

Access to Services Support Programme Gender Advisory Services

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the “Bank”) is committed to addressing gender issues and implementing specific actions in its investment and technical co-operation projects to increase the positive impact of the Bank on gender equality and opportunities for women, such as by increasing the economic participation of women by improving their access to services in areas of urban development, transport, the provision of water and the management of solid waste. Reducing the amount of time women spend on unpaid work via improved infrastructure can free women’s time and support them in engaging in economic activities that will eventually contribute to women’s economic empowerment and closing of gender gaps in the labour market.

EBRD has been working with its partner municipalities and private sector clients to ensure that the provision of services is more demand driven, responds to the needs of all user-groups and is commercially focussed. On 16 April 2013, the Board approved the Strategic Gender Initiative which sets out the orientation for the EBRD’s work in promoting and strengthening its approach to enhancing service provision to this underserved market so as to leverage the untapped potential of women in its countries of operation.

The objective of EBRD’s “Gender Advisory Services Programme” is to enhance our clients’ ability to mainstream gender in the design and delivery of demand driven services and to adopt an approach for gender responsive financing and capacity building so as to deliver efficient and cost effective services.

Through the provision of targeted Technical Assistance the Bank can support its clients to:

- Profile the demand and supply factors relevant to women as the user of the service;
- Gain an understanding of the pattern of usage and areas of key concern of all stakeholders;
- Provide operationally relevant recommendations so as to ensure gender equality is incorporated in to the planning, provision and resourcing of services to ensure that projects equally benefit women and men and contribute to reducing gender gaps.

For each eligible project, the Bank will work with the client to address their needs and design a programme that would be most beneficial and useful for them in the context in which they operate. This programme can be coupled with capacity building elements for the service provider as well as an Equal Opportunities Initiative programme¹.

¹ EBRD has been working with its clients to promote equal opportunities for women and men in the work place, offering clients an opportunity to review their HR policies and practices in order to promote good practices as part of the Bank’s Equal Opportunities Initiative. The objective is to promote equal opportunities for men and women in the workforce regarding issues such as recruitment, retention, promotion, wages and work-life balance as well as by enhancing women’s role on corporate boards.

The Process

The process generally involves the following:

- Assessment of the current status of service planning and provision through a review of quantitative and qualitative data so as to identify potential issues and opportunities
- Mapping the institutions and stakeholders involved in the provision of the services in question
- Formulation of key prioritised recommendations that are appropriate in the context of the service provider to ensure that gender issues are taken in to consideration in the planning, financing and provision of infrastructure investments and services, so as to make these more user- and customer-responsive;
- Develop a strategy for staff training to raise awareness of gender related issues in the planning, implementation and delivery of services;
- Develop an implementation, capacity building and resource plan detailing how recommendations might be implemented; and
- Develop, if needed, protocols to enable the service provider to mainstream gender when a) planning; b) designing; c) implementation and managing; and, d) monitoring service provision.

Potential key and prioritised recommendations may include suggestions for amendments to current practices with respect to ensuring non-discrimination and some proactive support measures that might be adopted, in line with international standards. The support measures would ensure that the client efficiently targets the underserved market. Training and capacity needs would also be identified as well as a set of indicators so that any progress can be measured.