7. EBRD achievements

EBRD institutional capacity building

AMR can be perceived as complex and is unfamiliar to some. Addressing AMR requires a cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary One Health approach. Questions about AMR raised by colleagues are valuable entry points from which to start conversations on AMR, and this has been one of the approaches adopted by the Bank to raise awareness. As of September 2024, 23 AMR articles had been posted on the Bank's intranet, while 20 internal workshops had taken place. For the workshops, various outside speakers were invited from academia, research organisations, industry, philanthropic organisations, civil society, the WHO and the World Bank. World AMR Awareness Week is marked every November by a staff campaign to increase AMR awareness in the EBRD community. The Bank's Communications Department also used social media to indicate the Bank's support for WAAW to external audiences. The Japanese government supported medical consultants who provided scientific assurances for the EBRD's AMR work for three years.

Technical cooperation for clients and beyond

The Bank has carried out AMR risk management capacity-building technical cooperation programmes for healthcare service, PPP hospital, national Covid-19 response, pharmaceutical and agribusiness projects in Egypt, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Türkiye and Ukraine and across the EBRD regions. The programmes support institutional capacity building, identified as a priority in the NAPs on AMR in the economies where the Bank operates. Lifelong professional training schemes in the medical field are lacking in many countries where AMS is in its infancy. Participating medical professionals welcomed the technical cooperation training.

For healthcare services and hospital clients, the AMR technical cooperation programmes focused on (i) IPC, (ii) microbiology laboratory capacity building, (iii) AMS and (iv) surveillance. Experts from the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) assessed client capacity and existing risk management systems at facility level, provided advisory services for actions and held training events. AMR-related guidance from the WHO, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the BSAC, the ECDC, ministries of health and NAPs has been applied to the Bank's technical cooperation work. Technical cooperation programmes aim to bring sectoral GIP to clients through step-by-step actions in the specific country context.

In Türkiye, the Bank played an instrumental role in organising Turkish experts to conduct a live YouTube AMR workshop (June 2022). More than 280 Turkish medical professionals joined the live session, while more than 2,500 have since watched the recording.[53] Where appropriate, wider healthcare professional communities and regulators have been invited to such training sessions.

The BSAC has developed an online AMR tutorial scheme and an AMS accreditation scheme.[54] The latter was highlighted by the Egyptian delegate at the UNGA-HLM on 26 September 2024 as part of the country's response to AMR and has been part of EBRD projects in Georgia. The BSAC-Pfizer-EBRD Tripartite Alliance for AMR was announced in 2021 to raise awareness of AMR and used the BSAC's open-access e-learning resources for the Bank's healthcare clients following a memorandum of understanding with the BSAC in 2020.

[53] See Turkish Ministry of Health (2022).
[54] See BSAC (2021).

In the pharmaceutical sector, an AMR capacity-building technical cooperation programme in Kazakhstan in 2024 was the first such programme in Central Asia focused on sectoral AMS, based on the Common Antibiotic Manufacturing Framework of the AMR Industry Alliance (see Section 9)[55] and good manufacturing practice (GMP). Pharmaceutical companies in the economies where the EBRD operates are helping to secure timely patient access to critical medicines, such as antibiotics, while their role in promoting responsible antibiotic use is valued in the context of NAPs. The BSAC's pharmaceutical industrial experts have provided insights into the business and AMR nexus. Kazakhstan remains in the early stages of AMS implementation. However, Bank client and leading Kazakh pharmaceutical company VIVA Pharm's focus on product quality, the consistent implementation of standard operating procedures and an initiative on the rational use of antiseptics to prevent environmental bacterial resistance in plants are a basis for forward-looking actions to address AMR. The technical cooperation in Kazakhstan demonstrated the firm's leadership commitment to AMS and the Bank's additionality in supporting it. It also underscored the importance that AMS in the sector reflect interactions between drug manufacturers, governments, medical professionals, pharmacy retailers, suppliers and patients.

In the agribusiness sector, in 2020, under a long-term collaboration agreement between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the EBRD,[56] the Bank embarked on capacity-building technical cooperation on animal health and food safety in Ukraine. The initiative aimed to improve the sustainability of animal production by reducing risks associated with transboundary animal diseases and AMR. The technical cooperation programme supported responsible antibiotic use in chicken meat production through systematic actions across the entire supply chain: the adoption of voluntary standards on antibiotic use in poultry production and certified and labelled chicken meat on the shelves of Ukrainian supermarkets, with the cooperation of industrial associations and regulators. This was the first such labelling scheme in the region to create new market incentives for the responsible use of antibiotics through the supply chain by raising awareness among producers and consumers.

[55] See AMR Industry Alliance (n.d.).
[56] See FAO Investment Centre (2024).

In 2021, this technical cooperation effort with the FAO was extended to pig production in Ukraine. On the AMR side, it included a veterinary educational curriculum review against WOAH (formally OIE) recommendations, and EU guideline-aligned labelling and monitoring for voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.[57] The FAO's technical expertise and the EBRD's investment capacity are mutually enhancing.[58]

A team of experts from the Institute of Infection, Veterinary and Ecological Sciences at the University of Liverpool was involved in a technical cooperation programme on cross-regional AMR risk management in the livestock sector from 2021 to 2024. The programme was developed to assist the economies in which the EBRD operates in preparing for the EU's revised regulations on antibiotic use in food-producing animals, enforced in January 2022,[59, 60] as well as the bloc's Green Deal (farm-to-fork) objective to reduce the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and aquaculture by 50 per cent by 2030.[61] The team focused on practical guidance for animal food production in EBRD investee economies by integrating biosafety and biosecurity, animal welfare and AMR components. The guidance aims for the most effective use of antibiotics in livestock by avoiding unnecessary, inadequate or abusive use of antibiotics, based on veterinary diagnostics, as well as to preserve WHO medically important antimicrobials for human medicine.[62] Two online training sessions have been provided for Bank staff.

In the wastewater sector, in 2023, the Dutch KWR Water Research Institute conducted a pilot study on wastewater epidemiological surveillance for tracking Covid-19 and other concerns such as AMR. The study found that this surveillance method was a cost-effective early-warning and monitoring tool for Covid-19 occurrence and spread, complementing diagnostic tests. Effective sharing of data with the public and stakeholders can help shape public health policy interventions. The Royal Society of Chemistry's May 2024 position statement on AMR called on governments to "further capitalise on wastewater surveillance technology established during the Covid-19 pandemic to expand our capability to detect biological concerns".[63]

[57] See European Commission (2010).
[58] See EBRD (2021).
[59] See European Union (2018).
[60] See European Union (2019).
[61] See European Commission (n.d.a).
[62] See WHO (2017).
[63] See Royal Society of Chemistry (2024).