

## Foreword

### Happy New Year and welcome to the CSO Newsletter!

In this issue, we reflect on our activity at the end of 2021, with a focus on the EBRD's participation in the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. The Civil Society Engagement team, along with colleagues from other multilateral development banks (MDBs), also organised the second symposium on Bringing Civil Society Back into policy dialogue to foster a more inclusive society.



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links to more content

During the last months of 2021, the Bank published a number of major strategies and methodology documents, to which our civil-society partners made crucial contributions during the consultation process. These publications included the Bank's new Promotion of Gender Equality and Equality of Opportunity strategies, its first Digital Approach to advancing transition and a consultation document on the Bank's Paris Agreement alignment methodology for indirect finance. A flagship publication for the EBRD was the Transition Report 2021-22 on digital transformation.

Looking ahead to the first months of 2022, we aim to deliver an equally ambitious agenda that focuses on civil society and has an impact on the ground. We want to continue the dialogue with our partners and civil-society representatives and further expand into new areas of concern for civil-society organisations (CSOs). In this edition, we also provide you with an overview of our activity and look ahead to CSO activity at the beginning of 2022.

Happy reading!  
The CSE team

# MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

## EBRD at COP26

At the turn of the year, global leaders came together in Glasgow for the COP26 United Nations climate conference. The EBRD and its non-governmental partners had a significant presence there. Working to a limited timeframe, the 197 parties agreed to the Glasgow Climate Pact, though it was watered down somewhat at the last minute.

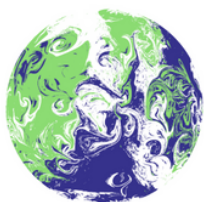
The deal received a mixed reaction. Some governments viewed it as a major step forward; others said it did not go far enough. In the midst of the controversy, an impactful event took place – a panel discussion entitled “COP 26; Views from the EBRD and Civil Society Partners”, which explored how the decisions taken at COP26 and changes happening today might affect our lives and the lives of future generations.

After COP26, the EBRD Civil Society team organised a panel discussion with senior experts from the Bank and civil-society partners to reflect on the climate summit and consider how international finance organisations – the EBRD in particular – and CSOs could engage and cooperate to bring about meaningful and inclusive climate action.



### Key takeaways from the panel

- The COP 26 conference was a **good step** forward, **but we need to take a massive leap forward**.
- **Climate action** needs to be accelerated – the poorest countries and populations are most affected by the impacts of climate change and COP 26 failed to address the needs of the most vulnerable, including children.
- **Children and youth voices** need to be brought to the fore.
- A **greater focus on governance and rights-based approaches** will create the transparency and ambition needed to tackle climate change and inequality, especially in market-based solutions.
- **Promoting gender equality** is key to a sustainable transition. Even though women and girls remain more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they are not just victims, but also champions of climate-related solutions.
- **Cooperation and partnership with like-minded organisations** is key to building open, sustainable market economies. Sharing knowledge and learning with each other will lead to more efficient and effective



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY





# MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

## POLICY ACTIVITY

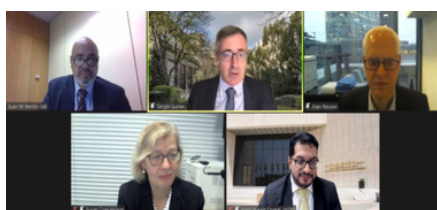
### Bringing civil society back in – MDBs’ role in an inclusive future

The past year was yet another year of uncertainty and crisis. In times like these, turning community engagement into true partnerships is particularly important, and CSOs are our entry point to communities. Only by accurately assessing the risks in their businesses will the EBRD, other MDBs and their clients be ready to face new challenges. They also must secure the social licence to operate.

Discussions around the perceived “failure of capitalism” highlight the critical role of civil society as a conduit that will enable all stakeholders to work together in a resilient, sustainable, inclusive, climate-friendly way.

Early in 2021, we hosted a first symposium – Bringing civil society back in - transition after the pandemic – on how to build a more inclusive and vibrant society and how to support a more inclusive recovery after the pandemic.

