

FOSTERING THE DIGITAL AGENDA

We are living in turbulent times. After more than two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine presents a new challenge, which has jeopardised political stability and is upending lives and livelihoods in the economies where we invest. The EBRD strongly condemned Russia's war on Ukraine within hours of the invasion and suspended access to its resources for Russia and Belarus. The Bank also put in place a €2 billion resilience package to address the huge needs of Ukraine and neighbouring countries. This facility is helping citizens, companies and governments to overcome difficulties resulting from the war.

At the same time, the Bank has been careful not to lose sight of the directions its Governors set in the Strategic and Capital Framework 2021-2025: creating a world that is more **green, digital** and **equal**. Across the economies where we operate, the Bank has continued to make investments and expand policy engagement to advance these dimensions of the development agenda. In the digital sector, highlighted in this issue of the *Law in Transition Journal*, the Bank's activities focus on three areas:

- Promoting the **foundations** of a sustainable and inclusive digital economy through the adoption of appropriate policies and regulations, access to connectivity through infrastructure, and a skilled workforce.
- Facilitating organisations' **adaptation** by providing access to finance, technical cooperation and advisory services that support digitalisation of services, assets, business processes and value chains.
- Fostering **innovation** and sustainable growth among digital-first clients through an ecosystem of policy and advisory services, as well as debt finance and direct and indirect equity investments.

I believe the EBRD can add exceptional value to the development of these areas in the economies where we invest. The work of the Legal Transition Programme, which is integrated with the EBRD's policy work in our countries of operations, is particularly relevant to the first

area, as it actively promotes policies and regulations for the digitalisation of government services. The stories in this issue of the *Law in Transition Journal* showcase our work on this theme. From cloud computing and blockchain in government services in Poland, to digitising mining geodata in Mongolia, to digitalising the work of court bailiffs and promoting open contracting data standards in public contracts, our specialists have shared a wealth of expertise.

To help accelerate the digital transition, the Bank created a Digital Hub in January 2022. The Hub should help the Bank further develop a coordinated and coherent digitalisation offer to countries and clients. As a concrete example, the Hub is already providing support in pilot policy products such as a cyber-security tool kit. The Hub will also take the lead on external engagement and outreach, prioritising cooperation and partnership with other international financial institutions.

Besides its digital focus, this issue of the journal also touches on another direction of our Strategic and Capital Framework 2021-2025. The green agenda has been, and will continue being, a leading priority of our work. I am delighted that this journal also discusses questions relating to climate change and sustainability, in particular the EBRD's efforts to contribute to the COP26 commitments made in Glasgow last year.

More than ever, there is a need to strengthen legislative and policy frameworks in the economies where the EBRD works to help them weather the current crisis and those yet to come. As UN Secretary General António Guterres so correctly observed: "*Facing dramatic global challenges, we need a global capacity to address them that reaffirms the importance of multilateralism and the importance of a rules-based set of international relations, based on the rule of law and in accordance with the UN Charter.*" Through our policy dialogue and technical cooperation, we are proud to contribute to this process and the pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



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