

EBRD-CSO Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with the EBRD



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development



EBRD releases position statement on retaliation against civil society and project stakeholders

In January on ebrd.com we released our position statement on retaliation against civil society and project stakeholders. The statement aims to signal clearly the EBRD's zero-tolerance policy on retaliation. We do not accept actions by our clients or other project counterparties that amount to retaliation – including threats, intimidation, harassment or violence – against those who voice their opinions about the activities of the EBRD or our clients.

We take seriously all credible allegations of reprisals. This is why we have set up mechanisms that detail how to prevent and handle potential cases of retaliation.

First, we have a specialised team, the EBRD Civil Society Engagement Unit, which promotes institutional dialogue with civil society. Civil society organisations (CSOs) and stakeholders affected by projects must be able to provide feedback, voice opposition and raise concerns with the EBRD and with EBRD clients. This ensures that any negative impacts of EBRD-financed projects are avoided, minimised or mitigated appropriately.

Second, we have developed internal guidelines that explain how to handle

allegations of retaliation for complaints about EBRD projects. We are also raising awareness among our staff to ensure the implementation of these guidelines. The key principle behind them is that every individual or group has the right to criticise EBRD projects or to lodge complaints about them without experiencing threats to their safety or fearing retribution.

We also work with EBRD clients to build and maintain a constructive dialogue with locally affected communities, CSOs and other stakeholders and to ensure that human rights are respected in EBRD-financed projects.

This statement is our contribution to a safer space for dialogue with civil society about EBRD-financed projects and other activities that the Bank supports.

The full position statement is available on our website: <https://www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/civil-society-overview.html>

January - March 2019

Welcome to the CSO Newsletter

Since the beginning of the year, the Civil Society Engagement Unit (CSEU) has travelled extensively to facilitate discussions with CSOs on EBRD policies, strategies and projects. Across these consultations, we have received feedback that the implementation of high standards and transparency is key, whether as part of our good governance policies or at project level in the hydropower sector (see pages 3 and 4).

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So what comes next? The 2019 edition of the Civil Society Programme! We are excited to welcome you to Sarajevo, where we look forward to your participation in our panels, discussions with the EBRD President and Board of Directors, and a new exhibition of CSO solutions to regional and global challenges in cooperation with the Paris Peace Forum – find details on page 2. See you in May!



For more information visit:
www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/civil-society/news-and-events



What's on at the Civil Society Programme

The 2019 Civil Society Programme revolves around the theme of building stronger communities by bringing together civil society, business and the public sector. In pursuit of this vision, a new feature of the Civil Society Programme will include a CSO exhibition titled "Connecting for Solutions", which is organised in cooperation with the Paris Peace Forum. The Programme agenda will provide representatives from CSOs with opportunities to engage with Bank staff, management, Board Directors and businesses on a range of issues of mutual interest. As such, it will include on 8 and 9 May a number of closed sessions for civil society representatives on dedicated topics as well as open sessions and panel discussions where Business Forum guests are also welcome.

About the location

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a rich and fascinating cultural history: it has long been open to eastern and western European influences alike and underwent Byzantine and Ottoman conquests. Today, its strong political, trade and business links – both to the European Union and to other countries in central and south-eastern Europe – make Bosnia and Herzegovina a strategic location for investment opportunities throughout the region.

Panels and discussions

You are invited to participate in thematic discussions on EBRD projects in energy and natural resources, municipal and

environmental infrastructure, and the climate finance portfolio. The Programme will include three multi-stakeholder panel discussions and a special topic presented by the Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return Initiative (FAIRR), focusing on vulnerability to antimicrobial resistance as well as on environmental and social megatrends. The first of the three panels envisaged will debate the extent to which business and civil society share values and objectives and can join forces to promote sustainable development and optimise impact. A joint panel with the United Nations Development Programme will focus on transparency in public procurement. A third panel will explore how civil society can play a role in connecting for solutions to manage a "just transition" towards inclusive and resilient, low-carbon economies, which avoids "stranding" communities and workers. These sessions will be open to all guests attending the Business Forum as well as the Civil Society Programme, with the aim of promoting dialogue among representatives from the civil society, public and private sectors.

How to register

As an official representative of your organisation at the Civil Society Programme, you are invited to attend the Business Forum free of charge. The theme of the 2019 Business Forum is *Connecting Economies for Stronger Growth*. The fee is waived for a maximum of two representatives per organisation (inclusive of interpreters). However,

please note that the EBRD does not provide financial support for any other expenses related to participation in the Programme.

For the latest information and updates on registration, visit www.ebrd.com/am. Should you require a visa to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina, please follow the instructions in your registration confirmation email.

More opportunities to get involved

Our revised good governance policies will be launched as part of the Civil Society Programme. During this session, you will learn how we have incorporated your feedback and you will be able to discuss with EBRD staff the changes we have made. See page 3.

You are also invited to participate in two sessions on the review of the Transport Sector Strategy and the Property and Tourism Sector Strategy 2020-24. Your participation will contribute to the drafting of these strategies.