Following this event, we held a second symposium in late November, where we looked at how MDBs could begin to work more proactively with civil society and on behalf of the communities we were established to serve.



#### Key takeaways from the event

- **Cooperation with CSOs at project level.** In a world of imperfect democracies, the accountability of national, regional and municipal authorities is crucial to our operations. To create impactful partnerships and projects, it is imperative to work with CSOs and involve them in project design at an early stage, especially as CSOs are usually better informed about the challenges local communities face.
- **Training and knowledge exchange for CSOs.** Building the capacity of civil society is crucial to achieving transition. CSOs need more support in the form of training, conferences and platforms for knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices, as well as opportunities to create platforms to bring together civil-society stakeholders from different countries.
- **Protecting civic space.** Although it is not an MDB’s job to do what civil society does, MDBs have a crucial role to play in protecting civic space and setting an example for governments when it comes to working with civil society. Companies and civil society usually take a more long-term view than governments, making them a natural ally for MDBs in achieving their development goals. The private sector, therefore, needs to understand that to make their countries investable, they need to make progress in civil society-related areas, such as good governance, gender, inclusion, the green transition and digitalisation.

### Renewed partnerships with UNODC and Save the Children

The end of 2021 was a busy period for the EBRD CSE team, amid numerous strategy consultations and policy engagements. A key highlight at the end of the year was the renewal of the memorandum of understanding between the EBRD and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

With UNODC, we have partnered on a project to promote more transparent and accountable governance systems by establishing a national-level dialogue platform to coordinate and foster public-private partnerships on anti-corruption. This project targets all five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), with an initial pilot initiative in Uzbekistan to support implementation of the 2018 Law on Public Control and to promote external and independent oversight with a view to setting a benchmark for the region.

Similarly, in January 2022, the EBRD renewed its partnership with Save the Children. We formed this partnership in 2019 to broaden our dialogue to new issues of mutual interest, such as approaching technical cooperation projects with a special focus on children, gender and economic inclusion. Our plans include extending policy dialogue to additional areas of interest, such as the care economy, climate change and value chains.

# OVERVIEW OF CSE ACTIVITY

Last year, the CSE team continued its active engagement with its valued CSO partners, enhancing its cooperation and outreach. The CSE conducted numerous consultations and public panel events, for example, organising meetings with CSOs and the EBRD President, orchestrating country visits for the Board and implementing technical cooperation projects under the Capacity Enhancement Framework. The result was enhanced dialogue, clearer understanding between the EBRD and CSOs, and the delivery of better and more inclusive policies and investments. Focusing on sustainable energy and resources, economic inclusion, good governance and digital transformation, the CSE commits to the EBRD's mandate and uses its tools to create impactful change in the economies where the Bank invests.

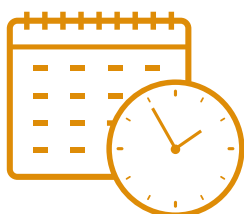
The CSE team had held the following events as of December 2021

**19** Country/sector strategy consultations

**10** Presidential CSO meetings

**20** CSE external activities

**6** Board country visits



## Contacts

### Civil Society Engagement Unit

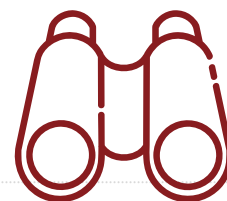
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# LOOKING AHEAD



- The EBRD is reviewing its **Paris Agreement alignment** methodology for EBRD indirect finance. Send us your comments by **4 February 2022**.
- Our **Kazakhstan country strategy** consultation runs until **6 February 2022**.

## HAVE YOUR SAY



Review all our open consultations

## EBRD PUBLICATIONS



**EBRD  
TRANSITION  
REPORT  
2021-22**



**DIGITAL  
APPROACH TO  
ADVANCING  
TRANSITION**



**Strategies for  
the Promotion  
of Gender  
Equality and  
Equality of  
Opportunity**



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