

# European Investment Bank's engagement with civil society

## 2020 highlights

The European Investment Bank values its engagement with civil society. We believe that being open improves the quality and sustainability of our policies and the projects we finance. It also increases our accountability towards all our stakeholders. To this end, we actively share information and engage in dialogue with civil society to receive their input.

The EIB engages with its civil society stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- We invite civil society stakeholders to an annual seminar with the EIB's Board of Directors
- We organise public consultations on our key policies
- We host events to explain what we are doing, explore emerging issues and benefit from the feedback and ideas of civil society.

This document describes the EIB's progress in achieving the goals announced during the last seminar between civil society and the Board of Directors, and provides highlights of the EIB's engagement with civil society in 2020.

It is organised by theme:

- environment and climate change;
- social development;
- governance;
- cross-cutting issues.

# Environment and climate change

## Stakeholder engagement on the EIB Group Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025

*March-July 2020*

In November 2019, the EIB's Board of Directors agreed on a new level of commitment towards climate action and environmental sustainability. To make this ambition a reality and guide the transition, a Climate Bank Roadmap (CBR) was required to provide the EIB Group – the EIB with the European Investment Fund – with an operational framework for its activities on climate action and environmental sustainability over the first five years of its commitment, from 2021 to 2025.

Between March and July 2020, stakeholders were invited to contribute to the CBR's development. This was an iterative process, guided by two questionnaires and two series of online engagement webinars. Participation was particularly high as over 250 people took part in the webinars and we received 222 written contributions. An [engagement report](#) summarising the process and the main elements of the feedback received from stakeholders was prepared and published during the fourth quarter of 2020. The EIB Group would like to thank the numerous stakeholders who took the time to contribute.

The CBR was adopted by the EIB's Board of Directors on 11 November 2020. Please visit the [engagement website](#) for more information.

## Massive Open Online Course on nature-based solutions

What are nature-based solutions? How can they help build resilience to disasters and climate change impacts? Why are nature-based solutions relevant? How can different stakeholders, including practitioners, policy-makers businesses and civil society, apply such solutions in their work and everyday life? These are some of the questions that are at the core of a new Nature-Based Solutions Massive Open Online Course ([MOOC](#)) led by the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction ([PEDDR](#)) and the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), supported by the EIB. The EIB contributed to the learning with the business case for nature-based solutions, leveraging its long-standing experience of investing in nature for climate and disaster resilience across the globe. The 2021 MOOC was [announced](#) on the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October and the course will be [available online](#) free of charge starting from January 2021.

## Partnership with the World Resources Institute

*10 December 2020, Luxembourg and online*

The EIB Civil Society team set up an institutional partnership with the World Resources Institute ([WRI](#)), a global research organisation working on issues at the nexus of the environment, the economy and human well-being. The EIB-WRI partnership focuses on information exchange and joint outreach activities on issues of mutual interest such as climate resilience, nature-based solutions and environmental data platforms. In December 2020, WRI hosted a [conversation with EIB President Werner Hoyer](#). This was an opportunity to discuss how public development banks can support a green recovery.

## Webinar on Environmental, Social and Governance metrics and European Sustainable Development Goals Summit

*9 July and 26-30 October 2020*

In 2020, the Bank continued its collaboration with the Brussels-based NGO [CSR Europe](#) with two online events.

The webinar in July focused on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) disclosures and, in particular, on "Which ESG metrics will survive COVID-19?" The event explored how companies and investors reacted to rapidly-changing material topics and how ESG metrics impacted investment decisions, moving from immediate crisis responses into building-back-better.

The second event, the European Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit 2020, took place over five days at the end of October. The overarching theme of the Summit was how to build back better and integrate sustainability into organisations' strategic planning. The event featured plenary sessions with high-level speakers including EIB experts, as well as sector and topic-specific discussions.

## EU Sustainable Finance

*Throughout 2020*

Following the work of the European Commission's Technical Expert Group (TEG), the EU Taxonomy Regulation was formally approved by the European Parliament in June 2020. This will allow for the progressive development of an EU-wide classification system for environmentally sustainable economic activities. EIB Group staff have had an active role in this process, as well as in the development of the **EU Platform on Sustainable Finance**. The Platform was created to complete the taxonomy work for the remaining four environmental sustainability objectives. EIB Group representatives also acted as observers on the new International Platform on Sustainable Finance that pursues similar objectives on a global level.

The EIB contributed to the draft proposal for an EU Ecolabel for financial products that are sold to retail consumers. The Commission-led working group on the **EU Ecolabel** released its third technical draft report in November 2020, followed by a consultation. The proposal will continue to be discussed in 2021.

## Social development

### Improving access to health services, quality education and safe water for children – Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF

*27 January 2020, Brussels (Belgium)*

The EIB Group signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children around the world.

The two institutions committed to investing jointly in quality education and skills training for the most vulnerable children, and to scaling up community-based climate adaptation initiatives in schools and health facilities.

