
APPROACH PAPER

Special Study: EBRD Shareholder Special Fund – interim evaluation

July 2014

EBRD EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

The Evaluation Department (EvD) at the EBRD evaluates the performance of the Bank's completed projects and programmes relative to objectives in order to perform two critical functions: reinforcing institutional accountability for the achievement of results; and, providing objective analysis and relevant findings to inform operational choices and to improve performance over time. EvD reports directly to the Board of Directors, and is independent from the Bank's Management. Whilst EvD considers Management's views in preparing its evaluations, it makes the final decisions about the content of its approach papers and reports.

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Contents

<i>Definitions</i>	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 The Shareholder Special Fund	
1.2 Rationale for the SSF interim evaluation	
1.3 Nature of the evaluation	
1.4 Other relevant evaluation work	
2. Monitoring and self-assessment	5
3. Scope and methodology	6
3.1 Scope	
3.2 Evaluation questions	
3.3 Methods of data collection and sources of information	
3.4 Deliverables	
3.5 Potential problems and limitations of the study	
4. Administrative arrangements	8
4.1 EvD team	
4.2 Peer reviewers / advisory panel	
4.3 Management reviewers	
4.4 Timetable	
4.5 Budget	
<i>Annex 1: Evaluation design matrix</i>	10

Definitions

BAAC	Budget and Administrative Affairs Committee
CRR	EBRD Credit Resource Review
GCSR	Grant Co-Financing Strategic Review
ISF	Investment Special Fund
SAR	Semi-Annual Report
SEMED	southern and eastern Mediterranean
SSF	EBRD Shareholder Special Fund
SCF	Strategic Capital Framework
TC	Technical Cooperation

1. Introduction

This is an interim evaluation of the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund and it has been included as an additional item in the Evaluation Department Work Programme for 2014 (see section 1.2).

1.1 The Shareholder Special Fund

In accordance with Article 18 of the [Basic Documents of the EBRD: Agreement establishing the Bank](#), in 2008 the EBRD Board of Directors established the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund (SSF)¹ to “support the EBRD’s operational work and other designated activities” in order “to respond more vigorously to the transition challenges in key regions as outlined in the Bank’s Country strategies”. The SSF has been meant to:

“complement funding from bilateral and multilateral donors and would be used to finance technical assistance (or cooperation) as well as non-technical assistance (or cooperation) initiatives such as investment grants and incentive payments”².

The fund’s creation followed extensive discussion of how best to utilise the substantial net income generated by the EBRD during the business year 2007.

As of June 2014, the sum of €385 million has been allocated to the SSF. €360 million has been allocated directly from the net income following four resolutions of the Board of Governors³ setting also the specific conditions for the use. Additional €25 million has been drawn-down and transferred to the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) window of the SSF following the establishment of the EBRD SEMED Investment Special Fund (ISF).

At approval, rules of the SSF have been adopted about: its establishment, the sources of funding, the use of the resources, the administration of the fund and the conditions for its effectiveness, termination and amendments. Over the years, the rules have been amended to adjust the SSF to the actual needs for implementation and Regulations No. 1 and 2 have been added⁴.

In accordance with the rules of the SSF, the EBRD Board of Directors has approved over the years a total of six work plans of the SSF⁵, each of which is in compliance with the conditions of the corresponding Board of Governors’ resolution. The context in which the SSF work plans have been designed and approved has changed over the years. In fact, following the directions provided by the fourth EBRD Credit Resource Review (CRR4)⁶, Management initiated in 2010 a strategic review of the grant instrument in order to examine more closely the contribution of grants to the Bank’s business model. The review process started in 2010 and the results have been captured in the Grant Co-Financing Strategic Review (GCSR) final report which was issued in early 2013. The innovations and changes in grants management and governance included in the GCSR have been also targeting the SSF specifically and its implementation.

According to the latest figures provided by Management to the Budget and Administrative Affairs

¹ 2008 Board documents

² Ibidem - Introduction

³ Resolution No. 112 in May 2008; Resolution No. 122 in May 2009; Resolution No. 127 in May 2010; and Resolution No. 161 in May 2013.

⁴ In November 2008, in January 2011; in October 2011; and in January 2013, see Board documents from 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2013.

⁵ Work Plan 1 in April 2008; Work Plan 2 in March 2009; Work Plan 3 in January 2011; Work Plan 4 in January 2012; Work Plan 5 in January 2013; and Work Plan 6 in February 2014, from Board documents 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014

⁶ 2010 Board document

Committee (BAAC) in April 2014 cumulative TC commitments from the SSF since its inception (projects which have been approved and recorded in the system to drawdown the funds) amounted to €167.7 million (43.5 per cent of available funds) for 961 projects as at end of December 2013, of which around €98 million has been disbursed (26.8 per cent of the total available and 58.4 per cent of the committed funds). The total allocation from the SSF to non-TC projects amount to €67.2 million for the existing region, and €10 million to the SEMED region.

