

EBRD Civil Society Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

The EBRD Civil Society Steering Committee serves as an additional forum for dialogue and communication between the Bank and civil societies. The Civil Society Steering Committee is established under the new EBRD Strategic Approach for civil society engagement to help the Bank to enhance its civil society engagement.

The strategic approach builds on existing EBRD efforts and provide a systematic approach for mainstreaming community and civil society engagement in EBRD-supported policies, programmes, projects, and knowledge work, to improve their development results and, within the scope of these operations, contribute to building sustainable national systems for citizen engagement and the private sector.

Background

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play multiple roles in society, ranging from advocacy, mobilisation and participation in policy processes and accountability systems to complementing the governments and institutions' actions in delivering services to populations. In the past 30 years, CSOs have emerged as a major force in international development.¹ CSOs represent shared values, objectives, and ideals (cultural, social, economic, or political) and enable citizens to express opinions. They also voice the concerns of specific populations (including marginalised groups), represent their interests at various levels and facilitate their direct engagement. Moreover, CSOs can create alternative solutions and services to those of the state, raise awareness about local and global challenges, and facilitate action to address these issues. Their distinct added value lies in their expertise, proximity to citizens, and knowledge derived from their different activities. An empowered civil society is, therefore, a crucial component of any democratic system.

The EBRD Civil Society Engagement (CSE) team is currently reviewing its strategic approach for civil society engagement. Building on the experiences of other IFIs and MDBs, such as the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank, the EBRD now aims to set up its own Civil Society Steering Committee to further strengthen the role of civil society in the development of its interventions and to effectively address bottlenecks in stakeholder/ civil society engagement in its operations.

Purpose and functions

The Civil Society Steering Committee will serve as an interlocutor for the EBRD to effectively achieve its objective of civil society integration; a mean for meaningful engagement; and a platform for a diverse group of civil society representatives to voice their concerns, share ideas and experiences on a wide range of development issues. The CSO representatives in the Committee are expected to act as a bridge between the EBRD and CSOs in the EBRD regions, particularly with local, grassroots organisations. It is anticipated that the Committee members will voice the opinions and concerns of local CSOs and communities in their respective regions. The Steering Committee will also actively contribute to the planning of the Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum (AM).

¹ [World Bank](#), 2022

Composition/Membership

The Civil Society Steering Committee will be comprised of 9-12 members selected among the civil society stakeholders of the Bank. Representation is based on several factors, including: (1) geographic representation of the EBRD regions, (2) country-level representation for the countries where the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum will take place during the specific Committee cycle, and (3) the EBRD's INGO partners. It is expected that the Committee members will commit to joining calls and otherwise actively participate in the works of the Committee. The CSE team will facilitate the meetings of the Committee and invite the relevant Bank staff, where deemed necessary.

Roles of the Civil Society Steering Committee

Working closely with the CSE team, the advisory Civil Society Steering Committee will:

- support the organisation of the Annual Meeting panels by highlighting issues of importance relevant to civil societies in the countries where AM will take place and coordinating the participant CSOs during the AM;
- be consulted early in the process of preparing the agenda and panels for the CSO Programme at the Annual Meeting;
- support with the revision process of EBRD country and sector strategies, as well as CSO consultation meetings.
- review and provide guidance and expertise on the implementation of the EBRD's strategic approach for civil society engagement;
- help the Bank to bring the broader CSO community closer and act as an entry point to reach out to local, grassroots CSOs in the EBRD region;
- strengthen the Bank's accountability and transparency;
- provide advice with civil society perspective on areas of development, such as inclusive consultations process, safety issues, retaliation, etc. and work together with CSE to find the best possible solutions;
- propose new ideas to the EBRD CSE team to improve stakeholder engagement or give opinions on ideas presented by the EBRD;
- serve as a forum for dialogue on what is working well and what is not and suggesting appropriate adjustments;

Timeframe

Membership to the committee will start on the date of acceptance. The term of each committee is a period of 2 years. The Committee will meet regularly, no fewer than 4 times per year. Candidates must be eager to actively engage with civil society in their region and volunteer a few hours a month for calls, emails, meetings, and other work, and more intensively during the preparation of the Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting.

Eligibility criteria

All entities seeking to apply to participate in the CSO Steering Committee must meet the following criteria:

- The aims and purposes of the applicant entity should be consistent with the EBRD and conform with EBRD's policies;
- The entity should be considered a nongovernmental organisation in line with the [definition set by the EBRD](#);
- Geographical representation of the EBRD region
- CSO Steering Committee members will have good connectivity and communication tools such as internet and a working e-mail account.
- In addition to the online application, interested organisations must provide 2 reference letters. The letters should be 1 page long each, written in English. Please submit your reference letters to: cso@ebrd.com

Application: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DP71M8/>