanbe, alongside focus groups on knowledge and attitudes. The public awareness-raising campaign, which will include media broadcasts, will then be designed and will run for five months. There will also be special seminars on the benefits of eco-driving for drivers, companies and society as a whole.

The EBRD is supporting the road safety and eco-driving technical cooperation assignment as part of its overall commitment to safe and sustainable transport, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and as part of the CAREC Road Safety Strategy (2017-2030). The campaign will be implemented in relation to the Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Investment Project.

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Supporting Self-Funded Communities in Turkey

The civil war in Syria has displaced millions of people and placed significant stress on the economies of neighbouring host countries including Jordan and Turkey, where the EBRD invests. In response to a sudden surge in population in these two countries, the EBRD is leading efforts with host communities and refugees alike to build economic resilience to the challenges posed by the crisis. In Turkey, the Bank is working in partnership with international and local CSOs to enhance business skills among those affected by the crisis and to improve access to finance for refugees. A technical cooperation (TC) project implemented by the Spanish Association of Self-Funded Communities (ACAF) and the Turkish CSO Jana, with support from the EBRD, is providing financial literacy training and building community savings and loans schemes together with local CSOs in Istanbul and south-eastern Turkey.

On 7-8 February a workshop on micro savings and loans was held by Jana and ACAF in Istanbul for Turkish CSOs and community centres. The workshop, which brought together more than 25 participants from across the country, focused on introducing the Self-Funded Communities (SFCs) model to CSO representatives. SFCs are small communities in which the partners, usually between 10 and 30 people, give small amounts of money that allow them to become shareholders of the SFC. For refugees without access to formal banking services, SFCs can provide an important source of financial security. Jana and ACAF will work throughout the TC project to establish SFCs across Turkey, targeting refugee women and communities affected by the crisis, and to build the business skills of the members through financial literacy training and mentorship.

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Launch of a seatbelt and eco-driving campaign in Dushanbe

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In Brief

EBRD signs Accreditation Master Agreement with GCF

The signing of the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) marks the final step required for the EBRD to access the resources of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to implement joint projects aimed at combating climate change in the Bank’s regions. The accord underscores the EBRD’s position as the largest single recipient of GCF resources. A total of US$ 618 million, or 26 per cent of total GCF resources, have so far been allocated to green EBRD projects. These resources will flow into renewable energy projects in Egypt, adaptation projects in Tajikistan and Morocco, as well as green lending in several countries of operations based on the model of credit lines for sustainable energy efficiency. Concessional finance provided through the GCF is crucial for providing additional financing and incentives for EBRD clients to choose investment options that protect the global climate, make climate finance and technologies more affordable and help with project preparation through, for example, technology transfer, and implement reforms that support green investment.

New publication on resettlement guidance and good practice

The EBRD’s recently released ‘Resettlement Guidance and Good Practice’ is the first major guidance on resettlement and livelihood restoration by a development bank in over a decade. It provides advice on interpreting and implementing the EBRD’s Performance Requirement 5 (PR5): Land Acquisition, Involuntary Resettlement and Economic Displacement under its Environmental and Social Policy.

This guidance document encourages stakeholders to manage resettlement processes in a manner that is tailored to their particular context, because there are as many different resettlement scenarios as there are affected people. However, the aim of any resettlement process should be to minimise negative impacts and maximise development opportunities, placing the needs and views of affected people at its centre.

The guide showcases good practice examples from eastern Europe, Central Asia and the southern and eastern Mediterranean and provides practical information to help clients determine the best approach to addressing physical and/or economic displacement for their specific project.

The key messages of ‘Resettlement Guidance and Good Practice’ are addressing both physical and economic displacement; livelihood restoration (resettlement often means that people lose land they rely on for their income); making provisions for vulnerable people or groups; the process for replacing land and assets; and managing compensation entitlements in a fair and transparent way.

Key dates and contacts

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To have your say on strategies visit: www.ebrd.com/strategies-and-policies/have-your-say.html

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