To improve children's climate resilience and access to health services, quality education and safe water, EIB and UNICEF will promote financial innovation including impact investments aimed at boosting financing for development across private and public players. They will also look to help vulnerable groups gain better access to services around the EIB's sustainable infrastructure investments, such as those in water, sanitation and hygiene projects. Pilot projects will be initiated in countries across Europe, Central Asia and Southern and Eastern Africa.

## Governance

### EIB Group Stakeholder Engagement workshop on its draft policy on preventing and deterring prohibited conduct in EIB Group activities

*6 March 2020, Brussels (Belgium)*

The EIB Group organised an engagement workshop to present and discuss its draft revised policy on preventing and deterring prohibited conduct in EIB Group activities (Anti-Fraud Policy). The EIB Group has **zero tolerance of prohibited conduct**, whether occurring in connection with projects and activities financed by the EIB Group or perpetrated by its staff. The **Anti-Fraud Policy** is one of the key reference documents guiding the Group's action in this respect. This workshop aimed to gather stakeholders' inputs as part of the ongoing process to review the policy triggered by recent changes in EU legislation, international best practices, EIB Group policies, as well as lessons learnt from past investigations. The adoption of the new policy is foreseen early in 2021.

## Cross-cutting issues

### EIB Board of Directors seminar with civil society

*4 February 2020, Luxembourg (Luxembourg)*

In February, the EIB welcomed representatives from a broad mix of civil society organisations, including international and local NGOs, think tanks, research and academic institutions and trade unions, to the **9<sup>th</sup> edition of its annual seminar** with its Board of Directors.

The seminar dedicated two sessions to themes defined in collaboration with civil society organisations. During the first one, participants explored how the EIB, as the EU's climate bank, supports the European Green Deal in practice. Then, the positive effects of protecting and promoting quality employment in developing countries provided focus for further discussion.

Finally, the Policy Dialogue Session, opened by EIB President Werner Hoyer, reflected the diversity of civil society organisations in the room. Board members engaged with civil society's suggestions and answered questions on topics ranging from deforestation to working with financial intermediaries, and from promoting urban cycling infrastructure to implementing a just transition toward a carbon-neutral economy.

## Public consultation on the review of the EIB Group Transparency Policy

21 December 2020 – 12 March 2021

The EIB launched a public consultation on the review of the EIB Transparency Policy, which sets out the EIB Group's approach to transparency and stakeholder engagement. The public consultation provides an opportunity to listen to stakeholders and the public, reflect on experience with the transparency policy, and consider appropriate improvements. The public consultation will run until 12 March 2021. In a [webinar](#) on 10 February 2021, EIB staff will engage directly with participants about the key issues at stake within the review.

In line with good practice and to promote the widest possible participation, a dedicated public consultation website – available in [English](#), [French](#) and [German](#) – provides information about the background and process for the review. It contains the draft revised EIB Transparency Policy, showing the amendments currently under consideration, an explanatory note, and an online questionnaire.

After the completion of the public consultation, the EIB will publish the contributions received, reasoned responses thereto, the revised draft policy, and a draft consultation report. The publication of the final revised transparency policy, as approved by the Bank's governing bodies, is expected in the third quarter of 2021.

## Engaging civil society on how to invest in the future of Europe

1 July and 26 November 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic put the European Union's strength to the test, the EIB continued its cooperation with the [European Movement](#), a network of non-governmental organisations that promote European values, to discuss how the EU institutions can cushion the economy from the impact of the crisis and put the continent on the path to a green and resilient future. Under the overarching theme of "Investing in the Future of Europe," two online events took place during the year, covering perspectives from EU policy-makers, EIB and civil society about how to invest in [EU's recovery](#) and the [European Green Deal](#).

## 9<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns and 2020 Transformative Action Award for Sustainable Cities

30 September – 2 October 2020, Online and Mannheim (Germany)

For the last 25 years, the [European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns](#) has offered regions, cities and urban stakeholders a platform for inspiration, action and the commitment to take sustainability to the next level. The EIB supported ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a civil society organisation, in running the conference and the [Transformative Action Award](#), an annual prize that rewards current or past initiatives mounted by regions, cities or NGOs using the pathways of the [Basque Declaration](#) on sustainable development for socio-cultural, socio-economic or technological transformations.

The jury, made up of the ENVE Commission, UNESCO Etxea (Spain), the city of Aalborg (Denmark), ICLEI Europe and the EIB, awarded the prize to the [City of Katowice](#) (Poland) for its apps and environmental campaigns that increase civic participation and encourage residents to help make the city more sustainable. There were also two special mentions for [CEAR - Spanish Commission for Refugees](#) for their work on supporting the integration of refugees in Madrid (Spain) through food and cultural activities, and [Groupe One & Urbike](#), which set up a digital platform that small- and medium-sized businesses can use to sell their products, as well as a shared delivery service by bike in Brussels (Belgium).



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More information about the Civil Society division and its engagement activities can be found here: [www.eib.org/cso](http://www.eib.org/cso)