1.2 Rationale for the SSF interim evaluation

An interim evaluation of the SSF was included ex-post in EvD's Work Programme for 2014. In May 2014 the newly installed management of the Bank's Donor Co-Financing Unit has proposed that EvD produce an interim evaluation of the SSF as a key step for its strategic planning process as endorsed in the EBRD Annual Meeting 2014 in Warsaw. In fact, Management's medium-term directions paper calls for the development of "a more strategic and programmatic approach to grant funding – including through the SSF – in full partnership with donors and shareholders"⁷.

EvD has agreed with the Donor Co-Financing Unit on the strategic value of an interim evaluation of the SSF to be completed in 2014 in preparation for the EBRD's fifth Capital Resources Review (CRR5) 2016-2020 (now termed Strategic Capital Framework - SCF) despite the tight timeframe. EvD is able to respond to the request in part because of the greater flexibility coming from EvD's new multi-year work programme⁸ that gives the possibility to respond to unanticipated opportunities to produce timely and relevant work. Findings and recommendations of the study are expected to feed into Management strategic planning for 2015.

Moreover, it is considered best practice to evaluate an open-ended operation vehicle such as programmes and funds at regular intervals during their lifetime. EvD carried out a [2010 EvD Special Study: Initial Review of the SSF](#). The timing looks convenient to carry out an interim evaluation.

1.3 Nature of the evaluation

This evaluation is intended as primarily a utilisation, process, management and governance review. This choice has been made based on the time and resources availability for this study and the likelihood of producing findings and recommendations useful for Management's strategic planning for 2015.

While implementing this process review EvD will also look at the SSF portfolio and identify whether specific aspects of the grants committed in technical and non-technical cooperation operations could be relevant to be reviewed with respect to the achievement of their results in a follow-on piece of work that could be included in EvD's Work Programme for 2015 or beyond.

1.4 Other relevant evaluation work

An [2010 EvD Special Study: Initial Review of the SSF](#) was undertaken within two years after the approval of the fund, as indicated in the document establishing the fund⁹. The initial review, which was meant to assess whether the fund had been successfully established and was meeting its expectations, arrived at a *Successful* rating.

SSF initial review - key findings (2010)

- The fund's governance and management arrangements are well established and executed. Nonetheless,

⁷ 2014 Board document

⁸ 2013 Board document

⁹ 2008 Board document

quality of reporting and monitoring should be strengthened and some overly cautious provisions might be relaxed to improve the efficiency of its administration.

- The fund proved to be additional overall, helping to maintain and slightly increase the available donor funds at the Bank. While its co-financing with other multi-lateral funds is widely praised, the evaluation team could not evidence a multiplying effect of such activities.
- The fund's individual assignments show overall similar patterns to the rest of the TC population over the first two years of the establishment. Specific features consist of smaller project sizes, fewer direct linkages to investment operations and larger shares of sector work.

SSF initial review - recommendations (2010)

- 1) Similar to other TC work in the Bank, the fund could benefit from a more rigorous monitoring of its transition impact. This is particularly necessary with regard to the fund's non-TC projects that are currently only partly captured by the given monitoring systems.
- 2) Pool the remaining resources from the fund's WP1 and WP2 together with newly allocated amounts for the year 2011 and beyond, without further restrictions in respect of sector categories, or the distinction between ODA and non-ODA recipients.
- 3) An increase of threshold amounts for TC projects requiring Board approval to >€500,000 would save a substantial amount of administrative effort.
- 4) Decrease the quantity and increase the quality of reporting. Enlarge the cycle of reporting on the fund's implementation by adopting a bi-annual sequence instead of the current quarterly one. At the same time, management should seek to include all relevant aspects in its reporting in order to give a complete picture of the fund's utilisation.
- 5) Simplify the current handling of the project pipeline and SSF project list. Electronic handling of the project pipeline and an updated list of all SSF projects on the Bank's intranet is recommended, with access provided to shareholders/ donors as necessary.

For the purpose of the interim evaluation, EvD will build on the key findings of the 2010 review and look at Management's actions taken out of the recommendations.

In addition, EvD will take advantage of the work undertaken to support Management during the Grant Co-financing Strategic Review.

