

PUBLIC

**DOCUMENT OF THE EUROPEAN BANK
FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

STRATEGY FOR MONTENEGRO

**REPORT ON THE INVITATION
TO THE PUBLIC TO COMMENT**

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to summarise the key comments received from stakeholders during the consultation period on the Bank's Strategy for Montenegro and provide the Bank's management response.

In accordance with the EBRD Access to Information Policy (AIP), the draft strategy for Montenegro was posted on the EBRD website in English and Montenegrin for 45 calendar days, starting from 7 July 2021. The public was invited to comment on the draft strategy no later than 21 August 2021. The previous strategy was also made available on the EBRD website at <https://www.ebrd.com/where-we-are/montenegro/overview.html>.

Information about the public consultation process was posted on the EBRD's dedicated "Have your say" webpage, which highlights the latest opportunities for the public to comment on the Bank's policies and strategies under review. Targeted notifications of the consultation process were sent to local and international civil society organisations (CSOs) that have expressed interest in the Bank's work in the country.

During the consultation period, no written comments have been received by the EBRD.

In line with the Bank's increased efforts to involve civil society at an early stage of country strategy development, the EBRD organised a consultative meeting with civil society organisations (in virtual format) on 20 May 2021.

The objective of the meeting was to gather civil society's feedback during the preparatory phase for developing the draft strategy. Six CSO representatives from different civil society organisations participated in the consultation.

The EBRD was represented by the Head of Montenegro, the Associate Director for Country Strategy Coordination, as well as the Economics, Policy and Governance, the Country Strategy and the Civil Society Engagement teams.

The summary of the key messages and the list of CSO participants in the consultation process are provided in the Annex 1 to this report.

EBRD Strategy for Montenegro
Consultation with civil society, 20 May 2021

Summary of key messages from CSOs:

- Civil society organisations endorsed the priority of strengthening competitiveness by enhancing private sector capacity and improving the business environment. In particular, CSOs view EBRD support as needed in the area of facilitating access to finance for SMEs and young entrepreneurs (including women). They ask that the Bank also help foster stability of the investment climate and fiscal policy.
- CSOs also welcomed the Bank's focus on deepening Montenegro's Green Economy Transition, highlighting that more needs to be done to build capacity and educate the private sector on GET, especially regarding circular economy and renewable energy.
- Civil society representatives further endorsed the Bank's support for greater connectivity and integration by expanding cross-border transport, energy and digital links. CSOs consider digital transformation to be particularly important for the country's development.
- According to CSOs, further improvements are necessary in the area of gender and economic inclusion, especially with regard to economic disparities and access to the labour market for women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. CSOs also shared their concern regarding a perceived shrinking space for civil society and lack of proper inclusion into public consultations and policy making.

List of CSOs participating in the consultation process

1. Center for Democracy and Human Rights
2. Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
3. Association of Business Women of Montenegro
4. Chamber of Economy of Montenegro
5. Centre for Development of NGOs
6. Centre for Civic Education