
EBRD press release

EBRD supports youth entrepreneurship and skills development in Egypt

Launch of new initiatives worth US\$ 140 million

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- **EBRD launches Youth in Business programme and pilot Skills in Business credit facility**
- **Total package of US\$ 140 million to provide finance and technical assistance**
- **National Bank of Egypt first partner bank under new facilities**

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has launched a US\$ 120 million Youth in Business programme and a pilot US\$ 20 million Skills in Business credit facility during a virtual event held in partnership with [National Bank of Egypt](#) (NBE).

The facilities will address key challenges that Egypt faces: [the economy](#) suffers from high levels of youth unemployment and increasing emigration as well as structural barriers to accessing key resources for business growth.

The Youth in Business programme will offer young entrepreneurs access to critically needed financing and technical assistance to grow their small businesses. The financing provided to NBE is part of a wider US\$ 120 million Youth in Business financing package for Egypt, which the EBRD will also offer to other banks and microfinance institutions for on-lending to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises run by young entrepreneurs.

The offer will be complemented by technical assistance to partner banks to strengthen their lending capacity. In addition, young business owners and managers will have access to advice to increase their

productivity and scale up their enterprises. NBE is the first bank to join the programme and a leading partner in its launch.

The US\$ 20 million Skills in Business credit facility launched in partnership with NBE aims to tackle the skills shortages and high employee turnover that hinder growth. Eligible small businesses that receive financing will also benefit from advisory support to recruit, train and retain staff and attract talent.

The Skills in Business advisory component is also available via the EBRD's Direct Financing Framework and Risk-Sharing Facility across [the southern and eastern Mediterranean](#) (SEMED) region, supported by funding from the Small Business Impact Fund¹¹ and [Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs](#).

Heike Harmgart, EBRD Managing Director, [SEMED](#), said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges young people face when entering the labour market or accessing the financing and the skilled employees they need for their businesses. Limited capital and gaps in know-how are among the biggest barriers standing in the way of young entrepreneurs' success. Placing youth at the centre of our priorities for the recovery is a significant step towards dismantling those barriers and building back a stronger, fairer economy that works for all."

Hisham Okasha, Chairman of NBE, added: "We are proud to partner with the EBRD and are determined to work towards building an inclusive economy that empowers youth and invests in young talent. Inclusion and sustainability are key pillars of NBE strategy and are perfectly aligned with the objectives of both Youth in Business and Skills in Business."

Egypt is a founding member of the EBRD. Since the start of the Bank's operations there in 2012, it has invested more than €7.3 billion in 130 projects in the country.