

PUBLIC

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

STRATEGY FOR ARMENIA

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

PUBLIC

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to summarise key comments received from stakeholders during the consultation period on the Bank's strategy for Armenia and to provide the Bank's management responses. The comments received during the public consultation period, if any, were reviewed by the Bank's management and reflected in the strategy as appropriate.

In accordance with the EBRD Public Information Policy (PIP), the draft strategy for Armenia was posted on the EBRD website in English and Russian for 45 calendar days from 25 September 2019. The public was invited to submit comments on the draft strategy no later than 9 November 2019. The previous strategy was also made available on the EBRD website at <https://www.ebrd.com/armenia.html>.

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 national and international civil society organisations (CSOs) that have expressed interest in the Bank's work in the country.

No written comments on the draft strategy for Armenia were received during the public consultation period.

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 on 25 July 2019 in Yerevan to gather civil society's feedback during the preparatory phase for developing the draft strategy. The consultation provided a platform for dialogue between civil society representatives and EBRD staff involved in the strategy preparation process, including senior management. A summary of the meeting and list of participating organisations are provided in the Annex to this report.

Summary of EBRD's consultation meeting with civil society on 25 July 2019 in Yerevan

As part of the public consultation process, the EBRD organised a consultation meeting on 25 July 2019 in the Yerevan Resident Office that was attended by representatives of nine civil society organisations. Participants discussed the upcoming country strategy for Armenia; EBRD gathered CSOs' views on the civil society landscape and recent political developments overall, as well as on the specific challenges and opportunities in the fields of transparency, governance, inclusion, responsible mining, as well as green transition.

Strategic directions, implementation risks and Political Assessment

Civil society representatives were broadly supportive of the strategic priority areas proposed by the Bank for the new strategy period. Regarding the first strategic priority area "Strengthen private sector Competitiveness, improve Governance and support business environment reforms" CSOs advised that EBRD should continue and expand its focus on helping to improve the investment climate and strengthen competitiveness in Armenia. Furthermore, EBRD should support de-monopolisation efforts and continue promoting corporate governance and transparency, where CSOs see remaining challenges for the country. In relation to the second strategic priority "Promote sustainable infrastructure through commercialisation and Green Economy Transition" CSOs welcomed the Bank's focus on the development of renewable energy and on modernisation of the energy infrastructure. They suggested that there were more untapped opportunities for the Bank to explore in the renewable energy sector.

CSOs noted the continued importance of strong environmental and social safeguards as well as well-functioning grievance mechanisms for Bank projects. Some representatives emphasises that the Bank should facilitate better access to information for local civil society stakeholders.

In terms of the Political Assessment, CSOs commented that it was a good reflection of the situation on the ground in Armenia. Civil society participants elaborated on their concerns regarding remaining transition challenges and pointed out that the effort to address corruption, transparency and accountability issues in Armenia was of an ongoing nature.

List of CSO represented at the consultation meetings

- Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC)
- AUA Center for Responsible Mining
- Center for Development of Civil Society
- Corporate Governance Centre
- EcoLur Press Club
- Ecoteam of Armenia
- International Center for Human Development
- Transparency International Armenia
- Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development