



# Case Study

Building Profitable International Relationships



European Bank  
for Reconstruction and Development

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# The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is an international financial institution that fosters transition towards democratic market economies. Since its foundation in 1991, EBRD has become the largest financial investor in its region of operations which extends from central Europe to central Asia, the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

Owned by 66 countries from six continents and two intergovernmental institutions (The European Union and the European Investment Bank), the Bank operates in 34 countries. As a truly international organization working to help develop market economies, EBRD operates in many different countries. In order to work effectively with both internal and external stakeholders, EBRD employees require excellent international communication skills with foreign language competency at the fore.



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# Helping EBRD Develop the International Language Skills of its Employees

With its founding remit to develop market economies across central and eastern Europe, EBRD quickly identified the need to enhance the language skills of its employees operating across this diverse range of countries. The Bank required a partner capable of providing high-impact language training not only in the languages of central and eastern Europe, but also in the languages of its shareholders.

Following a competitive tender process, Learnlight was selected in 1996 to meet this demand. Since then, Learnlight has delivered individual and group training in Russian, Serbian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Bulgarian, English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Japanese, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi.

In 2011, in response to events now referred to as the Arab Spring, EBRD extended its operations into the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region (SEMED). This has required EBRD staff to develop their French and Arabic skills.

## Training Objectives

The sole supplier of language training to EBRD, Learnlight is required to:

- » Provide training in the languages of eastern and western Europe as well as the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region
- » Support EBRD members of staff to work more effectively with colleagues and clients in the countries of EBRD operations by improving their linguistic skills
- » Employ a wide range of high-quality learning resources to suit training requirements and individual needs
- » Maximize return on investment through clearly defined learning plans and clear progress structures
- » Offer cost-effective training solutions by grouping delegates with similar language levels and training objectives



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# Challenges

The main challenges were seen as:

- » Adapting the training style to suit the diverse linguistic, cultural and professional backgrounds of EBRD delegates
- » Creating a training format to engage delegate interest over an extended period of time required in order to achieve the necessary level of competency
- » Providing flexible and effective training schedules that fitted around frequent travel and limited time available to delegates
- » Delivering highly specialized training in eastern European languages, e.g. technical language on nuclear decommissioning

## Training Approach

The diverse professional and linguistic backgrounds of EBRD employees, where many speak at least two languages, required Learnlight to deploy a unique training approach. Particular emphasis, for example, was placed on the selection of trainers with experience of working with advanced learners.

Following a Diagnostic Consultancy with each delegate to identify their professional training requirements and language experience, an in-depth face-to-face language assessment is carried out to measure existing language competency. Each delegate's ability is benchmarked using the Common European Framework standards to establish the delegate's speaking, listening, reading and writing ability in the target language.

Once complete, the selected trainer, in tandem with Learnlight's Training Management team, designs a program specifically in line with the delegate's linguistic needs, objectives and professional context. Particular focus is placed on the format, approach and materials employed for each delegate.

In addition to continuous informal in-course assessment, each delegate is also required to sit a formal assessment, on completion of each module, which is designed to measure progress against the agreed pre-course objectives.



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## Our Solution

Learnlight offers EBRD company-wide language training in all of its operational languages. One-to-one and group language training programs are available according to the requirement and rate of learning required. In addition to the training delivered at EBRD's City of London headquarters, Learnlight also provides language training in the countries of resident offices ensuring training continuity. Recent programs have taken place in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Istanbul.

Learnlight has assigned a team of dedicated trainers who work almost exclusively for EBRD. With many years of experience of working with the Bank, the trainer team has gained an invaluable insight into EBRD, its operations and the language needs of its learners. This insight ensures the team is able to provide a personalized approach to each training course that incorporates the lexicon, common language scenarios and case studies that are most relevant to EBRD and its employees.

Learnlight's dedicated team of professionals also includes a Client Manager and Training Manager responsible for the account and ensuring training and course management excellence. These two key contacts provide both the Bank's Learning & Development professionals as well as individual learners with unique points of contact.

Learnlight has also deployed a Client Portal to allow EBRD's Learning & Development team to make informed decisions about the Bank's training investment with Learnlight.



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## Results

On average, up to 150 delegates actively train with Learnlight every month across a range of levels, from little or no previous language ability to extensive experience where the need is to develop specialist linguistic skills. Training is delivered to delegates at all levels of the organization including executive committee members and senior management.

Learnlight is proud to have provided language training on a long-term basis to a number of EBRD employees. Our trainers have developed a very strong working relationship with these learners and have acquired an in-depth knowledge of their professional needs and requirements.

Learnlight services to the Bank often go beyond pure language training and its team of experienced trainers have supported EBRD learners with their special requests.

- » Long-term continuous training has permitted employees from the Office of the General Counsel to be able to prepare legal reports, draft contracts and deliver presentations in Russian
- » Training on Russian cultural nuance such as the use of humour and anecdotes has helped a number of Board Directors to build rapport with their clients
- » Providing background information about the target country, its history, and current economic and political issues has prepared delegates for assignments in resident offices
- » Learnlight has delivered training to current directors of resident offices in Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, some of whom started as complete beginners in the target language. By following a language course with Learnlight they have now achieved demonstrable results and are able to communicate with native speakers on complex business topics
- » Following a request from EBRD's L&D team, Learnlight developed an English language proficiency test to form part of the Bank's recruitment criteria. A high level of English competency is a key requisite of any candidate seeking to work for the Bank. The test comprises an online component with an offline element to assess candidates' English writing skills. To-date, more than 400 candidates have completed the test

Learnlight values its long-term partnership with EBRD and continually strives to provide excellence in language training and customer service. Innovation and flexibility form a key part of Learnlight's commitment to EBRD.



“The course met my needs and objectives very well. My aim was to be a more confident user of the language and build on existing skills, which the course achieved.”

Russian Delegate  
EBRD

Learnlight is an award-winning EdTech company that provides language and soft skills training to more than 1,000 clients and over 100,000 learners in 150 countries.

Since our foundation, our dream has been to bridge the gap between the disparate worlds of education and technology by harnessing cutting-edge technology to optimize instructor-led training. Our obsession was, and continues to be, to empower talented trainers to create transformative learning experiences because we think people are the real killer app.

Visit [learnlight.com](https://learnlight.com) to discover more about Learnlight and our unique range of digital, tutoring, virtual and face-to-face solutions.

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