Another session will update you on the implementation of the EBRD's Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2016-2020.

DIALOGUE

Consultations on country strategies and more



Country strategy for Turkey

As part of the public consultation process during the review of our country strategy for Turkey, the EBRD held two consultation meetings on 7 March 2019, hosted by the Resident Office in Istanbul. The Bank's suggested strategic priority areas, supporting the EBRD transition qualities, were broadly endorsed by civil society participants. The draft strategy is expected to be published for a 45-day public consultation period in May or June 2019. We look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Board consultation visit to Kosovo and North Macedonia

A delegation of the Board of Directors of the EBRD, who represent the Bank's shareholders, visited Kosovo and North Macedonia in early February. The Board representatives met with civil society on 4 February in Pristina and on 8 February in Skopje. The meetings provided an opportunity to discuss key operational issues of relevance from a civil society perspective.



EBRD adopts country strategy for Slovenia

The EBRD has adopted a new country strategy for Slovenia for the period 2019-24. The new plan focuses on areas where the Bank remains [additional](#) in the country, such as equity financing, capital market

instruments, cross-border investment and green economy technologies and products. The two main operational priorities are a) boosting competitiveness and good governance by championing privatisation, while deploying innovative instruments to support private firms; and b) supporting the transition to a green economy by promoting new green technologies.

We organised a consultation meeting with civil society in Ljubljana on 14 November 2018 and an open consultation period in December and January.

For more information about the EBRD in Slovenia visit <https://www.ebrd.com/slovenia.html>



EBRD consults civil society in Kyrgyz Republic

On 13 March, the EBRD Resident Office in Bishkek held a consultation meeting with local civil society representatives to discuss the upcoming country strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic. Attending civil society representatives broadly endorsed the strategic priorities that the Bank proposed for the new strategy period and, in particular, supported the work envisaged in the area of the green economy. CSOs also focused on remaining transition challenges in relation to Article 1, especially transparency in the judicial system.

Good governance

In February and March 2019, the EBRD held eight consultation meetings, in London and across the economies where we invest, gathering feedback on our three good governance policies, which are currently under review: the Public Information Policy, the Rules of Procedures of the Project Complaint Mechanism, and the Environmental and Social Policy. More than 300 of you seized the opportunity to speak to us in person at one of these meetings, and many more submitted written suggestions. Your suggestions included:

- enhancing stakeholder engagement, transparency and disclosure practices, especially for category B projects and sub-projects financed by partner financial intermediaries
- strengthening the human rights commitments in the Environmental and Social Policy
- adapting the policies to local circumstances for the purpose of implementation, taking into account the different languages, cultures and social conditions across the EBRD regions
- integrating substantive provisions designed to prevent and address reprisals or threats to individuals, communities or groups who might request or share information or submit formal complaints

The draft policies are due for consideration by the Board of Directors in late April. Following approval, a full report on public comments will be published on our [website](#). We will report back to you in our next newsletter about the impact of your feedback on the final policies.

IN BRIEF

Meeting of the Environmental and Social Advisory Council

The EBRD's [Environmental and Social Advisory Council](#) (ESAC), an independent body of environmental specialists who advise the EBRD on environmental issues such as policy, international standards, technical development, emerging trends and future opportunities, held its first official meeting of 2019 on 31 January. ESAC members discussed the review of the good governance policies and provided suggestions, in particular on environmental sustainability, human rights commitments and safeguarding good working conditions. Members also considered the recently reviewed Energy Sector Strategy approved in December 2018.



Joint EBRD-CSO event in Belgrade on hydropower in the Western Balkans

On 1 March the EBRD, together with the organisers of the Save the Blue Heart of Europe campaign, held a multi-stakeholder workshop on hydropower in the Western Balkans. The event took place in Belgrade and was attended by representatives from civil society, national regulators and financial intermediaries investing in hydropower developments in the region. The workshop aimed to provide a space for dialogue on sustainability in the Western Balkans hydropower sector. At the event the EBRD also launched its new good practice note for financial intermediaries investing in hydropower. The EBRD training that covers issues in the Environmental and Social Guidance Note for Hydropower Projects will be mandatory for all financial intermediaries interested in investing in hydropower with EBRD financing. Check [ebrd.com](#) to access the full text of this guidance note.

EBRD adopts shadow carbon pricing methodology

Since January 2019 the Bank has been applying shadow carbon pricing as part of an economic assessment of projects in any sector that have the potential to significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions. During the preparation of the shadow carbon pricing methodology, the Bank took into consideration written comments from civil society stakeholders as well as the feedback received during the consultation meetings for the Energy Sector Strategy review. Find details of our methodology on [ebrd.com](#).

Key dates and contacts

Country strategies: public comment periods

Kyrgyz Republic	May-June 2019
Turkey	May-June 2019
Turkmenistan	2019

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News from our partners

The Paris Peace Forum calls on all organisations to bring concrete and innovative solutions that tackle global challenges and to present them at its second annual event, from 11 to 13 November in Paris. Check parispeaceforum.org for more information and submit your proposal by 13 May 2019.

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