2. Monitoring and self-assessment

According to Section 3.04(a) of the rules of the SSF "The Board of Directors shall be provided with a quarterly report on the current status of the approved, committed and disbursed uses of the resources of the fund". In compliance with the rules, Management submitted quarterly reports up to the end of 2010. Following the adoption of one of the recommendations included in EvD's 2010 initial review of the SSF the reporting provision under clause (a) has been changed into semi-annual report. Since 2011 Management has provided the Board of Directors with a Semi-Annual Report (SAR) that nowadays has been renamed into Grant Co-Financing Report.

According to Section 3.04(b) of the rules of the SSF "The Board of Directors shall be provided with regular progress and completion reports on each technical assistance item financed with the resources of the Fund, using the same reporting format through TCNet as is used for donor-funded technical cooperation projects". According to the information available, Management has provided progress and completion reports for each technical assistance operation funded by the SSF through the Consultancy Assignment Reporting (CAR) system.

As far as non-TC operations funded by the SSF, the monitoring/self-assessment is carried out together with the investment to which the non-TC is attached.

No specific requirement is indicated in the SSF rules about transition and other impact monitoring. It is assumed that the same rules for monitoring of transition impact of any other TC and non-TC of the Bank is applied to the SSF funded operations.

3. Scope and methodology

3.1 Scope

The thematic scope of the evaluation covers the implementation of the SSF. This evaluation was timed in a way that it would allow to focus on specific aspects of the SSF but still to contribute meaningfully to the next phase. In terms of evaluation criteria, this evaluation will consider:

- SSF relevance and its added value within the EBRD business model and strategic objectives;
- SSF efficiency in terms of governance, management, administrative procedures, and monitoring.

The time scope of the evaluation covers the entire lifetime of the SSF.

3.2 Evaluation questions

The study intends to answer to the evaluation questions listed below. Based on an initial assessment of the available documentation the evaluation team has designed a preliminary evaluation matrix with judgement criteria, indicators, sources of data and limitations (see Annex 1), which could be subject to further refinements at data collection stage.

3.2.1 To what extent has the SSF supported the Bank's evolving strategic agenda?

Key issues for consideration:

- The clarity of the objectives of the SSF and their understanding by the EBRD shareholders, banking and non-banking staff;
- Value added of the SSF with respect to the existing mechanisms of donor co-financing and to the bilateral/multilateral donors' objectives;
- The strategic role of the SSF in planning and prioritisation of donor co-financing (such as GCSR).

3.2.2 Has the SSF governance contributed to allocative and process efficiency in the utilisation of the Fund?

Key issues for consideration:

- The governance structure including internal processes and operational guidelines for the SSF, including their emphasis on the achievement of SSF objectives;
- The adequacy of internal processes within the Bank to optimal utilisation of the SSF.

3.2.3 Has the management of the SSF been efficient?

Key issues for consideration:

- The adequacy of internal resources available for the management of the SSF (human, technical, financial);
- The quality of reporting on the SSF implementation (shareholders' satisfaction, internal utilisation);
- The appropriateness of the management fee related to the SSF.

3.3 Methods of data collection and sources of information

This study will imply only desk work and interviews. In particular it will involve:

- a background document review:
 - Board papers including: Board of Governors' resolutions; Board documents such as the rules and regulations, work plans, fiches (both TC and non-TC), reallocation requests;
 - EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit spreadsheets which record and monitor the use of SSF by for example projects, sectors, regions, countries;
 - EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit requests to senior management;
 - Inputs in to the EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit Semi-Annual Report on grant co-financing;
 - Project completion reports from Consultancy Assignment Reporting system;
 - Operations Committee, Strategy and Policy Committee and TC Committee documentation;
 - SSF commitments data and related documentation about approvals;
 - Relevant evaluation work conducted by other international financial institutions.
- interviews in EBRD headquarters with SSF stakeholders:
 - The EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit;
 - The Vice Presidency for Policy (including the TC Com Chair and TC Com Secretariat);
 - Banking and non-Banking teams using the SSF (in particular the Financial Institutions team, MEI team, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change (E2C2) team, Small Business Support team, Agribusiness team, Legal Transition team and the Office of the Chief Economist);
 - Internal Audit department;
 - Budget department;
 - Board Directors expressing an interest in contributing.

3.4 Deliverables

The expected deliverables under this study are:

- A main report including key findings and recommendations;
- executive summary;
- board summary;
- web summary;
- presentation to the Audit Committee;
- presentation to banking teams, if relevant;

3.5 Potential problems and limitations of the study

Lack of reliable documentation and data about TC and non-TC funds in the EBRD has always been an issue as the Bank's databases do not provide accurate information. This is a Bank-wide issue that EvD has raised over the past years several times. Therefore, for the timely and efficient implementation of this study, the evaluation team will rely on the data and documentation provided by Management and in particular the Donor Co-Financing Unit.

