

PUBLIC

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

**STRATEGY FOR ALBANIA  
REPORT ON THE INVITATION  
TO THE PUBLIC TO COMMENT**

PUBLIC

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the EBRD Public Information Policy (PIP), the draft Strategy for Albania was posted on the EBRD website in English and Albanian for 45 calendar days, starting from 6 November 2015 to 14 December 2015. The previous Strategy was also made available on the EBRD website in English and Albanian at <http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/country/strategy/albania.pdf>.

Information about the public consultation process was posted on the EBRD's dedicated webpage "Have your say", which highlights the latest opportunities for the public to comment on the Bank's policies and strategies under review. In addition, 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. The start of the review process was also advertised through social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Twitter).

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 (CSOs) on 21 September 2015 in Tirana to gather civil society's feedback during the preparatory phase leading to the draft strategy. The consultation provided a platform for dialogue between civil society representatives and EBRD staff involved in the country strategy preparation process.

The consultative meeting was chaired by the Head of the Resident Office in Albania. The workshop attracted civil society representatives from 12 local civil society organisations. The summary of the meeting and list of participating organisations are provided in the Annex to this report.

During the consultation period no comments were received by the Bank in written format.

## ANNEX 1

**Summary of EBRD meeting with civil society – 21 September 2015, Tirana**

On 21 September 2015 the EBRD Resident Office in Albania hosted a workshop with civil society representatives in Tirana. The event was attended by 13 participants from 12 local civil society organisations. Following a presentation on the Bank's activities and key operational priorities in the forthcoming EBRD Strategy by the Head of the Tirana Resident Office, the floor was opened for a roundtable discussion on a wide range of topics, including sustainable energy and climate, good governance and investment climate, inclusion of youth and women, and the Bank's engagement with civil society.

Participants welcomed the Bank's approach in consulting civil society at an early stage of the country strategy process and encouraged the Bank to pursue dialogue with civil society as part of institutional decision-making processes. CSO representatives furthermore broadly endorsed the main operational priorities set forth in the upcoming country strategy for Albania.

***Engagement with civil society***

Civil society participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss with the EBRD the key activities and results of the strategy period (2013-2015), and proposed strategic directions for the new country strategy. CSO representatives enquired about the Bank's engagement and consultation with civil society throughout the forthcoming Strategy's implementation. The Bank was also encouraged to engage in a continuous dialogue with the civil society sector according to specific sectors of interest to the Bank.

The Bank envisages a formal consultation process during the course of the country strategy preparation, nevertheless in order to ensure public access to information the EBRD routinely discloses information on its website and sends regular notifications via email to CSOs registered in the Bank's database. The Bank pursues an open dialogue with civil society and welcomes queries that can be addressed to the Civil Society Engagement Unit or directly to the Resident Office.

The levels of the Bank's engagement with civil society are information sharing, dialogue, consultation and cooperation. In the context of the Civil Society Capacity Building Framework, approved by the Bank in 2013, the EBRD Civil Society Engagement Unit has been developing technical cooperation projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of CSOs either as beneficiaries or implementing partners. In Albania, one technical cooperation project of this kind has been implemented on the issue of good governance and support to the investment climate.

***Sustainable energy and climate***

Environmental organisations asked for clarifications regarding the Bank's investments aimed at combating climate change, and encouraged the Bank to invest in renewable energies, in particular solar energy.

The EBRD Energy Sector Strategy provides the strategic guidelines for the Bank's energy investments in all the countries where the Bank operates. In Albania, the EBRD will continue to support investments in renewable energy, including hydro, wind and solar power. The Bank will also continue investing in energy efficiency in buildings and supporting access to finance through financial intermediaries with dedicated facilities on energy efficiency and renewable energy. To strengthen energy security, the Bank will support power and gas interconnections with neighbouring countries. While pursuing investments in the energy sector, the Bank ensures that projects are structured in accordance with the international standards set forth in its Environmental and Social Policy, thus contributing to the achievement of higher standards in the sector.

### ***Good governance and investment climate***

Civil society regards as a priority the promotion of good governance practices for the improvement of the investment climate, and the enabling environment for the civil society sector.

Albania has been one of the first countries where the Bank piloted its Investment Climate and Governance Initiative. To support the efforts of the Albanian government in tackling informality and business related corruption, the Bank has established the Investment Council, and has been supporting the capacity enhancement of the Albanian School of Public Administration and the National Coordinator on Anti-Corruption in developing awareness raising initiatives targeting the private and the civil society sector.

### ***Inclusion of youth and women***

Civil society representatives recommended the EBRD to support the economic empowerment of women, in particular in the context of large gender gaps and informal labour market in the country. The Bank also received recommendations to engage more broadly with universities to encourage dialogue with youth on economic and financial matters.

The Bank mainstreams gender across its projects and has adopted its Strategy on the promotion of Gender Equality on 9 December 2015. In Albania, the Bank runs a Programme for Women in Business, which aims at providing advisory services and enhancing access to credit for women entrepreneurs. The EBRD Civil Society Engagement Unit took notes of the interest expressed by the academic sector to provide students with opportunities for engagement with the Bank.

**List of participating organisations to the consultation meeting in Tirana on 21 September 2015**

1. Foreign Investors Association of Albania
2. Regional Development Agency
3. MedAlb Institute
4. Albaforest Centre
5. Albanian Center for Economic Research
6. BKTF Coalition
7. Albanian Women's Network
8. Union for Albanian Civil Society
9. Partners Albania
10. University of Tirana, Faculty of Economics
11. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania
12. PFGE North Albania