4. Administrative arrangements

4.1 EvD team

The evaluation team tasked with completing this Study comprises Ms. Chiara Bocci and Ms. Regina Husakova, EvD Managers.

4.2 Peer reviewers / advisory panel

Mr Keith Leonard, EvD Senior Adviser, will be the internal peer reviewer of this study.

Moreover, the evaluation team will select the one of the expert among the EvD External Panel of Experts to peer review the study. The expert will provide independent input into the study and advice on strengthening the Bank's evaluation products and processes. The external peer reviewer that will agree to participate will receive a copy of this Approach Paper.

4.3 Management reviewers

The draft Approach Paper has been circulated to the designated counterparts in Management as per the Operations Manual 8.5, namely to the two Focal Points (Director Strategy & Policy Coordination in VP Policy, Zsuzsanna Hargitai and Managing Director Portfolio Business Group, Kanako Sekine) who have co-ordinated with the relevant departments/teams for circulation of the draft Approach Paper and shared consolidated comments with EvD. Management Focal Points and Reviewers for the study include:

Lead Focal Point:

- Director, Strategy & Policy Coordination - Zsuzsanna Hargitai, HargitaZ@EBRD.com

Other Focal Point:

- Managing Director, Portfolio Business Group - Kanako Sekine, SekineK@ebrd.com

Management Reviewers:

- Managing Director, External Action and Political Affairs - Alan Rousso, RoussoA@ebrd.com;
- Director, Donor Co-Financing - Otto Camilla, OttoC@ebrd.com;
- Director, Technical Cooperation - Dilek Macit, MacitD@ebrd.com;
- Director, Banking Country Strategy & TC Management Operational Strategy and Planning - Michael Weinstein, weinstem@ebrd.com;
- Chief Economist, Office of the Chief Economist - Erik Berglof, berglofe@ebrd.com;
- Chief Counsel, Legal Transition Programme - Michel Nussbaumer, NussbauM@ebrd.com;
- Managing Director, Environment and Sustainability - Alistair Clark, clarka@ebrd.com.

This list may be added to during the course of the evaluation.

4.4 Timetable

Milestone	Date (by week)
Study starts	I June
Draft Approach paper circulated to Management	I July
Approach paper approved	III July
Consultants recruited	N/A
Field visit complete	N/A
Survey complete	N/A
Draft circulated to internal peer reviewers	III September
Draft cleared by CE for circulation to external peer reviewers	IV September
Draft cleared by CE for Management Comments	II October
Final editing	I November
Final approved by Chief Evaluator	II November
Draft Board Summary	II November
Final Board Summary approved by Chief Evaluator	III November
Final distribution	III November

4.5 Budget

This study is not expected to require resources beyond those already budgeted for EvD staff; no field mission is planned.

Annex 1: Evaluation design matrix

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Sources of Data	Collection Methods	Potential limitations of data and means to address this
1. To what extent has the SSF supported the Bank's evolving strategic agenda?	The clarity of the objectives of the SSF and their understanding by the EBRD shareholders, banking and non-banking staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SSF objectives clearly stated at establishment – Consistency in stating SSF objectives across stakeholders (documents and interviews) 	Board of Governor's Resolutions SSF Rules and Regulations SSF Work Plans SSF reporting to the BAAC and the Board of Directors BAAC and BoD Minutes Grant Planning Meetings documents SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)	Documents extracted from EBRD Databases Documents provided by teams Interviews	Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews Staff and Board member turnover Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives Reliability of data from EBRD databases
	Value added of the SSF with respect to the existing mechanisms of donor co-financing and to the bilateral/multilateral donors' objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SSF filling the gaps in available donor co-financing – SSF leveraging up donor contributions (bilateral and multi-donor) through co-financing – Total resources available increased at least equal to SSF commitments 	Portfolio analysis (pre & post SSF) for TC and non-TC operations Semi-Annual Grant Reporting SSF Rules and Regulations Grant Planning Meetings documents SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)	TC databases of the EBRD Non-TC databases of the EBRD Documents provided by teams Documents extracted from EBRD Databases Interviews	Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews Staff turnover Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives Reliability of data from EBRD databases
	The role of the SSF in strategic planning and prioritisation of donor co-financing (i.e. GCSR, CRR5, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SSF introducing new mechanisms for donor co-financing management – SSF contribution to funding predictability – SSF contribution to donor funding architecture 	SSF Rules & Regulations Grant Planning Meetings documents SSF Work Plans GCSR Final Report Semi-Annual Grant Reporting SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)	Documents extracted from EBRD Databases Documents provided by teams Interviews	Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews Staff turnover Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives Reliability of data from EBRD databases

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Sources of Data	Collection Methods	Potential limitations of data and means to address this
2. Has the SSF governance contributed to allocative and process efficiency in the utilisation of the Fund?	The governance structure including internal approval processes and operational guidelines for the SSF, including their emphasis on the achievement of SSF objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resolutions and conditions for SSF allocations clear and appropriate (for example TC/non-TC; ODA/non-ODA) – SSF approval processes for TC and non-TC operations clearly and formally defined – SSF approval processes for TC and non-TC operations consistently applied – Management’s internal arrangements to support SSF approval processes – Quality control mechanisms – Timing implications of SSF approval processes for TC and non-TC operations (and number of steps involved) – BAAC and Board of Directors involvement justified – Number and frequency of changes of SSF Rules and Regulations 	<p>Board of Governors Resolutions & SSF Work Plans</p> <p>SSF Rules and Regulations</p> <p>Approval process for all TCs and SSF</p> <p>Documentation (fiches) submitted for SSF TCs approvals</p> <p>Approval process for all non-TCs and SSF</p> <p>Documentation (fiches) submitted for SSF non-TCs approvals</p> <p>Internal Audit Reports</p> <p>SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)</p> <p>Process maps developed by the team</p>	<p>TC databases of the EBRD</p> <p>Non-TC databases of the EBRD</p> <p>Documents provided by teams</p> <p>Documents extracted from EBRD Databases</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives</p> <p>Reliability of data from EBRD databases</p>
	The adequacy of internal processes within the Bank to optimal utilisation of the SSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SSF actual allocations against Work Plans expected allocations – Number and frequency of changes of SSF Work Plans (reallocations within the same work plan and extension of use of resources beyond the initial validity) – SSF de-commitment rate 	<p>Board of Governors Resolutions & SSF Work Plans</p> <p>SSF Rules and Regulations</p> <p>Documentation (fiches) submitted for SSF TCs approvals</p> <p>Portfolio analysis (pre & post SSF) for TC and non-TC operations</p> <p>Documentation (fiches) submitted for SSF non-TCs approvals</p> <p>Semi-Annual Reports to the BAAC</p> <p>SSF stakeholders (see section</p>	<p>TC databases of the EBRD</p> <p>Non-TC databases of the EBRD</p> <p>Documents provided by teams</p> <p>Documents extracted from EBRD Databases</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives</p> <p>Reliability of data from EBRD databases</p>

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Sources of Data	Collection Methods	Potential limitations of data and means to address this
			3.3)		
3. Has the management of the SSF been efficient?	The adequacy of internal resources available for the management of the SSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit and VP Policy units involved in SSF management adequately staffed – EBRD's teams users of the SSF adequately staffed – Adequate IT systems to support the management of TC and non-TC grants 	<p>GCSR final report</p> <p>Internal Audit Reports</p> <p>IT systems</p> <p>SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)</p> <p>Possible use of a satisfaction survey</p>	<p>Interviews</p> <p>IT systems</p> <p>Documents provided by teams</p> <p>Documents extracted from EBRD Databases</p>	<p>Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives</p> <p>Reliability of data from EBRD databases</p>
	The quality of reporting on the SSF implementation (shareholders' satisfaction, internal utilisation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SSF reports provide comprehensive information about allocations, commitments, etc. against Work Plans – SSF reports provide comprehensive information about results of the committed individual grants – SSF reports provide comprehensive information about achievement of the SSF objectives – Shareholders' satisfaction with reporting – Evidence of internal follow-up on SSF reporting (for example in other donor co-financing documents) 	<p>Semi-annual reports to the BAAC</p> <p>Minutes of the BAAC meetings on SSF reports</p> <p>Reporting individual SSF TCs</p> <p>Reporting individual SSF non-TCs</p> <p>Results of donor surveys (already) carried out by EBRD Donor Co-Financing Unit</p> <p>SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)</p>	<p>IT systems</p> <p>Documents provided by teams</p> <p>Documents extracted from EBRD Databases</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Availability of documents only saved on teams J:drives</p> <p>Reliability of data from EBRD databases</p>
	The appropriateness of the management fees related to the SSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flow of the management fees according to EBRD policies – Eventual use of the SSF management fees 	<p>Financial reports</p> <p>SSF stakeholders (see section 3.3)</p>	<p>Documents extracted from EBRD Databases</p> <p>Documents provided by teams</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Availability of SSF stakeholders for interviews</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Availability of documents only saved on teams internal document systems (non cross departmental)</p>